

Sunday, May 31, 2020

Acts 2:1-21, I Cor 12:3-13

“The Spirited Church”

How many days have gone by since you first bit into your chocolate Easter bunny? If you answered 50 you are correct! It has been 50 days since we shared the joy and wonder of Christ’s resurrection and in this days of Easter we heard the stories of Jesus interacting with his disciples. From the time of Mary seeing him first and then the disciples seeing him that evening and the following week. We also heard of the followers on their way home whose eyes were opened when he started to eat supper with them in their home at Emmaus. And in these 50 days we were reminded of the promises Jesus made to those who were his closest followers- that they would not be left alone, that he would return to the Father, and that the Spirit would come to help and guide them. The disciples stayed in Jerusalem where they went to the temple and prayed and waited.

Pentecost was a celebration for the Jewish people which marked the Feast of first fruits- It was a celebration of thanksgiving that the grain crop was ready for harvesting. It was a time of feasting, prayer and gathering together. People went to Jerusalem to pray, to celebrate and to give thanks to God for this early harvest time. This is why there were people from all over in the streets of Jerusalem. People who spoke many languages and who were visitors from Rome, people who were Jews, Cretans and Arabs. And on this particular celebration day of Pentecost something amazing happened to the disciples. They were waiting on the Spirit. And then they waited on the wind, And a mighty wind it was! It blew so hard that the world has never again been the same!

Divided tongues of fire appeared and then rested upon each of those present. They were filled with the Holy Spirit and this enabled them to speak in many different languages. They were loud and so people on the street who were walking by wondered what was happening and then realized that they heard messages in their own language being shared by others. The crowd was forming on the street people were asking, what’s up What do you know? No one knew what to say or what was going on for sure. Some people even said that the Galileans, were already drunk on the new harvest wine!

But this is when things changed! Calm fell over the crowd and Peter stood up with the rest of the disciples and spoke. He quotes from the OT prophet Joel and for many listening the words would be familiar. “In the last days it will be 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. Upon my slaves the Spirit will be poured out and they shall prophesy. I will show signs- both of blood, fire and smoky mist; the sun will be dark and the moon reddish. These would be signs of the coming of the Lord.”

But Peter does not stop with the prophesy of Joel, but continues by telling Jesus’ story- his life, death and resurrection and what has occurred that morning! For this is the day that Holy Spirit has been poured out upon all those who see and hear and because the Spirit was moving amongst those first hearing the good news of Jesus proclaimed by Peter, they believed and wanted to know what they needed to do to become disciples/ followers too! They were baptized about 3000 that day—and this began the community of faith we know as the church! The church was born!

As the church we are one in the Spirit- we were all baptized into one body- Jews, Greeks, slaves, free and we were all made to drink of the one Spirit. The body we call the church has many parts just like a human body—feet, hands, ears, eyes, and if there is one part that is sick, the whole body suffers. Yet when all is well- the whole person feels well. Just like the body of Christ= the church. Right now we are missing our home- we like to go to the place where we are comfortable in our seats, the ones where we know that there is no names, but is ours through tradition. We like to see the windows, with the light shining through the stained glass and we like to hear the organ and piano, the choir and musicians playing and singing praises to God. We as a church like to gather together to eat and to have fun. But we also like to do things for others- we like to reach out to help those in need whether far away or down the street. We also look after each other by checking in and seeing how we are doing in all times and in all ways. This is the church. As members and adherents to a church we get to know each other in friendship and love and respect. We each have different gifts to offer and to recognize these gifts we celebrate being one with God and one in the Spirit.

On Pentecost we celebrate the Spirit, the fire and we celebrate Jesus promise of sending the Advocate, Counselor Spirit being fulfilled and that the Spirit is with us always.

I really like balloons- but a dead balloon- has no life. It just exists, stays where you put it, doesn’t move, no power. But what happens when we blow it up—it is full of air yet it is still dead until that power from inside is released. When this happens balloon can move because the air gifts it the ability to move. However, when the wind power within the balloon is released, you don’t know where the balloon is going to go; but you know it’s going somewhere. Just like wind, we

don't know where it is going. Jesus did not give the disciples the Spirit so that they could stay behind locked doors in fear. It is given to move people out into the world -- even if we don't always know exactly where we will end up. But right now with the stay home orders we cannot fully get out in the world- but we can try to see who is around us right now and who needs the power of the Spirit. When the balloon empties its power it seems dead again. We are not like that balloon because Jesus promises that the Spirit will be with us forever. We will never run out of the Spirit's power. The Spirit given to you in baptism remains forever. But from time to time we need to get renewed with the power of the Spirit. And this is the purpose of the church—ro get filled up with the Spirit to help us carry out the next week. Under our current circumstances we are renewed in Spirit because we can virtually come together to pray, praise God and to share in what Jesus asks to do. Share in the sacrament of Holy Communion and share of yourself in faith and with hope. By coming together we receive Jesus in the hearing of the word and in the sharing of sacrament and through the fellowship of the saints who right now we cannot see but by faith we know that as we eat this bread together everyone who is sharing in these moments of prayer are One in Jesus. And this is the church of Jesus Christ. This is the Spirit of God moving all around us—here in Windsor- Essex and all the communities, Chatham-Kent, Sarnia Lambton including Oil Springs and throughout the regions of Ontario—including Algoma- Sault Ste Marie Blind River, as well as Eastern Ontario- to Ottawa, Barrie and Toronto, for wherever you are watching me right now and when I will break the bread and lift the cup—the Spirit of God is touching you just as the Spirit of God is present in my office in my home where my family and cat reside! This is so amazing because God's Spirit cannot be contained! And the church as we know it will emerge in a new and profound way—we just need to be patient and move with the Spirit leading and guiding us!

As we gather prepare to share in the sacrament of Holy Communion let us be mindful of our brothers and sisters in Jesus who share with us at this time. Not only our church family of Glenwood United but friends in Christ who believe and have faith and know that Jesus meets us here as we remember what He did for us in his death and resurrection. Let us rejoice. Let us celebrate. Can you feel the Spirit of God in you?

LET US PRAY: God of grace and love Move amongst us now. Open our hearts and our minds to your Spirit and refill us with joy. Open our hearts to move us so that we might see your love in others as we share with one another what Jesus asked us to do in remembrance of him. Bless us O God and bless your church now and always. Amen.