

The Best Translation App Ever!

[Text - Acts 2:1-21]

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On the day of Pentecost, “the disciples were all together in one place. Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability.” On that amazing day, each of Jesus’ followers boldly proclaim the Good News of Divine Love in ways and words that are new and - literally - *foreign* to them.

On this amazing day, you and I can also experience the Holy Spirit speaking to us - and leading us to speak to others - in fresh and exciting ways. We can hear the ancient words of Scripture come alive with new meaning, through the Spirit’s insight and inspiration. We can recognize the voice of our Still-Speaking God in the words and wisdom of contemporary authors, poets, prophets - even preachers! And perhaps most significantly, you and I can feel the Spirit’s Living, Loving Presence in and among this welcoming and inclusive Family of Faith.

Throughout our society and around the world, there seems to be an increasing number of forces and factions that are pulling people apart. Unfortunately, there are individuals and organizations that work very hard to foster discord and division among Christians, Muslims, and Jews; between Black and White, rich and poor, gay and straight. Fortunately, there is a Divine Remedy for such divisiveness: the Holy Spirit’s marvelous ability to make people *holy* and to make us *whole* - to remind us that we are *all* loved and cherished children of our One Divine Source. This is the central message and mission to which we as Brecksville United Church of Christ dedicate ourselves - a mission which is stated on the cover of every Sunday bulletin: “Loving, Serving, and Accepting *All* People with God’s Life-Changing Power!”

That *power*, is the power of the Holy Spirit - the same Spirit who calls us to this mission, and who inspires us to carry it faithfully forward.

On that 1st Century Pentecost, the sound and power of a mighty Wind and Spirit ‘fills the entire house where the believers are sitting’; and then that Divine Power pours out to the streets and into the world! On this 21st Century Pentecost, that same Divine Wind and Spirit continues to fill, inspire and empower “the *entire* house” and the entire world! The Holy Spirit’s intention is that *all* people - not just twelve disciples, not just long-winded preachers, but every child of the Holy One - experience and share that Divine Breath of Life and Love!

Those 1st Century believers also see “tongues as of fire, which...rest upon each of them. And *all* of them are filled with the Holy Spirit, and begin to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gives them the ability.” Admittedly, that would have been a really strange experience; yet the purpose of that experience is really quite simple. The intention of the Holy Spirit on *that* Pentecost, is to make sure that **everyone** be included; that no one miss-out on the Good News because of linguistic, cultural, or social differences. I believe that the Holy Spirit desires the same thing on *this* Pentecost: That no one be excluded. That we all remember that we are all members of the One Same Family. And that we put-forth a special effort to reach-out to those Family members who generally are pushed-aside because of their gender identity, social status, religious or cultural differences.

On Pentecost, those pyrotechnic tongues light a fire within Christ’s followers, igniting their passion and inspiring them to proclaim Divine Love and Grace in ways that are readily understood by all who gather. And that’s an extremely relevant point for you and me to remember today: that it’s not the multitudes who learn to speak the language of Christ’s followers. Instead, the Holy Spirit enables those followers to effectively communicate with all those around them. They’re surrounded by an eclectic, international assemblage; yet somehow they can communicate their message to everyone present. It’s as if the Holy Spirit is the best translation app ever known!

I think that the Pentecost Experience is the Holy Spirit's beautiful way of demonstrating that the Universal Language is a Divinely inspired language of passion and compassion, welcome and inclusion, graciousness and love. Because when people's hearts are filled with Divine Love, they will find a way to express and to make that Love known. We will remove the human-imposed barriers and obstacles that set us apart. We will joyfully recognize all those around us as our genuine sisters and brothers. We will find new and creative ways to translate and communicate, show-forth and live-out the Good News of Jesus Christ. And though, at times, our words may be inadequate, our acts of kindness and compassion, openness and love will certainly be understood!