**6/8/25**

**Acts & John Preach Together**

**Vicar Vince Piekarski**

**Acts 2:1-21 (NRSVUE) & John 14:8-17 [25-27] (NRSVUE)**

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians 1:2, NRSVUE) (2) **Amen.**

What a wonderful and awesome day to be present with all of you! Thank you for joining us here in this space, and on the conference call, as we rejoice together on this Day of Pentecost. Though this special day may mark an end to our Easter Season together, I also remind you that it marks a day of something completely and holy new. Though this special day was initially marked on the calendar back then as the Jewish Holiday called Shavout (Sha-voo-OHT), the Festival of Weeks, that was held 50 days following Passover. This annual commemoration of the event gathered people from near and far in one place to celebrate the giving of the Torah to Moses. This event gathered people from near and far, by no mistake, and it did so wonderfully, intricately, and purposefully because something new was breaking in. The Holy Spirit was arriving in grand fashion, and rolling up its proverbial sleeves, to get to work in each and every person present inside and outside of that room. The Holy Spirit allowed everyone that was willing to hear an amazing chance to experience God’s presence in every native tongue, including their very own! These folks that were locked up in a room for their safety, due to their fear, but they were granted new energy and new life as the Spirit came down on them and entered them, and they had no other response than to go share it with others. The Holy Spirit showed up and showed out, because that is precisely what was promised in scripture, and in the very life of Jesus Christ here on earth! Amen to that!

I will also say and admit how awesome it is to be in front of you all following an exhausting, yet exhilarating, three days away at the New Jersey Synod Assembly. It was a blessing being present as a called Vicar of the church, and having your blessing and prayers to vote alongside of my wife, and to experience and take everything in. It was a blessing hearing from Bishop Tracie Bartholomew in her final report, and being able to thank her for her 12 years of service, commitment, and love that she provided to the New Jersey Synod. It was a blessing hearing all the responses to a barrage of questions that several candidates fielded and the Bishop-Elect Rev. Dr. Christa Compton being announced following five ballots of voting. It was a blessing when we sang our final songs, completed the Sending Rites, and we heard the announcement that the Assembly was adjourned. We rejoiced and sang out as we left that very upper room in the hotel and were provided with the continued commission to go out into the world on fire with Christ forever burning in our hearts and souls to share the very message of that assembly, of Christ’s resurrection and ascension, and of the returned forever presence here with and alongside of us on Pentecost in the Holy Spirit.

However, I must also be a little vulnerable here, and even admit to you that there were several sad moments as well. It was a sad moment because all that I had ever come to know and be comfortable with regarding Bishop Tracie and her office was now going to be no longer. It was a sad moment that our friends and visitors from other states and synods, and all of us were splitting up and going back to all of our little respective corners and areas where we serve. It was a sad moment leaving colleagues and friends that I have had the privilege of spending time with and really getting to know and come to appreciate. It was a sad moment no longer being able to connect others together and spend time with them as they rejoiced together in commonalities that they may have never realized they shared. However, just as the Spirit moved us to handle the business of the church for those three days for the ELCA in New Jersey, we were quickly reminded that we needed to get back to all of you. The Spirit moved us to get back to our flocks to feed our lambs, tend our sheep, and feed our sheep precisely as Peter was commissioned to do in scripture. Behold! I make all things new, was not just some fancy slogan for our particular assembly, but it truly was a scriptural reminder that our God is constantly making things new. It was a scriptural reminder that we need to observe and witness to and about it all over the world, and not just keep it to ourselves in an upper room just like those very first followers of Christ we hear about in our message today.

So, with all that being said, and fulfilling my responsibility of delivering some of the Assembly to you, then you may have happened to notice that we did things a little bit differently today. Believe it or not, I actually had this initial plan in place before I even left for assembly, and well before I even started typing this very sermon. I intentionally planned to read the message from Acts and John to you. Now, I of course would like to think that I had my hand in things all by myself, but I really came to realize that it was not just me. The Holy Spirit led me to shake things up and change things a little bit precisely as the Spirit has done so all throughout my life. I was indeed called to introduce these two stories together to and with you, because believe it or not, they actually preach together. They do so for the specific reason as they both outline similar yet different Pentecost stories. That is precisely why those that reviewed and developed things for Year C in our Revised Common Lectionary placed them together on the same Sunday in the first place. Now, it is my responsibility and my call to unwrap those very stories and their purpose a little more to you all here in this place.

Alright, now I know for certain that some of us actually rejoice in hearing the noisy and powerful wind through the grand entrance of the Holy Spirit as tongues of fire. Then again, I also know for certain that some of us rejoice in the subtle and much calmer, or even intimate, entrance of the Holy Spirit as Christ personified right in front of the disciples during his farewell discourse. Jesus guaranteeing that we would never be alone for the Advocate would be with and alongside of us forever and always. Again, two totally different approaches to yet similar Pentecost stories, and if we did not slow down a little bit, and if I did not do some additional research and reading throughout the week, we all may not have caught that. Then, again some of you are much smarter than I, and you may have caught the very relation between these two stories, and you probably even picked which version that you preferred. Yet, regardless of your awareness or preference, rest assured the Spirit will move where it wills or wants, and thanks be to God for that! For we have a Triune God that is so big, so powerful, and so unlimited that our needs are always met in every time and every place. Let alone, we are forever reminded and reassured that we are never alone, and we are commissioned to remind others of that as well. We of course can do that in many ways, and we of course can follow the very examples set in front of us, but you may very well be asking how.

So, let’s explore the subtle, the more intimate way first. It is by no mistake that I petitioned and began the project with all of you several years ago to redesign the very space outside of our front church doors. There was a reason that my initial idea was to bring a Peace Pole in several languages to each and every one of you. It was an extremely memorable part of my childhood as we created a safe and welcoming space at my former Catholic church in Pittsburgh. Now, of course this space came into a much more beautiful and welcoming place here as all of you shared ideas and jumped on board to make this a real thing. We gathered together as a community and tore out the old overgrown bushes, and we planted a tree in memorial of one of our former members. We gathered together and collected plastic of every kind and shape, loaded several cars, and were off on our way to Acme to turn it in and get it weighed so that we could receive an awesome bench created from it. Together we created a beautiful and welcoming place for anyone in our community, inside these doors, and out there in the world. This space offers a place to rest in the very presence of God, and to possibly even see your own native language. I am so glad that we completed our surveys and agreed on eight languages to be displayed on that very Peace Pole that all embody the same message, and that is, “May Peace Prevail on Earth.”

Now, let’s explore the noisy and more powerful way. For it is by no mistake that when you and I go outside of these doors that we are stirred to share a message of hope, of comfort, of presence to those that we encounter. We may not slam them with the message and scripture right off, and we may not expect them to hear it as we proclaim it, but we may do so just by being there with them and alongside of them in moments that they may experience. We may interject ourselves in their lives and show them a little bit of Christ precisely as we are all called to do. That is being bold, that is witnessing, and that is being noisy and powerful in our very own way for sure. We share the very grace and mercy that are provided to us unconditionally by not keeping it to ourselves. We boldly share it and proclaim it so others may do the same if they come to believe.

So, as we have made it to Pentecost, as we have made it to the end of this Easter Season, let us still remember that we are indeed Easter people all year round. Let us remember that we have not been abandoned, and that our Triune God has been present with all of us before time, on this earth, and right now alongside of us right at this very moment. Let us remember that we have been divinely created and designed, and that we serve as the hands and feet acting as one in and with the Trinity. Let us remember that as we take this good news, this gospel, out into the world and share it with others, that we can rejoice and announce and proclaim in our hearts, in our minds, and in our actions with total joy and thanksgiving that Christ is Risen… **Christ is Risen Indeed! Alleluia****! and Amen.**

**References & Study Points**

(1) Sundays and Seasons

Preaching

Year C 2025

June 8th, 2025

Day of Pentecost

(2) BibleGateway.com

(3) The Four Pages of The Sermon

Revised and Updated

A Guide to Biblical Preaching

Paul Scott Wilson

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Abingdon Press

(4) Luthermatrix

The blog of a lutheran pastor, writer, and political animal.

Saturday, June 04, 2022

Sermon: Glimpses of the Paraclete

Who is the Holy Spirit?

(5) WorkingPreacher.org

Day of Pentecost

Luke describes not the birth of the church but the empowerment of believers to bear

witness to the ends of the earth

June 8, 2025

Commentary on Acts 2:1-21

Margaret Aymer

(6) WorkingPreacher.org

Day of Pentecost

It happened on the subway platform in Moscow.

June 9, 2019

Commentary on Acts 2:1-21

Amy G. Oden

(7) WorkingPreacher.org

Day of Pentecost (Year A)

On the day of Pentecost, a small crowd gathered in a room on the highest floor of a

house in Jerusalem to wait for the manifestation of the promise Jesus made before

his ascension.

May 31, 2020

Commentary on Acts 2:1-21

Debra J. Mumford

(8) WorkingPreacher.org

Day of Pentecost

Consider questions and inquiry as a practice of faith

June 8, 2025

Commentary on John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Chelsea Brooke Yarborough

(9) WorkingPreacher.org

Day of Pentecost

When we think of Pentecost we immediately think of the book of Acts, when the

Spirit came on the primitive community gathered in one place in the form of a strong

wind that filled the house, and divided tongues of fire that rested on each of them

(Acts 2:1-3).

June 9, 2019

Commentary on John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Osvaldo Vena

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Day of Pentecost

What living love looks like

June 5, 2022

Commentary on John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Meda Stamper

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Day of Pentecost

Joseph is in love with Maria.

May 15, 2016

Commentary on John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Barbara Lundblad

(12) WorkingPreacher.org

Day of Pentecost

Believe, believe, believe.

May 19, 2013

Commentary on John 14:8-17 [25-27]

Lucy Lind Hogan

**Acts 2:1-21 (NRSVUE)**

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, he told his disciples they would be filled with the Holy Spirit. Now, amid signs of fire, wind, and a variety of languages, the people were amazed and astonished at Jesus’ promise coming true.

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, [the apostles] 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 people 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, “Fellow Jews 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.’ ”

**John 14:8-17 [25-27] (NRSVUE)**

Though the disciples struggle with Jesus’ nature and identity, they receive the promise that they too will be identified with God and God’s mission. Though he must leave them now, Jesus promises the coming of the Advocate whom God will send to comfort and enlighten them.

8 Philip said to [Jesus,] “Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.” 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, but if you do not, then believe because of the works themselves. 12 Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.

15 “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him because he abides with you, and he will be in you.

[25 “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27 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.”]