

**Pastor's Message**  
**May 31<sup>st</sup>**

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Get your “red” on and be ready to be fired up, it’s Pentecost!!! And like the winds that blew through that first Pentecost, members of GSELC are blowing into Muhlenberg neighborhoods for a Pentecost parade. So come and join in, make some signs to post in your car and gather in the church parking lot at 12:45 pm on Sunday, May 31. Our parade route will go past those members of GSELC in the Muhlenberg area who are not able to join us via Zoom on a Sunday morning. We will make noise, shout out our greetings from our cars, display signs and drop off a red geranium for them (all from a safe distance).

It warms my heart to see all of you on Zoom on a Sunday morning. There is such laughter and joy as we gather as Christ’s church across the miles. We will continue to worship via Zoom on Sunday mornings at 10:30.

Beginning in June, we will include the celebration of Holy Communion in our Sunday morning worship services on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays. You will need to be prepared with a piece of bread or a cracker and something to drink. Although it has been our practice as Lutherans to partake of this sacrament only when we are physically gathered together, in these times when the ever present Holy Spirit gathers us together in new ways for worshipping and praising God, we will extend God’s table in a new way to break bread together as Jesus command us to “do this to remember me.”

I am looking for a few tech-savy volunteers to run the power-points presentations on a Sunday morning. Although my daughter Greta has assisted me from the beginning of our on-line worship services; at some point she will be heading back to Africa to prepare for the upcoming school year. Please let me know if you would be willing to help.

There will be a Mobile Market food distribution sponsored by Helping Harvest on June 4<sup>th</sup> from 1:30 to 3:00 on the GSELC parking lot. Please share this information with anyone who might be in need of food.

I pray for your health and well-being, and for your continued patience and resilience as you endure the restrictions that this pandemic has brought your way.

See you Sunday!!!

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Denise

## Acts 2:1-21

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.

4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean? 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17 "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Mark 1:4-8

<sup>4</sup> John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

<sup>5</sup> And people from the whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem were going out to him, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

<sup>6</sup> Now John was clothed with camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

<sup>7</sup> He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals. <sup>8</sup> I have baptized you with water; but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## Pentecost

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. AMEN

It was on April 3, 1973 – that Martin Cooper, a Motorola employee stood on 6<sup>th</sup> Ave between 53<sup>rd</sup> and 54<sup>th</sup> in New York City and placed the first cell phone call to his competitor and rival Joel Engel at the Bell Labs headquarters in New Jersey.

April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1973, 47 years ago is the day when the meaning and the mode of phone communication would be changed forever more for everyone. There were no more theoretical discussions on how it might work. The first call from Cooper to Engel had been made and it marked the beginning of cell phone communication. It drastically changed how, when, where and to whom we can readily communicate.

Today in our churches, we celebrate a similar pivotal event in the history of God's people; when the traditional practices and meaning of the celebration of Pentecost takes on a whole new meaning for the followers of Jesus.

This event which because of its timing keeps us connected to the past traditions of our ancestors and at the same time propels us forward into a new and uncertain future. Pentecost was/is known to God's chosen people, the Israelites as the Festival of the First Fruits, where the people would travel to Jerusalem to praise and worship God as they gave to God the first fruits of their harvest

Pentecost as it is know to us is the arrival of the Holy Spirit, where we have been chosen to be the fruit of the work that Jesus did here on earth. And we celebrate this day for it is the day that changed everything as we were empowered to embrace and spread the good news of what God has done for us

Through the Jewish prophets of old, we heard of God's promises to send us a Messiah. And God was faithful and fulfilled that promise as he sent his one and only Son to live among us

And God's one and only Son Jesus promised that he would not leave us alone, but would send to us a powerful advocate – a divine guide – a Holy counselor to be with us always. And on this day each year, we celebrate with our ancestors that God has again been faithful and fulfilled Jesus' promise to be with us always. And in doing so, God has opened the door to new ways of connecting to God and new ways of being God's people.

And if you have any doubt about the power that this Holy Spirit brings – listen once again to how the event has been recorded in the book of Acts.

and suddenly from heaven – there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house – divided tongues of fire appeared among them – and a tongue

rested on each of them – and all of them were filled with the holy spirit –

And as Peter was inspired, empowered and emboldened by the Holy Spirit in that moment, he tells the crowd about this gift of the Holy Spirit as he says

This gift of the Holy Spirit is given to all of us –

the sons and daughters –  
the young and the old –  
the freeman and the slaves

so that we may proclaim the good news of what God has done for us through the gift of his son Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior

We celebrate today that

ALL of US have been filled with God's divine spirit

and that

ALL of us have been empowered to hear, to believe and to share the message of what God has done for us and continues to do for us each and every day.

And although Peter uses the word prophesying to describe the actions that the followers were about to engage in, he is not speaking of predicting about an unknown future.

Instead, Peter is talking about prophesying as truth-telling, telling the truth about what they have come to believe that God has done for them through the life, death and

resurrection of Jesus and what God continues to do in them, through them and among them through the power of the Holy Spirit.

And today we celebrate that all of us have been empowered with the Holy Spirit to do this work, to tell the truth. That is, to tell the story of God, to tell the story of God's people and to tell the stories of God's presence in our lives and in the lives of all people.

Filled with and inspired by the Holy Spirit we are the messengers of God empowered to tell all that God has revealed to us

Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, we are the messengers of God empowered to tell what God has done and is doing

And emboldened by the Holy Spirit, we are equipped to courageously proclaim that message

Like the prophets of old, we have been entrusted to be the bearers of the truth. But unlike the prophets of old, the truth that we proclaim is not based on signs or predictions or even visions.

Our truth is based on the revelation of God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the witnessing of God's presence in our everyday lives.

The gift of the Holy Spirit gives us the ability to make sense of Scripture and to bring it alive for ourselves and for others.

The gift of the Holy Spirit enables us to continually make sense of God acting in our lives as if we are detectives of the divine in action.

The gift of the Holy Spirit sanctions us to talk directly to God in prayer and to intercede and pray for:

those whom we love,  
those with whom we struggle  
and for those who have lost their voice.

Pentecost, the Jewish festival of the First Fruits of the grain harvest, which occurred 50 days after Passover brought thousands of people to Jerusalem to offer up the first of their grain harvest to God.

These thousands of people did not come to become the first fruits of Jesus ministry here on Earth

These thousands of people did not come to become the truth tellers, nor to be the witnesses of the revelation of God in Jesus

These thousands of people did not come to become the charter members of the Christian church

They came to fulfill their obligations to the covenantal laws, which required them to come to Jerusalem and honor God by offering the first fruits of their grain harvest

But what happened on that day – changed everything for evermore as they experienced

first hand the fulfillment of God's promise as they received the gift of the Holy Spirit

which made them - for all intensive purposes - the first fruits (the first harvest) of the life, the ministry, the death and the resurrection of Jesus

Today we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit received by those present at the first Pentecost following the resurrection and ascension of our Lord

and it is that very same Holy Spirit which each of us have received in our baptism that dwells in us, through us and among us always.

Today we celebrate that we have been entrusted with the good news of the gospel and that we have been inspired, empowered and emboldened to proclaim and interpret the good news with and for the world.

As April 3<sup>rd</sup> 1973 birthed new technology that propelled the communication industry into a new future –

So to - On that First Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus the Christ; God birthed God's church – and propelled and empowered God's people into a new way of knowing Christ and making Christ known

AMEN

***BLESSING***

May the God of covenant faithfulness enfold you;  
The beloved Son encourage you  
And the Holy Spirit descend upon you  
in blessing you this day and forever more.

AMEN