

Pastoral Message – June 2022

Jesus said, "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." – John 14:25-27

Beloved Neighbors in Christ,

Grace and peace be with you, from God our Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the ever-flowing Holy Spirit. Amen. Welcome to the beautiful month of June. Can you believe we are nearly halfway through the year already – where did the time go? This month we welcome the time of Pentecost, the birth of the Church and invite God's Holy Spirit into our lives. We will celebrate the Day of Pentecost on Sunday, June 5th at St. John's in Bismarck Township at 8:30am and First Lutheran in Winthrop at 10:00am. Please wear some red for the Spirit on this day. All are invited to these faith communities commemorating the Spirit's descent on the Apostle's who were locked away in a safe place. Jesus' former disciples were in liminal, confusing, and scary time and place looking to figure out what to do next after Jesus was killed, rose from the dead, appeared to them several times, and ultimately ascended to the Father in heaven.

We rejoice in the Spirit from the familiar story from the chapter two of the Actos of the Apostles where appearances of fiery tongues appeared over their heads and they heard the Word of God in different languages, unfamiliar to them up until this point. They questioned what was occurring and were amazed of these events ultimately leading them to go out into the world and profess Christ crucified and the message of love and forgiveness he gave to all who believed. This is where the church began and here we are today, two millennia later praising and describing the same story again and again.

I also bring to you a similar story from the Gospel of John, found in the fourteenth chapter; here Jesus tells his beloved friends that he is leaving them – *going to die*. But he offers comfort and love reminding them that another will be in his place, and this Advocate called the Holy Spirit will help them in their future actions reminding them of all he has taught. As Jesus has showed them this thing called the Kingdom of God in his earthly ministry, the Holy Spirit will continue to fill them with Jesus' presence and guide the message. This began with their combined journey since our Lord had called them to walk alongside him. Jesus also shares with them his peace, given from God, for all of humanity to share in. This is a peace that God describes as harmonious and tranquil allowing us to share in our combined faith and love that comes from the Lord. This is the peace that passes all understanding and keeps us in the heart and mind of Jesus Christ our Lord.

I encourage you to let the Spirit of God into your hearts and welcome God's peace into your life. Be the one God has called you to be and may you continue to be blessed in the Lord.

Rev. Erik Karlson

Pastor, Neighbors in Christ Parish