

**June 5, 2022, Pentecost**

## **The Pentecost Spirit, Based on Acts 2:1-21**

These days I tend to talk often about the energetic tendencies of my dog Duffy. He is still very young, which means he is always enthusiastic and exuberant. As Ollie would say, "he is a crazy dog." He just cannot help himself with excitement when he greets someone. The characteristic wag of the tail and half his body with it as he buries his head between your knees is comical. The vision of the "Ever-Ready Bunny" from TV commercials comes to mind. With the exception that there are no batteries needed.

This past week I experienced that kind of enthusiasm, exuberance, and incredible energy a little differently. It came in human form during my participation in the regional Mountain Candidacy Board process. For those that don't recall, I am a member of an interview panel that reviews the potential suitability for candidates seeking a career in U.C. Ministry.

The "ever-ready" bunny presented himself to us during one of my interview sessions. His excitement was palpable, his energy and enthusiasm for ministry was clear and pronounced. The Holy poured out of him. There was no stopping it. This individual sees his journey as a living transforming experience, a journey that he said was not about him. It is about seeing Christ in everything he told us. He used the words "Christ Soaked." When he did that the four of us on the panel could not help but smile broadly. A "Christ Soaked" theology. The batteries powering this individual were natural and infinitely renewable, they were Jesus' batteries.

On my travel home from the coast I was pondering a message to convey for this Pentecost time, and it came to me that our experience during this interview was a Pentecost Moment. This was a moment when the spirit broke through in a gust of wind filling us with awe. A fire broke out in our candidate, and it singed us with remarkable hope. It was inspirational. Our candidate was drunk in God's love, comprehending the possibility that he might be able to share that in the world. It was so encouraging for us to experience such a clear call to ministry in these times when there are more and more communities of faith struggling to survive. For those that are, there are less ministry personnel available to fill the vacancies. None of that mattered to our candidate. That was incredibly hopeful.

On this June 5 morning we come together in worship and celebrate the beginning of the Christian Church. We are also just a few days shy of the 97<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the United Church Union (June 10).

The fact that the Christian Church and the United Church itself has survived this long is really quite remarkable given our tumultuous history. Perhaps Pentecost moments have something to do with that.

Peter said to the Jews in his community,

***"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.  
<sup>18</sup> Even upon my slaves, both men and women,***

***in those days I will pour out my Spirit,  
and they shall prophesy.”***

These visions were glimpses of opportunity, realizations that a new tomorrow was a possibility, understandings that the elixir of “saving” was within grasp. God was speaking new possibility into the people, a great melting pot of peoples from near and far. They all got the message, God’s loving and healing spirit was real. It was right there in front of them, and they became giddy with the realization.

**Reality check, God is among us, we are not alone. Imagine that!  
Can we imagine that today?**

Can you remember the last time you were giddy? (And I don’t mean because you had one too many gin’s, single malts or glasses of wine). When were you last so filled with joy and exuberant awe that you wanted to just shout out loud? Perhaps that was at the birth of a grandchild. Perhaps it was at a graduation ceremony. Perhaps it was a moment when healing came to you or someone you love. Perhaps it might be a few weeks from now when you will be looking at your garden and saying “yes,” “wow,” “look at all that!”

I had a Pentecost moment when I first arrived here in 2016 because I was received with such love and acceptance. I had to pinch myself, was I really here among you standing at the pulpit? I had another, strangely enough when we had our flood. Pentecost came in the fervor of folks rushing about rescuing goods, getting, and operating pumps, mopping floors, hiring contractors, making coffee. God of the Pentecost came rushing through you all as you served this COF, and I was awed by that.

I had a Pentecost moment yesterday as we celebrated the life of our dear friend Ann Kruse. The Spirit of the Living God blew through our time together holding us, drying our eyes, helping us sing the Hymns Ann loved and in telling our stories afterwards during fellowship.

I had a Pentecost moment during that interview last week when it was so clear that our creator is doing something special leading another disciple on a journey in ministry. And I know I will have another Pentecost moment this afternoon when we visit Athena and celebrate her 6<sup>th</sup> birthday. It will burst in with hugs and greetings. It will flow through gleeful expressions of surprises. It will make me giddy with joy, laughter, and pride.

I think there are many, many Pentecost moments in our lives and this is in part why we keep on the doing in our ministry together. That has been the case since the church began and it continues to be the case now.

Love blows into the spaces when needed but not expected. Compassion floods into the lives of those who are lonely and desperate. The warmth of healing comes as rays of the summer sun. All come from that Holy Presence we call God among us.

Pentecost moments can break in at any time. Be on the lookout for them. Embrace the fire of Holy Passion that is present when together we pick up the pieces of broken dreams. Let the love of peace and hope flow through you like spring flood waters. Gaze into the bright sun of promise that assures us of opportunity. And hold on to the possibility that we might be giddy in the light of God.

Thanks for listening this morning. Amen