

June 4, 2017 • Pentecost • Confirmation • Baptism • Holy Communion



“This is a Day of New Beginnings”

Homily by Rev. Patricia Farris

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven 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.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ‘In the last days it will be, 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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

Good morning, church! Pentecost is the day the church is born. Following the Resurrection and the Ascension of Christ, God sends the Holy Spirit to infuse us with new life, just as had been promised, and to create the church, now entrusted with God’s ministry and mission, the Body of Christ in and for the world.

The church is created! God has gathered us all together and made us into a new people. We who were scattered, we who were far off. We who have come from many places and endured many things. We who have been tempted, sometimes, to give up hope. We who have wondered if we really belong, and we who have experienced the assurance of belonging.

God has commanded the Holy Spirit to dwell in us and among us that we might be a holy people, the body of Christ in the world, for the world. God has emboldened us with wind and fire to be his people on this earth. God has breathed life into us, generation after generation.

“In the last days it will be, 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.”

When you think about it, it is truly awesome. After all, we might think we’re just ordinary people--and we are. But by the grace of God, we’re also so much more! We are God’s inspirited children. We are heirs of the Gospel. We are products of God’s everlasting love. We are those in whom God has entrusted the most important news the world has ever known... that in Christ Jesus there is life abundant for all God’s children and justice for the least and the outcast and that God’s love endures from generation to generation.

Today the church is born again. Today we baptize Baby Luke and confirm new members of the family-- Brooklyn, Andrew, John, Emma, Annika, Ethan, Aidan, Conner, Emily, Natalia, and Gwen. And there’s enough Spirit for each and every one of them, and many, many more to come. We’re all fed from the table of the feast of life and we find new strength for the journey. Strength for whatever we’re facing at this moment in our lives. Strength to endure. Strength to overcome. Strength to fly high and soar in the freedom and joy and power of God’s love.

God’s people continue forward, generation after generation.

God has given us an incredible gift and with it comes with an awesome responsibility. God needs us to be the church. Needs each of us. All of us. Today Baby Luke’s parents say “Yes” to God on his behalf. Today our confirmands say “Yes” to God, each in their own right. And as they do, it is incumbent upon each of us here today to examine our own hearts, to take measure of our faithfulness, and to ask God to give us a new measure of energy and dedication to the Kingdom. God is faithful, and we are able.

Receive the power, church, the wind and the fire of the Holy Spirit. Welcome the Spirit: Advocate, Comforter, Guide, Teacher and Presence. Receive the Spirit’s power and abiding presence today. Make a new commitment to Christ and his church. Let us be the people God is calling us and empowering us to be. Amen.

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