

Homily  
The Day of Pentecost  
June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
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Readings: [ACTS 2:1-21](#); [PSALM 104:25-35, 37B](#); [ROMANS 8:14-17](#); [JOHN 14:8-17](#)

“Holy Spirit moments”. Those times when you feel the whisper – the “whoosh” – of something mystical, something more than what we see in this realm. I’m grateful for those moments – and I’ll share a more memorable one with you, on this feast of Pentecost, 50 days after Easter, as we recall the Holy Spirit “blowing into town”, as we recall Jesus’s promise to the disciples – and to us – that he would send an Advocate to be with us, always...

This particular Holy Spirit moment happened around a table. I was sitting talking to two people, and we were actually discussing the importance of conversation – of dialogue – when a man next to me leaned over and said “I’m sorry for interrupting, but I couldn’t help overhearing you talking about conversation. I’d like to tell you a way to get into conversation with someone. It’s a good way. Can I show you something?” I said, “Yes, of course...”

He took a small rectangle of paper and began to fold it. He said "You know, in life, you make your way along. Hopefully you feel God is with you."

He kept folding, and he turned the rectangle into an airplane.

He lifted it up and said "This is your life. You're flying along, and like I said, hopefully you feel God with you. Sometimes, though, in this life, you crash." He threw the paper airplane on the table. He picked it up again, and he tore it lengthwise. He said "Sometimes in life, when you crash, it's bad, and things fall apart. They break into pieces." He finished tearing the paper airplane, and he dropped the pieces on the table. "When your life breaks apart, you think, I guess God wasn't with me after all." He moved the pieces around on the table and he picked one of them up. He began to unfold it. He said "You know what, though? Even when your life is in pieces God is there." He finished unfolding the piece of paper. It was a cross. (This is when I felt that "whoosh" of the Holy Spirit!)

There's more though! He kept talking and he said, "Yes, God is always there with us, but that doesn't mean we're finished. You have to take those broken pieces of your life and sort through them. You have to look closely and when you do, you'll find the answer." He unfolded the rest of the pieces of paper that had fallen on

the table and began to move them around. They fit together, like a puzzle. And they spelled a word: LOVE. He looked at me, and he said “That’s the answer. Love is the answer.”

That conversation was at St. Luke’s Table, one of our Diocesan Community Ministries. I was sitting with two people who were not participants, and we were talking about how St. Luke’s Table, and the parish of St. Luke’s, and Somerset West Community Health Center might facilitate peaceful co-existence between different groups of people in the neighbourhood. The man who leaned over to me *was* a participant. In the midst of this “important” conversation we were having about the neighbourhood, this man was Jesus’s head and heart and hands. This man created an opportunity, in leaning over, in speaking – in interrupting a conversation to make way for another conversation – he made for the Holy Spirit to move. His name was Roland, and I’ll be forever grateful for his message: that God is with us in all things, that love is the answer to the brokenness in us, and in our world. I’ll be forever grateful to him for embodying Jesus, for embodying love, and for blessing me with that Holy Spirit moment.

We are celebrating Pentecost today. The arrival of the Holy Spirit. We heard about the Spirit – the Advocate – “blowing into town” in our reading from Acts. With the arrival of the Spirit, all those gathered were able to communicate with each other, freely, without barriers. They are astonished, bewildered, even. It’s unexpected. In our Gospel passage we heard Jesus say that there will be another Advocate to be with the disciples – to be with us – forever.

I am grateful for the experience we had of proclaiming the Gospel in many languages this morning. We also heard the story of the tower of Babel from Genesis this morning. There is a common interpretation – and a problematic one – that Pentecost is the antidote to Babel, making diversity – of race, language – a punishment. Diversity is a gift. Our reading in many languages is a reminder of that gift of diversity, created at Babel. God created diversity, and God’s people are scattered not as a response to disobedience, but so that we can spread the good news of God far and wide. When we stay in one place, when we make it about who is in and who is out, we make it about ourselves. Pentecost reminds us that it is about God’s mission. The wind and flame of the Spirit blows and burns to move us out of ourselves and into the world to join in God’s mission!

I included Bruce Cockburn's song "When the Spirit Walks in the Room" in this week's newsletter. This song reminds us that we are "...threads upon the loom, when the Spirit walks in the room...". We are threads – an endlessly diverse array of threads – and we are called, with the Spirit, to weave our lives into God's mission in the world – a mission of repair and love and restoration.

Our Gospel passage brings us the call from Jesus to "...keep my commandments" (John 14:15) When we hear the word "commandment" we might think of the "thou shalt nots" of the Ten Commandments, but that's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about the commands – the instructions – *Jesus* gave, the greatest of which was – paraphrasing of course – "Love God, love others...".

Jesus said to the disciples, and he says to us: do what I did on my life's journey. Follow my example. He said, I am going – I'm leaving this time-space world – but you have an Advocate – a Friend – with you, always. Feel that in all the ups and downs, you have God's Spirit with you. Know that God is with you, no matter what, and go and continue to do all the things that I did.

What are the things Jesus did? He saw the good in people even when their appearance, or life circumstances made them seem not so good. He let those around him know that they were loved. He stood up against injustices in this world, peacefully, non-violently. He helped those who found that their life was in pieces...

Breath. Wind. Fire. Movement ranging from gentle whispers or nudges to major disruptions. The Spirit moved on that first Pentecost, and the Spirit continues to move today and every day.

That Spirit is with us, abiding in us and moving between us when we gather together, when we communicate: whether that gathering and communicating is here in this sanctuary, around a table, or on the street. God's Spirit is there when we're flying high – when life is going smoothly – and that Spirit is there in the brokenness of life...

Feel the Spirit as we sing and pray this morning. Taste the Spirit in bread and wine. Make space for the Spirit when you speak to one another after the service. See each other as threads upon the loom, beautifully diverse, woven into

the wonder of this world, and into God's mission. Then, blow on out of here and be like Roland with his paper airplane and his commitment to conversation. Be like Roland and embody love. Be Jesus's head, heart and hands. Be willing to have an unexpected conversation. Let someone know that they are loved. Make space for the Spirit to move, in Jesus name. Amen.