

PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 20, 2018

**FOR THE DEDICATION
OF THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS**

**SERMON GIVEN BY
PASTOR SANDY KESSINGER**

We are on fire! On this Pentecost Sunday the flames of the Holy Spirit are upon us as we dedicate our stained glass windows and as we confirm Christopher, Morgan and Walker. It is an awesome day in the life of our church. On this day we contemplate how the Holy Spirit weaves its way through the intricacies of each window. And as we move from one window to the next we will conclude each section with: *Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.*

Creation: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep. Then God sent a wind to sweep over the face of the waters. God created the sun and the moon and the stars. God spoke and suddenly plants sprung from the ground. God spoke again and animals of all shapes and sizes came into being to live on the land or under the sea.

O Lord, you have set the earth on its foundations so that it shall never be shaken. You make springs of water gush forth in the valleys so they flow between the hills. You cause the grass to grow for the cows and plants for people to use to bring forth food from the earth. You gave us wine to gladden our hearts, oil to make our faces shine, and bread to strengthen us for the journey. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all.
Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

Bible: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. From Genesis through Revelation the Bible reveals to us the true nature of God and the relationship we have with our Creator. God made promises to his people that were binding and in return God expected his people to worship God alone and to be obedient to his laws.

God expects the same of us. We are like the rebellious people of the Old Testament who tested the limits of his grace and love. The old laws were written on stone tablets. The new laws are written on our hearts. Jesus taught us how to interpret and understand those laws.
Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

Life of Christ: We know that all of creation has been groaning in labor pains because of the sins of the people. But God did another amazing thing out of his unconditional love for us. He sent his Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to save and redeem us. In human form Jesus came into this world and in human form Jesus humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, death on the cross.

On Easter we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord. On this Easter we talked about being an Easter people in a Good Friday world. It is the faithfulness of God that completes the story. Jesus accomplished the will of God when he suffered on the cross and rose again.

Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

Sacraments: And from the empty tomb we are sent out to baptize in the name of the triune God. At every baptism we remember that our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. By water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. The waters of creation wash over us anew so we can go out to serve with love and compassion.

And at his table we remember the night in which he was betrayed. We remember how he took the bread and blessed it and offered us his body. We remember how he took the cup of wine and blessed it and offered us his blood. It is on this night that our Lord reminds us that our sins are forgiven and we are healed. *Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.*

Eternal Life: In baptism God has made us his own and assures us of his constant presence. And at the empty tomb God made it clear that death will not have the final word. His promises are beautifully envisioned for us in Revelation when Jesus said: I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.

To the thirsty God will give water from the spring of life. To those who walk in darkness God will light their path with his love. Even the leaves on the tree will be healing for the nations. All of creation will shine brightly because God (once more) will make all things new.

Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

Worship and Music: Until that time when Christ comes again we gather in our houses of worship to pray, to hear his word and to sing our songs of praise. We believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – one God in three persons. As Lutherans we maintain the tension of the cross with the glory of his resurrection. With our hands held in prayer we cling to the cross of Christ and with our voices we sing of all that God has done on our behalf.

Praise God in his sanctuary. Praise him with trumpet sound. Praise him with lute and harp. Praise him with tambourine and dance. Let everything that breathes praise the Lord.

Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

Community Outreach: Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common. They sold their assets and distributed the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, they spent a lot of time together in the temple. They broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts. They praised God and had the goodwill of all people foremost in their minds.

We go into our community equipped with the fruit of the Spirit. We are guided by the hand of the Good Shepherd who leads us on the right path. We go into McLean to feed his lambs. We go into Washington DC to tend to his sheep.

Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

Lutheran Heritage: Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Luther fought many demons in his life but with his Bible open and pen in hand he discovered the true nature of God through Christ. As Lutherans we do not presume to have all the answers but we, like Luther, will continue to read the Bible as the living Word.

By the law of faith we are justified by his grace. Our works of service are done out of thanksgiving for his love. *Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.*

Education: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

From our Lutheran heritage we understand that the work of the church belongs to the priesthood of all believers. We come here to worship and to study the Living Word. We equip others to teach and we encourage parents to open their Bibles and help our young people understand who God is in their lives. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.

Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him.

World Outreach: I am the true vine and my Father is the true vine-grower. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. I have appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.

When God created the world he made us stewards of his creation. We are now equipped for every good work. When we leave this place we are to follow the path of the Holy Spirit. What do we see? What do we hear? Who do we touch? When we open our hands to those in need they will be filled with good things. When we follow the path of the Spirit then the faces of others will be renewed. *Let us bless the Lord. Let us sing our praises to him. Amen! Alleluia!*