

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
 East Moline, Illinois
 Pastor Becky Sherwood
May 20, 2018, Pentecost Sunday
 Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b, Acts 2:1-21
2018-Pentecost Day

This morning I want to tell you that there is a surprising result from that first Pentecost that we read about this morning.

In the midst of the rushing wind,
 the tongues of flame,
 and all those gathered in Jerusalem
 hearing the Good News of Jesus in their own language,
 our lives were changed too!

On the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit of God descended on those first disciples,
 our lives were changed too.

That first Pentecost tells us that God, the Creator of the universe,
 is not just as distant as the galaxies that expand out exponentially,
 farther than the Hubble Telescope will ever reach.

God who dreamed creation into being long ago
 is not just a part of our distant human history.

God who named the stars
 and has known each generation of life on earth,
 has not stopped being present in human life.

The God of the universe, the Creator of all that is, seen and unseen,
 the God who came to earth and took on human flesh in Jesus,
 living and dying and rising for each one of us,
 the God of human history is here with each of us this morning through God's Holy Spirit..

As the Holy Spirit of God descended on each those disciples,
 The Holy Spirit of God has descended onto each of us who follow Jesus.

On this Pentecost Sunday, as we celebrate and remember the Holy Spirit coming to those first disciples, I want to invite you to put your hands to your hearts.

Let yourself become aware of it beating.

Then let yourself pay attention to each breath, breathing in and breathing out.

Our God is as close to us as our next breath and our next heartbeat.
 What started on that first Pentecost as the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples,
 has carried forward through the generations to and to me,
 and all who follow Jesus.

With your hands on your hearts, paying attention to its beating
 and paying attention to your breathing

listen to the way that the apostle Paul puts it in I Corinthians:

“...do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (I Corinthians 6:19). Or another way to read this is: “your

body is a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and you are not your own.”

God’s Holy Spirit lives in our hearts. We belong to God.

As followers of Jesus Christ, we too have been blessed by the Holy Spirit of God, and now the living God of the Universe, lives inside us, in our hearts and lives.

With our hands to our hearts I invite you to revel in this amazing news that God’s Holy Spirit lives in your heart, and my heart.

We are sanctuaries, housing the Spirit of the Living God.

If you’d like you can remove your hand from your heart, or you may want to keep it there as you listen; it is up to you!

God is within us and with us. We are sanctuaries of God’s Holy Spirit.

Whatever you came into church with today, whatever is going on in your life, the Holy Spirit is there with you in the midst of it.

You are not alone

with the joys and concerns,
the grief and the worry,
the celebrations and expectations
that you carry in your heart and head today.

God’s Holy Spirit lives inside of you and will be with you today, tomorrow,
and heartbeat by heartbeat, breath by breath.

If we are God’s sanctuary,

then in all that we are going through, God is with us.

God is at home in our lives through God’s Holy Spirit.

The Bible gives us pictures and descriptions of what it means to be the sanctuary of the Holy Spirit in our lives. One that I find most comforting comes from Romans 8 which reads: “Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words.” (Romans 8:26)

There are those times that life robs us of the ability to pray, and the Bible says that in the middle of those times, God’s Holy Spirit is praying in and through us.

When we don’t have the words, God’s Spirit has the words for us.

And sometimes God groans with the unspoken words and sorrow of our hearts.

God’s Spirit lives in us and prays for us, and loves us.

We see another picture of God’s Holy Spirit in the very beginning of the Bible. Genesis chapter one says that God’s Spirit breathed over the waters of creation, and God continues to breath over the creative moments and seasons in our lives.

In those moments when we are feeling most at home in ourselves, and what we are doing, God’s Spirit is present in that creativity.

When we are running cross country or track, painting or making cards,

listening to the stories of someone who needs to share and we have time to listen,
 when we are creating in wood, or fabric or words,
 reaching out to someone in need in Jesus' name,
 making the next prayer shawl,
 creating music with an instrument, or the instrument of our voice,
 when we are doing that thing that we know God created us to do,
 God's Holy Spirit is there breathing over the waters of creation in our lives.

Another comforting promise about the Holy Spirit who lives in our hearts and lives can be found in John 14. Jesus was speaking to his disciples during the end of his life, telling them that he would send the Holy Spirit to them when he went home to Heaven.

Jesus told them, and tells us, that Holy Spirit comes to us as a Helper, Advocate, and Comforter to be with us when we need to be reminded about who God is in our lives.

Jesus gave us words of promise that we often hear at funerals, but truly need to hear in many seasons of our live.

Jesus says: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you.
 I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled,
 and do not let them be afraid." (John 14: 25-27)

I invite you to once again put your hands to your hearts, feeling them beating.
 And now pay attention to your breathing, breathing in and breathing out.

The promises given to us by the Creator the Universe,
 The promises given to us by Jesus, God's Son, when he lived on earth,
 Are promises for you, and for me, this morning.

The Holy Spirit of God lives in your hearts.
 You are a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.

Whatever you came into church with today, the Holy Spirit is there with you in the midst of it.
 You are not alone
 with the joys and concerns,
 the grief and the worry,
 the celebrations and expectations
 that your carry in your heart and head today, in this moment.
 God's Holy Spirit lives inside of you and will be with you today, tomorrow,
 and heartbeat by heartbeat, breath by breath.

You are a sanctuary of the Holy Spirit.

I'd like to end today by inviting you into a time of silent prayer, so that you may speak the words you want to say to the Spirit of God who lives in your heart.

And remember, if you don't know how or what to pray in this silence, the Holy Spirit will pray for you,

With our hands on our hearts, aware of our breathing, let us pray: SILENCE

Amen.