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Holy Comforter
Richmond, VA
May 20, 2018: The Day of Pentecost

- Readings: [Acts 2:1-21](#)
- [Romans 8:22-27](#)
- [John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15](#)
- [Psalm 104:25-35, 37](#)

The Power of the Spirit

The Spirit breaks everything open, shakes us up,
and leads us into the future.

On that first Pentecost – those who had been
waiting for something waited no longer.

Jesus had told them to wait; he was going from them
but the Spirit would come to them.

Death, resurrection, ascension, and then the
Spirit comes.

The Spirit has always been – we will talk more about
that next week on Trinity Sunday—but in the
context of those amazing days following Easter – the Spirit came with
great power,
to break everything open,
to shake them up,
and lead those
first friends of Jesus and others
into the future.

The Pentecost account is a reversal of the Tower
of Babel. ---when all were confused by different
languages...when understanding was gone and
division was said to have come into the human
experience...a story to explain why different
languages existed and why people were
divided.

The story of that first Pentecost is a story of
connection; it is a story about the future...
a future that we are still living into...
a future when all will be one
and know ourselves to be...
when the reign of God will be
seen and known and lived by all.

The Spirit brings people together, be that
a community or a couple...connection
made...divisions overcome...and unity
created.

There was a wedding yesterday...I think you
might have heard about it.

The Spirit brought Harry and Meghan
together through love,
and our presiding bishop
Michael Curry had a
few things to say about love.

He told us and the world that
“Someone once said that Jesus began the most
revolutionary movement in all of human history.
A movement grounded in the unconditional love of
God for the world.
And a movement mandating people
to live that love.

And in so doing, to change not only their lives,
but the very life of the world itself.
I’m talking about some power.
Real power.
Power to change the world.”

He went on to say that love is like fire...has the power to fuel so much that is good.

God’s love was poured out on Pentecost...the Spirit
was known through the transformation of the
people gathered and the fire that was seen
on each of them...flames of fire.

They spoke in languages that they did not know so
that others could understand what they
said...connections made, divisions
overcome.

But such power from God to create unity was not
understood by all, they asked, “what does this
mean?”

And some said, “they are filled with wine.”

But Peter said, no, no, it’s only 9am in the morning,
they are not drunk but it is as the prophet Joel

spoke,
“In these last days it will be, God declares, that I will
pour out my Spirit upon all flesh...and people
will prophesy, and see visions, and dream
dreams.

And not just any prophesy or vision or dream...but ones
that tell of God...of the Power of the Spirit...of
the power of Love.

We are Pentecost People... we are about the
ways of God and open to the Spirit...open to be
guided by the Spirit.

Our church, Holy Comforter, is the Episcopal Church
in Richmond named for the Holy Spirit...and we,
you, and those who have gone before us,
have lived into our name and we seek to
live into our name more and more.

As Pentecost people, we embrace diversity of all
kinds...we value each person as a gift from
God; we see each other as beautiful
creations of God who show us
something of
God in our world...and in our diversity, we
see the face of God.

It is not an accident that we are together in this
church...at this time and in this place...we are
here, together, for a reason, for many reasons.

You, every one of you, you are an essential part of
the Church of the Holy Comforter...without you
and the gifts you bring, we cannot be the
faith community God calls us to be.

So listen for the Spirit, notice the nudge of the Spirit,
to share yourself, your gifts so that the love of
God can be known in our world through our
church...this is the love that changes
the world.

It is not just people who speak different languages
who need the Spirit to help bring them together
of course.

We can all speak the same language and still not
hear or understand each other.

We even have that phrase, “it is like he was speaking a different language.”

When we are speaking the language of love, not
everyone will understand or want to understand
us...but we must keep on speaking as the
Spirit guides.

There have always been such people who spoke in
ways that most could not understand...led by
the Spirit but ahead of their time.

People who said and say all are equal, men and
women, black and white, all races, all religions,
all sexual orientations and gender identities...
all are to be embraced, as all are God’s
children and therefore our siblings.

All deserve food, shelter, medicine, education, safe places to live, equal
opportunities...to be the people God calls them to be...we
help with that being the church of the
Holy Comforter.

I’m guessing that it was very Spirit-led, and Spirit-
filled, when the people of HoCo decided to offer
space for the first offices or ROSMY, which is
now called Side by Side...so long ago.

This is the organization that supports youth who are
LGBT or questioning.

I wonder what that was like.

Sometimes the Spirit leads us in ways that
seem easy and other times challenging.

Being led by the Spirit but ahead of our time is
usually not easy.

Jesus told his friends, “I still have many things to say
to you, but you can’t bear them now.

When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into
all the truth...”

We have seen the Spirit guide people into truth, new
understanding...we have seen it in history and
in our own lives.

The Spirit breaks everything open, shakes us up,
and leads us into the future.

The Spirit of Truth continues to lead us into all
truth...the Spirit is always with us, helping us to
be the people, the community, the world

God dreams for us to be.

And so we pray, Come Holy Spirit, set us on fire with
passion to be your people in our world,
transform us through your love so that we
may be your Pentecost people, people
who seek unity, share love, speak
truth, and listen with humility. Amen.