

Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104:25-35, 37b
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13
John 20:19-23

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Pentecost
Year A

At “nine o’clock” on *this* Pentecost “morning”...

The sound of wind chimes swept through us and around us where we have gathered... and we sang the gentlest of prayerful invitations together: *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, “Come, Holy Spirit – Come with your glorious light, come from the four winds, O Spirit, come breath of God...come.” Will Pentecost happen today, for us? Do we even know what we’re asking?

The disciples didn’t. All they knew was that Jesus had told them to pray and wait together for God’s promise to come true, for God’s Spirit to *clothe them with power*. Whatever it was they were expecting, Luke makes it clear that not one of them ever imagined what could happen or what did happen.

First, it swept among them - *they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*

Then, it burst open the bounds of the house and the hearts of everyone within breathing distance - *And at this sound a crowd from every nation under heaven gathered there, bewildered, because each one understood them speaking in the native language of each....* They kept asking, *How is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?* And that was when Peter remembered the words of the prophet Joel – *The day will come when I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: men, women, slave, free, sons, daughters...Everyone shall be saved.*

In a few moments, the sound of the Spirit’s wind will chime through us again. The question is: Will we recognize its power - here where we have *gathered at nine o’clock in the morning?* We do have some clues in the scripture to help prime the pump for us:

- *Jesus breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit...* Do you remember a time when you sensed a new beginning, a second wind blowing through your life, opening a way that had seemed closed, firing your hope and imagination anew? Maybe finding yourself with just the language you need for the way back into relationship...
- *the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear ... Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."* Or have you ever been locked in a stifled, hopeless meeting - maybe with family or at work or in a community project – where everyone was stuck and intractable; when suddenly a fresh wind seemed to sweep through minds and hearts in the room, clearing heads and re-arranging all the ideas that had seemed immovable?
- *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability...* Has there ever been a time when you found yourself given words to communicate you *knew* you do not have ordinarily, a tongue to speak of things you had never shared before.... Like the disciples on that nine-o’clock morning, we may not even know what we are saying at those times - the language is so strange and new to us - but for those who hear, the meaning is full of healing...
- Are there times when you have offered forgiveness without ever thinking you intended to? It makes all the difference, Jesus says: *If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven ...; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.* That is the real power we have to hurt or to heal. *Real* relationship is defined by forgiveness. That is what true communion is. That is the communion of saints; it is a unity that does not quench diversity.
- Or when have had an experience of not being alone – in the midst of what seemed like terrible isolation? We have an advocate, which is our brother and our God, connecting us inseparably with all God’s family

• Or have you found yourself reaching out to someone you had fully intended to pass by, or taking risks you did not know you could, or acting boldly when your faith most unexpectedly told you to act...*As the Father has sent me*, Jesus said, *so I send you.*"

I invite you to practice Pentecost this morning together, to practice feeling the wind of the Spirit among us in this place. When you hear the sound of the wind chimes, how about practicing a new language for Episcopalians at worship? *The Spirit will give you the ability*, I promise. Now that we've heard some clues and reminders, will you turn to your neighbor for a couple of minutes, and share something the Spirit has done or is doing in your life.... The babble will be music to all our ears, I believe... Remember *When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound like the rush of wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak as the Spirit gave them ability.* [CHIMES]

Just as at Creation and the Incarnation, Pentecost is also God giving God's own self life in *our* skin, our bodies, our minds... As we all breathe the breath that is God, we are all filled with the same life – in truth, we ARE one, one life from the beginning of creation – the life of God, in fact... We are filled with love.

And when that happens, it is as it was on that first nine-o'clock morning, and on the very first morning of all, perhaps. All that we thought was separate from us - or split apart one from another - is re-joined into one, *as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be.*

We know the reality that we are all one in God, indivisible, because we know the terrible stress we experience when we act as if we were not all one. No wonder it hurts us so much when we try not to love, when we try to suffocate it, rather than to breathe LIFE into us and out from us. You and I are filled with love with every breath we take.

Of course those disciples would have felt as if the roof would catch fire and blow off that day: the glory they were beginning to understand - the joy and power and healing - God so loving, so bright, so healing, so vast. It had to spill over, pour over everyone in their path in the languages of every need there is, which is all one need: the need to remember again that we are one and have everything in common: that is, GOD...

Jesus said to them again, Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. You will have all the power you can ever need – wind, fire, the breath of God. That is how the Father sent me. That is how I send you – with wind and fire and life itself to breathe in and breathe out..... It will be the very same wind that brooded over the waters of creation and returned life to the valley of dry bones. It will be the whirlwind that was the voice of God for Job. And the fire will be the same fire that powered Ezekiel's heavenly chariot, that led Israel's way out of slavery, through the wilderness, to the promised land.... All one fire, all one breath, **all one God for us.**

Breathe in. Say thank you. Exhale, and set the world on fire with the life of God.