

## **Pastor Mollie's Sermon**

**September 8, 2019**

**Acts 2:42-47**

*42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*

*43 Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.*

*44 All who believed were together and had all things in common; 45 they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.*

I feel like a primary need of the human heart is to rifle back to the past to find out the place and the time that something or someone big started off.

We just really want to know what Bruce Wayne was like before he was Batman.

This is just a fundamental drive for genealogy.

I think the Book of Acts is the church's equivalent of a genealogy.

We go all the way back and find out how we started, the first days of the church.

The revival that happens right before this passage, with wind that blows, there is imagery of fire, the Spirit is tangible and touchable.

People are bewildered and amazed and perplexed.

But it doesn't end with an emotional revival.

The passage we read this morning describes the Christian community as it begins, and oh my goodness, it is beautiful.

They are doing theology, they are living together, they are eating together, they are praying together--

this is a kind of community that most church leaders would give their left foot for.

And while this part of the story is not as noisy as the revival from earlier, it has its own reckless beauty--

the new Christians are literally giving everything away that they have so that no one will be hungry or homeless and doing it all in awe and with gladness and joy--

and the community just keeps growing every single day.

This story of the beginning of the Church is just glorious.

This is the Church alive. This is the Church on the move.

As we kick off today with fall festival- I wanted to introduce us to this text- Acts 2:42 as our theme for the year!

I want us to spend the year learning about the "whys" behind

what we do,

what we say,

who we are.

And what better way to do that than to center ourselves around this text-

this story of the first church- and see how we as St. Mark lutheran are living out the gospel.

I have some people here to help me describe our different areas of ministry and giving us a glimpse into how Acts 2:42 is currently active and alive today and where it will take us this year!

**Worship- Wally Guptill**

introducing the importance to spend time learning about the whys behind- confession and forgiveness, communion, apostles creed, Lord's Prayer, hymns.... etc.

**Building/church home- Dave Mundale**

Explaining the importance for our updates- maintaining warm,welcoming environment, a sound system so we can hear everything in worship, round tables so we can face each other and have closer communication, etc

**Generous giving- Mary Mortenson**

What it means to give to what we love and care for... handicap door, memorials, scholarships, etc

**Programming- life together- Tory Pluchek-**

how church is important beyond Sunday worship... what it means to show up and present in all areas of our lives, etc.

Want to know the best part?

The Good News is that it is not up to us.

We do not need to be perfect for God to work in the Church.

We do not need to have our stuff together before God starts to move in our midst.

God is still working.

The Church is God's Beloved, and God is not done working with her, either in the structures and institutions or in the individual people that together make up this Body of Christ.

The Spirit is at work when other people fail us and when we fail other people.

Because here's the thing.

We go back to that beautiful, inspiring passage from Acts.

And then we step back and look at the whole story....

And yeah--it is exciting and it is a wild ride of a young Church just leaping off into the world empowered by the Spirit and loving people and preaching the Good News of Jesus-- but it's also full of the tough stuff too.

*And yet. And yet. Here we are today.*

We are still moving. The Church is still moving.

The Spirit is still moving ... the Spirit is sweeping through our lives, whether we want it to or not, and sweeping through our churches even if we can't see it right away.

And you what else is pretty darn great?

We are all welcome in all our messiness and diversity.

This is us. This is the Church.

One body, different parts.

And while we think of Churches since the beginning...

that possibly have caused us or others to question, mourn, wonder, walk out, doubt...here we are again, through Christ and the Spirit creating a place for others and ourselves that we can serve and love in all our beautiful messiness.

Amen.