

Pentecost

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15

May 23, 2021

Grace and peace be with you from God our Father and our risen Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

This greeting, of course, comes to us via the Holy Spirit, who we celebrate today.

Hooray!

Happy Pentecost! And, Happy Birthday to the Church!

Today we celebrate that after Jesus returned to heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to be with us so that God's truth could continue to be known in the world and grow across the entire globe. This good news isn't just for a few, but everyone and everything!

With the gift of the Holy Spirit, the Church was born and today the Church is 1,989 years old. 1,989. Wow! That's kind of hard to fathom, isn't it? That's a really long time! But, here we are, continuing Jesus' work, proclaiming God's love to all of creation, now shared with the world through Face Book Live and Zoom as well.

I wonder what Peter and the other Apostles would think about that. I'm guessing they'd be pretty impressed at how nothing can inhibit the Holy Spirit, not even a pandemic. And the Holy Spirit is actually using the pandemic to spread the good news of God's love in the latest forms of communication.

The Apostles spoke the good news to everyone they met, even in languages foreign to them on Pentecost. Paul wrote letters in Koine Greek on Papyrus, which was the most common language in the Mediterranean at that time. Jerome used Latin in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century so that the entire newly Christianized Roman Empire could access the Bible. Luther used the printing press and translated the Bible into German for the people in his area, and he also taught them how to read it. And after, that the Bible got translated into every language it encountered.

The good news has been shared by voices, by writing, by print, by radio, by TV, and now by the internet. Nothing can keep the good news from being dispersed. That's the Holy Spirit at work.

But, that's not the only way the Spirit works. The Spirit also works through the languages of our interests, hobbies, careers, and relationships – through dance, art, football, photography, skiing, teaching, medicine, family, and friends.

The good news of God's love is so great, that the Holy Spirit uses everything we've got in order to share it with the entire world.

Throughout Easter, the Paschal candle has been lit. It represents the resurrection. It was lit at Easter Vigil and today that light is passed onto us. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, and now that light has been passed on to us so that each of us can share God's love wherever we go.

We take Christ's light, now our light, out into the world. It was given to us in baptism and is the Holy Spirit living in us. We take it out into our neighborhoods, schools, offices, homes, and everywhere else we go.

This is the candle that was given to me at my baptism. Tomorrow is the anniversary of my baptism. When I was given this candle I was told, "Receive the light of Christ." And when I was confirmed I was reminded of Matthew 5:16 to "let my light so shine before others that they may see my good works and give glory God in heaven."

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. I'm going to let the Holy Spirit work in, with, and through me so that God's light can shine where I'm at and my little corner of the world will know what true love is. All it takes is an openness to let God work through us. God's light, God's love, will shine through our cracks if we let it.

True love is giving life to another. True love is forgiveness. True love is unconditional. True love is everlasting. True love can never be destroyed. True love is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, the light of the world. And he is sending us out into the world to shine his light everywhere we go.

The Paschal light – the light of resurrection - is now our light. It is given to us to shine in a world of darkness.

This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine. And it only need be a little light of mine, because it doesn't take much light to break the darkness. One small act of love can change everything.

For 50 days, we have watched the Paschal light glow, and during these last few weeks we have heard Jesus say that he will be leaving us, but not leaving us alone.

For 50 days, he has slowly been turning his ministry over to us. And today, on Pentecost, we remember that his light is now our light and he is sending us out into the world to continue sharing the good news of God's love in every language we have – spoken and otherwise.

And here is the coolest thing. We don't have to fix everything or anything really. We don't have to do it all. We need only be a witness to what is happening and call on the name of the Lord.

And when we call on the name of the Lord, God will guide us into the next best step – the next little step of love – the next step that is within our reach.

This little light of mine. It only glows so far. But linked together it covers the entire world.

Jesus knew one person couldn't bring God's love to the entire world, so he sent the Holy Spirit to be with each and every one of us so that where we are, God is there too – living in every language, culture, and race. There is absolutely nowhere the Holy Spirit won't go.

In baptism, you have been called to share God's love everywhere you go for the sake of the world. So, let Christ's light, your light, shine right where you are, because together a bunch of little lights really add up. Just imagine how bright 2.2 billion little lights are together, that's the current estimate of Christians in the World.

Together, our little lights aren't so little. Together they are the brightness of the Son and that light continues to grow every day.

Happy Birthday Church!

We are Christ's presence in the World for the sake of the World.

Thanks be to God. Amen.