**The Spirit is Alive!**

Narrative Lectionary – Pentecost

June 9, 2019

Acts 2: 1-21 Russell Mitchell-Walker

Today we celebrate Pentecost, a day that is as important as Christmas and Easter. It is the completion of Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. After he was resurrected, he breathed the Spirit onto the disciples and before he ascended to heaven, he told them to wait for the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem. While they knew they were waiting for the Holy Spirit, they did not expect what they experienced. The Spirit did not just come to the apostles but to the gathered community that day. It transformed the community. Over 3000 disciples were added to the community, of all backgrounds and ethnicities. If we keep reading to verses 42-45 we learn that they not only formed communities of fellowship but those communities were transformed, establishing a new economy where they sold what they had and held all goods in common, so everybody would have what they needed. Earlier in the gospels, the disciples were arguing about who is the greatest. The Spirit shows us that all are! The Spirit is alive in their communities.

As we gather this morning to honour this special day, and also acknowledge our ministries through the Program Annual Meeting, we celebrate the Spirit is alive in our midst and ministries.

The Spirit is alive in our Faith Formation ministry as we heard the wisdom of young people on Children’s Sunday and we have children enjoying our Messy Church Ministry, shared with our Lutheran and Anglican partners.

The Spirit is alive in the people who are always prepared to offer Sunday school if there are children who join us.

The Spirit is alive in the support and welcome offered through our Congregational Care committee. People experience God’s love and support when they are ill or grieving through Congregational Care members.

The Spirit is alive through our Community Dinners, that has people not only sharing a meal and fellowship but experiencing song, prayer and scripture.

The Spirit is alive through the Film and Faith group offering support, welcome and spiritual nurture to a member outside of Eastside who has joined from the Community Dinner.

The Spirit is alive through the challenges we have weathered as we have seen our community come together in worship attendance, and experience Spirit-led generosity, moving us toward sustainability.

The Spirit is alive in the Leadership Team who have led us through these challenging times with faith, commitment and determination.

The Spirit is alive through being an Affirming Ministry, offering PIE day, where people were moved by elder Lorna Standingready’s welcome and two-spirit teaching, and as a two-spirit newcomer has found a welcome here, which he never thought he would in a church.

The Spirit is alive as the craft-study group opened up to vulnerability as well as the challenging history of indigenous peoples.

The Spirit is alive in working together with Indigenous Christian Fellowship and creating INI Café, Reconciliation through Performing Arts.

The Spirit is alive through the Arise!, and all those who offer nurturing, uplifting and lively music for our worship.

The Spirit is alive in the evening book study who learned the importance of knowing our history and being open to how God is active in our neighbourhood community.

The Spirit is alive in the connections made with Glen Elm School and a proposed lunch project, and in finding out that I know the principal.

The Spirit is alive as we have prayed together at prayer services and experienced an answer to prayer.

The Spirit is alive in the Gratitude team who have faithfully led a successful stewardship campaign writing thank you notes and following up with people.

The Spirit is alive in the JNAC Committee who have worked diligently, faithfully and provided recommendations that includes discerning that we have balance in spiritual nurture and service to the community in what we do and offer.

The Spirit is alive in so many ways, and I am sure you could identify your own experiences. I invite you to share them with one another following the service and meeting, or even during the meeting after church today.

These are examples of how the Spirit has been alive and moving through us this past year. There is much more the Spirit can do through us and we may be surprised when we are open, where the Spirit leads us and the kind of diverse community we can form. May we be open to the power of the Spirit transforming ourselves, and our community. May we be open to the Spirit breathing through us, continuing to create a community that is welcoming, knitting us more deeply and wholly as the body of Christ and sending us out into the world.