

Day of Pentecost

Whitsunday
Year C
RCL

- [Acts 2:1-21](#)
- [Romans 8:14-17](#)
- [John 14:8-17, \(25-27\)](#)
- [Psalm 104:25-35, 37](#)

It wasn't supposed to rain that night. But nature had another plan in store for us. After the beautiful drive through the Badlands, complete with bison sightings, we pitched our tent at a large communal site. After participating in a ranger program and eating dinner, one by one people crawled into their tents and the dark of the night covered us all. A few hours after we fell asleep, I awoke, startled by one of the most frightening things I have ever heard. The wind viciously blew through the flat, unprotected space. The thunder clapped and the lightning lit up the sky. The valley we were in magnified everything beyond normal sound levels. I told myself it was the wind and tried to fall back asleep. But the wind increased violently, and it sounded like a train barreling down its tracks. At that moment, I thought we were going to die. I convinced Alan of this and we moved into the

Jeep. For the next few hours, we watched others slowly do the same as they also sought safety from the wild storm.

Listening to the first Pentecost brought me back to that paralyzing camping moment. Gathered together fifty days after the Passover, the disciples and those in the city of Jerusalem were celebrating the Jewish Feast of Weeks marking the wheat harvest and celebrating the gift of the Torah from God. All of a sudden, the sound of a violent rush of wind came upon the disciples. The great sound filled the house where they were staying, unable to move from whatever may be happening. It was not the sound of a gentle, light, spring breeze rustling through the newly budded spring trees. This was something different, something powerful, all encompassing. This movement of God's Spirit came in bold, surprising, and from what I think all of us can imagine: an absolutely terrifying way. As so often happens in our lives, when God suddenly appears, the day that began would dramatically change and end quite differently than what we could ever have been expected.

After the resurrection, Jesus told his disciples, he would be leaving for good, returning to the Father, but he would not leave them alone. No, they would be given something to stay with them, to comfort them, to advocate for them. In the

midst of a storm, there would be help. In my moment of terror from the wind, I didn't feel peace until the new light of dawn came, knowing we survived it. But for the disciples, quite the opposite happened. The great sound of the power of God covered them, and instead of being terrified, they began to share the good things that God had done in their lives. And they didn't just share that with one another, but they began to speak in many different languages, languages understood by each individual as their mother tongue. People were truly amazed and perplexed about what was springing forth from chaos.

The disciples acted in bold and courageous ways out of chaos, out of the noise that surrounded them. From the unexpected they shared good news. That is not to be understated. What happened that day began a world-wide movement- A day where we can trace back our own moment as the whole world was welcomed and accepted into the kingdom of God. The Spirit didn't just fall upon the disciples, but the Spirit moved through them to reach to the ends of the earth.

Pentecost is a day where we revisit our roots. Go back to the beginning, back to the basics of our faith. This day marked how the Spirit indwells with each and every one of us- covers us all. We go back today, to the beginning of the formation of the church. And sometimes, you have to go back to your roots to

move forward. That is precisely what we're going to do this summer of Mother Elizabeth Sabbatical- this season of rest and renewal will be highlighted by opportunities to reconnect with that life giving, empowering Spirit within each one us. This summer, we are all invited to invoke the Spirit of God in deeper and maybe even new ways. It will be a good reminder to us all that God always dwells in us, but sometimes, when our lives are filled with great noise, we just can't hear it.

Today, in the 11 am service, Amelia will be baptized in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Like hearing the story of Pentecost, baptism is one of our core basics, principles of our faith. In the rite of Holy Baptism, the candidates or the Godparents, will be asked if they promise to follow and obey Jesus Christ. The word obey comes from the Latin word to hear. When we promise to obey, we promise to give ear to Jesus. So the call for us on this day that the Holy Spirit was sent is for us to give ear to the holy, first and foremost. Sometimes in a new season, there is this feeling of Holy Anxiety. What will this new season for our community look like? What will it look like to truly give ear, to take a step back and step into the holy? To strip away any distractions and just be. This season of Pentecost, this season of Sabbatical, is the time to deepen

our grounded-ness in the Spirit, to be refreshed by the cool waters of baptism.

From the chaos that is within and without, draw on the Holy Spirit to reclaim it.

We are often said to be an introverted congregation, one that prays regularly and finds sanctuary in the city in this place, so the invitation to do more reflection might be odd. But introversion aside, we are a very busy parish- most of us involved in numerous ministries and programs. And that is just here and not in the rest of our lives.

From this day, I invite you to notice and observe what is rushing through you. Is the Spirit awakening something within you? We must first give ear to the Holy Spirit before we move to do the outward work of the Spirit. The wind of the Holy Spirit is rushing through this place. Let it be in you, move through you to draw you back into the holy. Strip away, blow away any noise or fear of what may come. Because the disciples gave ear to the Holy, they were able to share it with the world which transformed everyone it touched. The Spirit is there to guide us, to show us the way and to be our counselor in the midst of the Holy. In hearing the Spirit's call, even when it's unnerving, we find God was already there in the first place.