

Pastor T.C. Arnold  
Pentecost/Confirmation  
Acts 2:3  
May 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015

*“And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.”*

I don't know about you but I have given a lot of thought over the years to what this Day of Pentecost looked like. I see in my mind's eye a big place, more people than I can count at the time, rushing wind blowing through, hearing a lot of noise, and these, “tongues as of fire appearing and resting on each person.” I can imagine it, but I wonder how close my imagination is to what really happened.

But beyond how we see in our mind what Pentecost looked like for those believers gathered in Jerusalem that faithful day, is what they actually received and the meaning behind it. Yes, God attaches meaning behind everything that happened for the sake of the very early church and her faithful believers. For example, notice that what rested on the believers were “tongues.” Why tongues? Because those who were filled with the Holy Spirit that day would not be filled to be full. They would be filled in order to fill others. They would be filled in order to “pour out” – that is, “speak” with their own tongues the glorious message of the Gospel for the sake of the nations. Make no mistake about it. They were “tongues as of fire” so that they may speak the Word of God to those who knew not the Gospel of Jesus.

And then the “of fire” part. That's important too. Remember the seraphim messengers in Isaiah chapters 6 – the “flaming angels” that took that coal from the Lord's altar and put it on Isaiah's lips. Or how God reveals His presence by calling out to Moses in that burning bush. Fire purifies and refines – so does God's Word. He reveals Himself in these miraculous ways – in the wind and the fire that blessed day of Pentecost.

So this is the image we get – the Spirit of God is poured out on the people – wind, tongues as of fire – all resting upon them. And because the Spirit was “poured out” at the time, they were filled – filled with the Holy Spirit. They were “filled” Christians and there were a lot of them. But they were not filled in order to be full. They were filled in order to fill others – to pour out so that others may have the Holy Spirit – The Word of God preached to them.

There was a lot of pouring out and filling done these past 32 weeks of catechism instruction with seven of our Christ Lutheran baptized children of God just down the hall. The Lord was pouring out through the Holy Spirit, words from the Bible, words of guidance through the catechism, words of wisdom from two very handsome and wise pastors – well at least one handsome and wise pastor... Pastor Froiland. The Lord was pouring out and pouring into the hearts and minds of these seven kids that mean the world to us.

While God was pouring into them His Word and His Faith gifted to these seven confirmands, God was also pouring out through them, to their pastors. I can't tell you how competitive this class is – mostly the girls. The boys were just kind of along for the ride. It was cut throat when it came to answering questions in class. They kept track of their answers on the white board, a running tally of who got the most answers correct for the day. Their hands would spring up and reach for the sky as fast as they could so they could put another mark on the board under their name.

Amy would always reach her hand the highest. She has the shortest arm so maybe she thought that if she reached higher I would most likely call on her. Honor was always trying to get hand up first, to beat Amy to the punch. I can count on one hand how many times Emma and

Kaitlyn answered a question incorrectly. Lauren, was always a willing participant, she grasped the understanding of what Holy Communion would be for her – and she always knew the answer for what does this Holy Sacrament benefit... It gives us the forgiveness of sins. Connor, I believe, had his hand up every time I ask a question. So eager to participate and he gave answers that rested on the faith that he was taught through his time asking all sorts of questions of mom and dad, his pastors and Sunday school teachers.

And then there is Benjamin. Sorry, Ben, you are the pastor's kid. As you might assume, there are advantages to this and disadvantages to this burdensome designation. Ben was expected to know the answers. And guess what, he did know. In his calm, quiet way, Ben would give an accurate thoughtful answer – and usually, in the way that only Ben can, would make the rest of the class crack up laughing. I'm so proud of you, Ben. I love you and I can't say enough about that. Your mother and I can't believe this day is here – how old you are and grown up.

And for the rest of you kids... I told you this before... I love you, too. I told your parents that you are my kids. You are my kids that I let your parents take care of, and feed, and buy all your expensive stuff. But you are my sons and daughters. I'm sorry, I'm being a bit selfish with you. That's the way it works sometimes when you have people that you love, I suppose.

So parents, please take care of my kids, won't you? They will profess the faith before you and all these other members of Christ parish-family and friends. Encourage them, sponsors, and pray for them. They need your prayers. Parents, bring them to this blessed meal. It's the meal of life – God poured out for them – to forgive them, comfort them, and strengthen them. They need this. They need you to bring them here. Please bring my kids back here – often and with regularity. My heart sings when I see you all here because I know God is providing what we need for them.

Class of 2015, I know the Lord has poured Himself out into you today. And I know He has poured Himself out “through” you as well. I heard your stories – the ones where you are sharing your faith. You are His tools to bring the good news to your friends and relatives. You are the tongue of the Holy Spirit. When your mouth moves, and you pour out, God is at work. That's a high calling kids. That's a high calling parents. That's a blessed calling.

Beloved, The Lord has poured Himself out to you through the Gospel message. He has called you His own. He gave everything to have you. He wants to keep you and nurture you and grow your faith. Here is where He pours Himself out for you – right at that altar. So may God bless your confirmation. May He guard you and protect you on all sides in this fallen world. Amen.

The peace of God which passes all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.