

Green Hill Presbyterian Church
Come Holy Spirit
Thomas G. Speers, III
Pentecost—June 4, 2017
Kids Sunday

Lesson: Acts 2:1-21

Today is Pentecost Sunday, which really is the birthday of the church. The church was born on Pentecost. This is the story. The disciples were all together in one place. Jesus had told them to wait in Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high. They stayed in an upper room, perhaps the same room where they had celebrated Jesus' last supper. There they prayed; there they waited. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together. Suddenly there was a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the house. It felt to them as if they were on fire, but they weren't burning up. It was a good kind of fire; like the fire of the burning bush Moses saw. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages--the native languages of all the people round about. Thus the church was born.

Part of the story of Pentecost is that everyone is included. Kids will see visions. Old people will dream dreams. Everyone gets to hear a word from God in a way that they can understand, people from every nation and country. If I tell you that you are cherished in God's sight, as Isaiah proclaims, you can understand that, but some people here might not. But if I tell you that Jesus loves you and this I know for the Bible tells me so—that is something we all can understand. So Pentecost is about people hearing for themselves the word of God.

Pentecost is also about discovering that we are much stronger than we know. Those disciples were hiding away, and suddenly the Spirit got a hold of them and they were standing tall and full of energy, ready to tell people about God. If you ever feel like a weakling, as if you are too little or too old to make a difference in the world, let the Spirit get a hold of you. God is ready to use you! Don't think of yourself as a weakling because with God by your side, you are as strong as anybody.

And Pentecost is about scared people discovering new courage. You don't have to be scared. There is a wonderful book written by a woman named Olive Ann Burns called *Cold Sassy Tree* and in that book Grandpa Blakeslee talks with his grandson and says this: "What's important is that when the spirit a-Jesus Christ come down on them disciples later, they quit settin' round a-moanin' and a-tremblin', and got to work. They warn't scairt no more, and the words they spoke had fire in'm... [And] that same miracle is still a-happenin', right here in Cold Sassy, in July of nineteen aught-six. A crippled person or a invalid, or the meanest thief or the most despairin' misfit, why, if'n he can ketch ahold of the spirit of Jesus Christ, he can quit bein' scairt and be like rising up from the dead. Once his soul gits cured, no matter what his body's like, why, he can start a new life."

So Pentecost is about starting a new life. Everyone of us here can do it with the help of the Holy Spirit. We can become the people God wants us to be and maybe even let everyone know just how much God loves the whole wide world. Happy birthday to the church.