

Rev. Timothy M. Crummitt  
 Pentecost - Year B  
 64th Week of Pandemic - Outdoor Worship  
 Ezekiel 37:1-14  
 Psalm 104:24-34, 35b  
 Acts 2:1-21  
 John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15  
 05/23/2021

### **Gospel**

The Holy Gospel according to St. John:

[Jesus said,] 26“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. 27You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. 16:4b“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.12“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

The Gospel of our Lord

### **Prayer**

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen.

**Pentecost!**

Good morning! For about a year now, I have been reading Frank Herbert's classic sci-fi series Dune. Any Dune fans here? What's interesting is that these books take place THOUSANDS of years in the future. Human beings have moved into space and occupy hundreds of different planets. Even the stories that take place in the books themselves span 4,000 years. I am currently halfway through Chapterhouse: Dune, which was the last book of the main series that Herbert wrote. For those of you who have been to my house know that I'm not usually a sci-fi fan. Most of my book tastes are fantasy. (And you better believe there is a difference!) Now, I know the Dune books are fiction, but what I find so fascinating is what specifically about society will stick around? As the human race moves from planet to planet, from millennium to millennium, what will still be hallmarks of humanity? A Van Gogh painting hangs in a leader's office, but nobody knows what a piano is anymore. What changes, and what makes the cut?

It's a good question for us to ask ourselves here on Pentecost. If and when the human race takes to the stars, what will the church look like? My God, can you imagine tuning in on a Sunday morning to watch a sermon from some distant planet?! Or, say we find out how to travel faster than light, would the future pastor have parishioners showing up late? "I'm sorry pastor, I would have made it here on time but the FTL drive is acting up again." "It's OK!" the pastor says, "stop by Jeff's place in the Ganymede System, they're a great mechanic!"

Here on Pentecost we ask ourselves one important question: Where is God calling the church? But first, a little background. Pentecost is often considered the Church's birthday. It happens 50 days after the Resurrection of our Lord. It signals the end of the Easter season. For most Protestant denominations, it is one of two Sundays, along with Reformation day, throughout the year that we mark with the color red. On Pentecost we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, given to us after the Ascension by God to guide the Church. The Holy Spirit is often seen in art as a dove descending.

It's one strange story, Pentecost. The disciples have been hanging out in Jerusalem, doing what Jesus had told them to do. Our Christian festival has its roots in what would become the Jewish feast of Weeks. Most of the Jewish and Christian holidays are rooted (no pun intended) in agricultural

celebrations, and this one was no different. For the Jewish people it commemorated the giving of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai.<sup>1</sup> We have a tradition of stealing other people's holidays and making them our own. As someone online once said, "you better behave, or we'll take Toyotathon too."

But what this means is that the disciples are still in Jerusalem during a major Jewish festival, one of three that all good Jews were expected to attend. And since the Diaspora in 587 bce, this means that Jews from all over the known world would be in the Holy City. So, when the events of Acts 2 take place, the whole town was packed.

Which brings us to the story at hand. The disciples "*were all together in one place.*"<sup>2</sup> *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.*<sup>3</sup> *Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.*<sup>4</sup> *All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*"<sup>2</sup> Now when this happens the crowd is obviously a little shocked. It's here that we get one of my favorite biblical details. Because of their behavior some people just assume they're drunk. Peter's fantastic rebuttal isn't to deny any possibility of being drunk, but he instead points out that it's only 9am! It's too early in the day for them to be drunk! Peter then proclaims that things are going to change, that the Holy Spirit has called the Church towards something new.

Here is what I love about this story. The disciples start off inside. But when the Holy Spirit arrives they are DRIVEN into the streets. The Greek work for church is "*ekklesia*," and it literally means a people called out. How cool is that! As we have learned this past year, the church isn't some building, it's wherever God is at work! Calling us out of our comfort zones into the streets and places all around us!

Another important lesson that the church continues to be reminded is that our differences are what makes us so strong. When the disciples start to speak, each person hears it in their own language. This isn't what we

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/day-of-pentecost-2/commentary-on-acts-21-21-14>

<sup>2</sup> Acts 2:1b-4 NRSV

would call tongues, but something totally different. And in that moment God speaks to all, embracing our differences and celebrating them!

I leave you with a quote from Cláudio Carvalhaes, a professor of worship at Union Theological Seminary. *“Like the wind, the Spirit moves us in different ways, sending us to other places and nesting us into other ground. To experience Pentecost it is necessary to search for change and to allow ourselves to be changed. Changes mean new forms of consciousness, awareness, commitments, and agency. What is it in your life that needs to be changed? Like seeds, we must learn to let go and die so we can sprout into life! Be uprooted from ways of thinking and believing and be taken by the Spirit, flowing with God’s grace to more expansive and necessary ways of living our faith in our world today.”*<sup>3</sup> So... Where are the winds of the Holy Spirit blowing you? Amen.

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<sup>3</sup><https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/day-of-pentecost-2/commentary-on-john-1526-27-164b-15>