



# FROM THE PASTOR

*"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts 2:8 NRSV)*

Dear Friends,

On June 4th we will be celebrating The Feast of Pentecost. Each year the lessons are similar, and we hear of the unique event of the Holy Spirit descending upon those disciples who were gathered together. When we read the lesson from Acts (Acts 2:1-21), we get some rather strange pictures in our minds, "tongues of fire", "mighty winds", and they "began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance". Incredibly the disciples could be understood by the various nations that were represented there. For all of that the only concrete comment we hear from those observing the phenomena is that the disciples are drunk!

Yet the result of this event is not chaos or "drunkenness", but a simple, yet powerful witness to the good news of Jesus Christ causing three thousand people to become Christians. The Holy Spirit, for all of its' power and perhaps "strangeness" had one simple purpose, to bear forth witness to the Lord Jesus Christ thus drawing people to Christ in faith.

But the time past the book of Acts, the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church seems not to be emphasized. To be sure the Holy Spirit is part of the blessed Trinity, and there are some references to the Holy Spirit in various prayers. It just seems the Holy Spirit takes a "back seat" in the church's story.

Today in the church if you talk about the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the church you get two responses, one is the same lack of understanding that we have lived with over the centuries, or you get a lot of nervousness and visions of "over the top emotionalism" going through people's minds.

The Holy Spirit is essential to the church. We need the power of the Holy Spirit to bear witness to Jesus Christ. Here is what Luther said on the importance of the Holy Spirit from the Small Catechism:

I believe I cannot by my own understanding or effort believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord or come to Him. But the Holy Spirit has called me through the Gospel, enlightened me with his gifts and sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it united with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

It seems plain to me that you and I need the ministry of the Holy Spirit for the life of the church today . Let us pray for an outpouring of God's spirit to that end for Fairbanks Lutheran well as the wider church that might be constantly under the guidance and power of God's Holy Spirit.

Your brother in Christ,

John



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