



Calvary Presbyterian Church  
Sunday, May 28, 2023  
PENTECOST SUNDAY

PAINTING WITH THE COLORS OF THE HOLY WIND  
Reflections on Acts 2:1-21

Dedicated to Natalie

EVE: *"Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and today -- all without seeing him. It is a long time to be alone; still, it is better to be alone than unwelcome. I had to have company -- I was made for it, I think -- so I made friends with the animals."*

ADAM: *"Perhaps I ought to remember that she is very young, a mere girl and make allowances. She is all interest, eagerness, vivacity, the world is to her a charm, a wonder, a mystery, a joy; she can't speak for delight when she finds a new flower, she must pet it and caress it and smell it and talk to it, and pour out endearing names upon it. And she is color-mad: brown rocks, yellow sand, gray moss, green foliage, blue sky; the pearl of the dawn, the purple shadows on the mountains, the golden islands floating in crimson seas at sunset, the pallid moon sailing through the shredded cloud-rack, the star-jewels glittering in the wastes of space -- none of them is of any practical value, so far as I can see, but because they have color and majesty, that is enough for her, and she loses her mind over them. If she could quiet down and keep still a couple of minutes at a time, it would be a reposeful spectacle. In that cases I think I could enjoy looking at her; indeed I am sure I could, for I am coming to realize that she is a quite remarkably comely creature -- lithe, slender, trim, rounded, shapely, nimble, graceful; and once when she was standing marble-white and sun-drenched on a boulder, with her young head tilted back and her hand shading her eyes, watching the*

*flight of a bird in the sky, I recognized that she was beautiful.” — Mark Twain, [The Diaries of Adam and Eve](#)*

I share these whimsical musings of Mark Twain today to set the stage for our Scripture reading, because the story of Pentecost is a creation story—or a recreation story. Yet, another sacred story of God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, making all things new. And creation stories are stories about God’s holy wind... On this Pentecost Sunday, I want us to take a moment to appreciate the air we breathe, the movement of the wind around us, and the way that the Spirit of Christ has been moving over the waters, the earth, and each and every one of us...since before Adam and Eve took their first breath or spoke their first words... READ ACTS 2:1-21

The ancient stories tell us that God spoke the world into existence...and when I hear anyone say: there is no God, I see their lips move and hear the vibrations of their words and conclude that their breath and ability to say anything is undeniable evidence that they are wrong. In Acts 2:1-21, it is undeniable that the Spirit is doing a new thing...again—through the speaking of every language and the understanding of every person and the dilated receptivity of every heart and mind and soul.

Breathing and movement is not necessarily the Spirit of God themselves (but they are gifts from God, evidence of the immediate proximity of God’s very presence). Air and wind are not necessarily the Spirit of God (but their life-giving, ever-present, and mysterious reality helps us to better understand the life-giving, ever-present, and mysterious truth of God’s Holy Wind in our midst).

I love the way that Chief Seattle tries to help us understand the sacredness of wind and that we cannot ever own what has been given to us by God—the sacred one. We cannot own anything given to us by the creator.

Sealth wrote:

*Every part of this earth is sacred to my people.*

*Every shining pine needle, every humming insect.*

*All are holy in the memory and experience of my people...*

*remember that the air is precious to us,*

*that the air shares its spirit with all the life it supports.*

*The wind that gave our grandfather his first breath also receives his last sigh.  
The wind also gives our children the spirit of life.  
So, if we sell you our land, you must keep it apart and sacred,  
as a place where man can go to taste the wind  
that is sweetened by the meadow flowers.*

SOURCE: Chief Seattle's Letter to the President of the United States, 1852  
(Attributed to Chief Seattle, but unverified; this is one of several versions)

The language that Chief Seattle uses—to acknowledge the power of the wind and the movement of the wind and the sacredness of the wind—helps us to enter the mystery of today's scripture passage.

The author of Acts 2 tries to describe what it was like for the Holy Spirit to move among the people with power and mystery. We know that we cannot own Holy Wind. We know that we cannot control the movements of God's Spirit.

The author had a hard time describing the Spirit of Christ, and we also struggle to articulate the mysterious ways God moves even today.

The Spirit has been described as a rushing, violent wind. Tongues of dancing flames. This Holy Wind is the Spirit of Wisdom, the spoken word, God's moving breath, the name of God YAHWEH is vocalized air, eternal breathing. The Spirit brings about special language, a holy understanding of one another, new life, constant comfort and divine presence and everlasting love.

Acts 2:12 says: *What is going on? What does this all mean?*

I believe the gift of God's Spirit is the gift of the mind of Christ, the power of God, and the purposes for God's church. I believe the Pentecost Story is a birth story for all of us who profess Christ and want to join the Spirit in helping us listen to one another and understand one another and love one another.

There is a beautiful, award-winning song from 26 years ago with lyrics by Stephen Schwartz, featured in the Disney film Pocahontas.

This song seemed to capture why the Spirit came upon the church—true then. True today. It is a song about respect for the earth, which includes respect for diverse peoples, as well as respect for the power of the spirit.

The lyrics reflect a more expansive perspective on what it means to be alive, to thrive, and to coexist. It invites us to interrogate our beliefs, our empire way of thinking and our propensity to stand over others instead of understanding all.

*You think you own whatever land you land on  
The Earth is just a dead thing you can claim  
But I know every rock and tree and creature  
Has a life, has a spirit, has a name*

*You think the only people who are people  
Are the people who look and think like you  
But if you walk the footsteps of a stranger  
You'll learn things you never knew you never knew*

*Have you ever heard the wolf cry to the blue corn moon  
Or asked the grinning bobcat why he grinned?  
Can you sing with all the voices of the mountains?  
Can you paint with all the colors of the wind?  
Can you paint with all the colors of the wind?*

I heard this voice of Pocahontas sounding like the voice of Eve—naming the beautiful things of the sacred earth as having brilliant color. I heard the Spirit of Christ asking me—can you paint with all the colors of my wind, my holy wind? Do you know my colors? Do you know that my Spirit is what makes things really beautiful? Can you create peace and justice and love with the colors of the Spirit of Christ?

I took a few moments to think about the Holy Spirit in terms of metaphorical colors. I think we are being asked to expand our ideas of the Spirit and to expand the ways for us to paint with spiritual colors. I thought of ten that are revealed to us through scripture. Let me describe these colors with a

little more vivid detail, and while I do so—let's ask this same Spirit to teach us to paint with all the color of The Holy Wind...

**Welcome.** The color of welcome is bright and provocative. It is the color of Shalom smiles, honest handshakes; it is the color of the feeling called-- belonging already; welcome is the color of the invitation to stay. (John 3:16/God loved the whole world)

**Inclusion.** Inclusion is a color that sees. It is that sacred eye that takes the time to detect, acknowledge, and name the magnificent hues, including the intricate cones and the complex rods of every eye. Inclusion sees, as well, every soul cradled deep within each eye it gazes into. This is why I say that Inclusion has always been inerrant to Christ. (Galatians 3:28/no longer male or female, Greek or Jew, slave or free...)

**Respect.** Respect is the color of deep ancient knowing. The color of seeing and recognizing and honoring oneself inside another. It is the color of open doors, wide-laned and vast bridges, and expanding minds. Respect has the tangible texture of kindness and compassion and empathy and equity and justice. (Philippians 2:3/consider others better than yourself)

**Gratitude.** Gratitude is the color of the earth. The color of sustenance, the color of breathing, the color of friendship and the color of peace. Gratitude is translucent, thoughtful, tranquil, and transformative. (Philippians 4:12-13/I have found the secret to contentment is gratitude)

**Holy Curiosity.** Holy curiosity is the color of autumn leaves that blow about in untamed swirling dances. It is the color of moonlight and the color of courage. Holy curiosity is the color of leaders, of mothers, of sages and saints. It is the color of open hands, hearts, and heads. It is the color of every sunrise, including the sunrise on the earth's horizon as well as the sun rising within every heart. (Acts 17:19-20, tell us more)

**Understanding.** Understanding is a brilliant Hue. It is the color of illumination and waking and of willing acceptance. It is the most welcomed color of the marginalized and oppressed the thirsty the hungry the hurting and the afraid. (John 4:29/come and see the man who told me everything about myself)

**Humility.** Humility is the color of honest prayer and of all holy conversations. It is the color of worship. It is the color of candlelight. It is the color of reverence. It is the color of resignation, reconciliation, and renewal. (James 4:10/humble thyself in the sight of the Lord and he will raise you up)

**Grace.** Grace is the shimmering color of age-less wisdom, empathy, and neighbor love. Grace is the whole brilliant palette of the heart. It reflects the essence of both heaven and earth, death and resurrection, night and day, ending and beginning again and again and again. (Ephesians 2:8/grace is a gift of God, so no one can boast)

**Communion.** Communion is the color of the entire vineyard that we call life and living. It is the Vine with the branches. It is the with-ness of the Great Spirit. Communion is humble abiding with God and neighbor and self. It is the color of joyful feasting and circle dancing. (John 14:3/I go and prepare a place for you in my Father's abode)

**Love.** Love is a kaleidoscope of endless light. Love is not only every color of the rainbow but also every color between the colors of the rainbow. Love is the color of our deepest loss, pain and grief as it is also at the same time the color of our greatest dreams, hopes and joys. Love is the color of all peoples. Love is painting with all the colors of the Holy Wind. (John 15:13/no greater love than to lay down your life...)

Today's passage talks about rushing wind and tongues of fire as a way to turn our gaze to the reality of the Holy Spirit in our midst. We can harness wind. We can sail. We can create energy. And we leverage the power of the sun and the soil and a host of other gifts from God but let us always ask how to join the spirit of Christ in changing lives, transforming our minds, and learning to love neighbor.

Let us begin by learning the colors of Holy Wind—WELCOME, INCLUSION, RESPECT, GRATITUDE, HOLY CURIOSITY, UNDERSTANDING, HUMILITY, GRACE, COMMUNION, LOVE—and let us live as those who will only paint with these colors.

May it be so. May it be so.

