

In the Name of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.



## I. Pentecost

### A. Welcome to the Feast of Pentecost!

1. As you may know, the Feast of Pentecost is actually of Jewish origins.

2. In the Old Testament tradition, Pentecost, was also known as the Feast of Weeks – 7 weeks of 7 days = a week of Weeks – or a Feast of Weeks.

3. Pentecost was actually a Spring Agricultural celebration in *thanksgiving* for God's bounty of the first grain harvest. (sound familiar?)

4. But by Jesus' time, the festival was increasingly observed as a commemoration of God giving the Torah – the Law – to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai.

5. Now, Pentecost is actually the Greek word for fiftieth, as the first Spring crops were harvested fifty days after planting.

6. Tradition also held that fifty days passed between the first PASSOVER in Egypt and the arrival at Mt Sinai.

7. So it was on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Passover, that the Jewish people would celebrate the giving of the Law – and this is what the people had come to Jerusalem to celebrate.

B. While gathered there, the Disciples experience an outpouring of the Holy Spirit – described in our reading from Acts – as a rush of wind and feeling like tongues of fire.



1. As they were filled with the Holy Spirit, the disciples burst into words of praise, and spoke in languages they did not know.

2. Now, this was not unintelligible babble - for we are told that the languages the Disciples spoke were recognized with amazement by those in the crowd from many nations – as they heard the Disciples tell of “God’s deeds of power.”

3. And so the Feast of Pentecost has come to have a new meaning as the beginning of the Church – the Body of Christ – sharing the Good News of God in Christ from that time until this very day.

## II. God Within Us

A. One of the reasons that I like to use the Creed from the Iona Community from time to time is it’s imagery of the Holy Spirit as “God within us.”

1. The Holy Spirit is within US – each and every one of us – we receive the Holy Spirit at our Baptism – and it remains with us as our connection to God

2. I once read that there is theme running throughout the Gospel of John – the Gospel we have been reading this Eastertide – and we especially hear this theme in our reading today.

3. This theme goes something like this: “As long as the Incarnate Son is on earth, it is through him that the Holy Spirit acts. In returning to the Father, Jesus sends an Advocate – the Holy Spirit – who will make the unseen presence of the Father and the Son known in the lives of the Disciples.”

4. So, while Jesus is on earth, the Holy Spirit operates through him.

5. But once Jesus returns to the Father – He sends the Holy Spirit into the hearts and lives of his followers that it may operate through US.

- In other words, “God WITHIN us.”

## B. And what are we to do with this “God WITHIN us?”

1. In our Gospel reading, Jesus says that just as the Father has been made known by Jesus, Jesus will send the Holy Spirit to his Disciples to help them in making God known.

2. Jesus says, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth...”

3. So, just as Jesus has come to share the news of God’s love to the world – so now his followers are to share God’s love – and that means all of us.

4. And to help us, and guide us, and empower us, God has given each of us the Holy Spirit – God WITHIN us.

5. And that, my friends, is the Good News of Pentecost.

## III. Living into the World

A. Lutheran Preacher and Blogger, **David Lose**, points out that:

1. *“... absent the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Disciples could go back to their previous careers as fishermen.*

2. *“I can almost hear James and John explaining, ‘Sure, it was a wild and crazy three-year ride, and that Jesus sure was a heck of a guy, but maybe we needed to get that out of our system before we could settle down and take on Dad’s business.’*

3. *“Once the Spirit comes, Lose says, that return to normalcy is no longer an option.*

4. *“They will now be propelled throughout the ancient world to herald the unlikely message that GOD HAS REDEEMED THE WORLD through an itinerant preacher from the backwaters of Palestine who was executed for treason and blasphemy.*

6. He concludes, *“The Holy Spirit, take note, doesn’t solve the Disciples problems, it creates them.”* (Synthesis May 20, 2018)

B. And what was true for the Disciples then – is true for US now, as WE are called to serve as witnesses to Jesus in our post-COVID world.

1. We face those same temptations as the Disciples did .”– of longing to RETURN TO NORMAL to go back to how things USED to be.

2. But that is not what we are called to do – PENTECOST calls us to look forward – to move ahead – not to look backward in longing for how things were – we are to focus on how things are, and how we can make them better.

3. Just as the Disciples were propelled into the streets to share the Good News of God in Christ so we too are called to bring this Good News to those who “know not or love not the Lord Jesus.”

4. We are called to bring the Good News of the love of God to the “*Parthians, Medes, and Elamites*” of our own day.

C. In this time of Pentecost, we are called to explore just what St. Columba’s is called to do in this Post-COVID time.

1. We have been through a lot this past year plus, and it would be so comfortable just to slide back into doing what we did before – but we can’t; the world has changed – WE have changed – and we must be at work IN the world.

2. How do we reach out to those who have spent the last year plus in isolation?

- Who are those who are hurting – who need our helping hand, who need to be reminded that God loves them?

3. How do we answer the call of GOD WITHIN US?

4. Our Food Ministry has been a shining example in the dark days of COVID as people stepped up to help keep Project Hope going but we started a second program as well.

5. Through these two programs we are reaching out to over 30 individuals and families each week, to help feed their physical hunger, but what of the SPIRITUAL HUNGER of those in our midst.

6. The first step we need to take is to **build back** our community so that we have a supportive foundation from which to move ahead.

7. As society begins to open up, and we are able to begin to go places and do things we must follow up and reach out to those in our St. Columba's family who have had to stay home for so long.

8. And we need to support our outside groups – AA, Al-anon, Scouts and the rest – that they can help their members in much the same way.

9. Then as we turn our attention to our community and the people we know and love, we can once again invite them to join us here to explore their relationship with God and how GOD WITHIN THEM is calling them to reach out in love.

10. We must look for new ways to reach out in love to combat the pervasive spirit of anger and fear that has taken hold of our society – and show those we come into contact with that this is not the way – God's love is the way – and it is our job to spread it.

11. This Pentecost we have a choice: we can stay tucked up in our nostalgic feelings of “then” trying to recreate a time that really never was;  
- or we can work to build the future – God's future – the future that GOD WITHIN US is calling us to build – the choice is up to us.

## Conclusion

In the beginning of creation, God's breath – God's *ruach* hovered over the chaos to create the heavens and the earth.

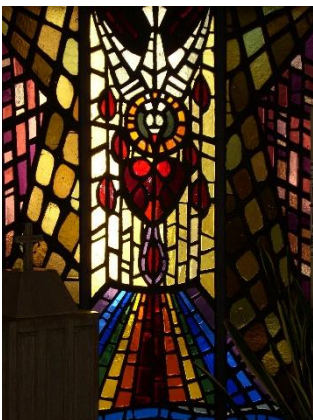
As God created human kind, God blew God's breath – God's *ruach* into its nostrils.

On the Feast of Pentecost, as the Disciples were gathered together, God's breath – God's *ruach* – filled the room and **empowered** them to share the news of God's love for us in Jesus.

And at our Baptism, God's breath, God's *ruach*, filled our hearts and lives – becoming God WITHIN us – so that every breath WE take, in a sense becomes the breath of God.

And that God WITHIN us, continues – waiting to be tapped again and again – ready to guide us and **empower** US as we strive to be God's people in this new time and place – bringing the Good News of God's love to those we meet – today and every day.

Let us Pray – In the words of Hymn 511



*Holy Spirit, ever living as the Church's very life;*

*Holy Spirit, ever striving through her in a ceaseless  
strife;*

*Holy Spirit, ever forming in the Church the mind of Christ;*

*Thee we praise with endless worship for they fruits  
and gifts unpriced.*

*Holy Spirit, ever working through the Church's ministry;*

*Quickening, strengthening, and absolving, setting captive sinners free;*

*Holy Spirit, ever binding age to age, and soul to soul,*

*In a fellowship unending, thee we worship and extol. AMEN.*