

## **Day of Pentecost**

### **Welcome**

### **Opening Hymn: “Open Our Eyes Lord”**

**Psalm 104:24-34, 35b**

**1 Corinthians 12:3b-13**

**Acts 2:1-21**

2When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

7Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.”

12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

14But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say.

15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

### **“The Language of the Spirit”**

I love languages. They are fascinating. It's interesting to see how each nation expresses itself differently. Today is Pentecost Sunday, so even though I am not a native English speaker, I know that all of you will understand every word I say clearly. :) But seriously, everyone, who likes languages should enjoy the story of Pentecost. Here a beautiful miracle happened. The disciples and the crowd understood each other irregardless of their native tongue. Some scholars call this story the "reverse of Babel".

At the tower of Babel the story starts out the opposite way. People were all together, speaking the same language. But they forgot about God and became so arrogant that they thought they could be like God. They thought that they would build a tower so tall that it would reach heaven. They thought they didn't need God any more.

However, God did not like their attitude, and decided to confuse their language, so they could not understand each other. And that's exactly what happened. People of Babel lost their connection, their common language, and scattered around the world. Everyone became a stranger, even an enemy.

Today the story is different. On that first Pentecost, finally people understood each other. All languages turned into one language: the language of love.

But before we jump into the middle of our story, let's take a quick look at the context. The disciples of Jesus were waiting together, scared and confused, after the events of Holy Week. They didn't know what to do next. Jesus promised them the Holy Spirit, but they hadn't received it yet. So they were together, waiting.

In Acts we find that Jesus was true to his word. He sent the Holy Spirit to his disciples to guide and empower them. The Paraklete took away all the

differences that separated their community, and filled them with so much understanding, that even language was not a barrier any longer.

But what does this mean for us today? How can we become so loving that even without saying a word, even without language, people will know that Jesus lives in our hearts?

Today my heart sings joyfully. On this Pentecost, the Holy Spirit fills my soul with love. I am so grateful to God for leading us to Shiloh UCC, and this area where we finally found our home. I hope that even without finding the perfect words you can feel my gratitude and love. Today is special for me and my family, because we are finally in our new home. Many of your fellow church members are still helping us make this home safe and secure for Sophie. So my heart is full of joy and hope for the future.

I know the TV says something different. The news on TV are full of violence, misunderstanding and hatred. Unfortunately, the world is not a joyful and safe place for everyone. There is still war, discrimination, and hostility. People are still hurting and killing each other. Power is being abused in high places. No matter who commits a crime; it is still a crime. Everyone will have to account for their life, even billionaires, politicians, generals, and police. If you are watching the news a lot lately its message is different then the Gospel. The Gospel is not about hatred. It is about love...

God sends us out to love and care for each other. Jesus is sending us out today to speak the language of the Spirit. It may be meaningful for someone to talk in tongues, but if you want to help build up one another, we must speak the same language: the language of Agape love.

Especially during these scary times, when the Coronavirus is still killing people, it's so important that we do everything to show kindness and patience toward our brothers and sisters in Christ. Often fear and isolation can make us angry or frustrated especially with those who are closest to us. We may use words that we regret later. So it's even more important to stay close to God's heart, and focus on the Spirit. It's important that we spend time with God, and really care about our spiritual growth.

Reading the Bible, praying, and meditating can all be ways to calm our spirits and soothe our souls. When we sit in God's presence worry, fear, and

pain disappear. When painful emotions arise, it's a good practice to "distance" ourselves from an angry situation. When an argument starts escalating, it's wise to withdraw into our room, or take a walk, or simply silence our souls by focusing on what's really important in life, like hope, peace, joy, and love.

This is exactly what the disciples were doing on the day of Pentecost. They were together waiting for the Holy Spirit when a holy wind changed everything. So you can see that it is not avoidance to seek God's counsel. In fact, it is a sign of patience and wisdom to rely on the Holy Spirit.

Pentecost is here, even if we are not fully ready for it. We are still not in our gorgeous sanctuary at Shiloh UCC. We are still not hearing beautiful organ music and singing our hearts out in the pews. We are still "social distancing" and staying put in our homes, until our wise leaders in the Consistory decide about a time to return to church. However, I already have some fun ideas for how we can see each other without being too close to one another.

I can't wait to see all of you and get to know you better. I hope that our future will be more peaceful and calm than how we started out our journey together.

Pentecost is here, and our task is to share this message with others. How do we do this while we are staying in our homes? Call each other and send each others cards. I have received more cards and expression of your love than what I can handle for a while. So, let me encourage you to please share your love with one another. Check on the weak ones. Call the lonely ones. Today the Holy Spirit unites people and inspires us to love and care for each other. The Comforter can teach us a language that transcends all barriers.

The language of the Spirit means different things to different people. To some it literally means speaking in tongues. And that's OK. We love our charismatic and Pentecostal brothers and sisters, too. To other people the language of the Spirit is something we communicate to each other in our everyday lives.

Pentecost is a special time, when miraculous things happen. I know that the Spirit has power. I know that the Spirit can inspire us to boldly follow Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God is right here, in our new home in Dover, but

also in your homes no matter where you live. The Holy Spirit is here to send us out into the world to spread the message of God's love. God's Spirit is inspiring us to spread unity and peace among all people.

For me, the language of the Spirit is clearly Agape love. That love becomes incarnate in our bodies when we love not simply with our words, but also with our hands and feet.

So on this Pentecost Sunday spread the message of God's unconditional love everywhere. Celebrate the birth of Christ's church, and have hope for the future of Shiloh Church. Rejoice, for God loves you and God has created you to love others. Despite our exterior differences, we are one in Christ. Despite the difference in our backgrounds and even the languages we speak, we are still one. God loves all of us equally, and teaches us every day how to better speak the language of love. Amen.

### **Pastoral Prayer**

Let us pray! Come, Holy Spirit, Come... fill our lives with your presence. Fill our lives with joy and hope for the future. Today we bless you and worship you. We thank you for our unique talents and diverse personalities. We thank you for a beautiful world where we speak many languages. At the same time you inspire us to sing a new and beautiful song in our hearts that talks about God's love. You inspire us to speak one language that everyone understands; one language that builds up and heals the world. Help us become the people you want us to be, loving, caring, kind, and gentle with others. Unify us, loving God, that we may serve you faithfully.

Comforter, Holy Spirit, be with all people who are suffering. Send your healing and inspiration to those in hospitals, nursing homes, or confined to their own homes. Console the people dealing with loss, and send your angels to those who are lonely. At this time we intercede for everyone who needs your special care. We also want to thank you for the joys in our congregation. We rejoice with the families whose children graduated this year. We are in spirit partying with those who celebrate their birthdays these days. We are grateful for giving us places that we can call home, where we are unconditionally loved and accepted.

Come, Holy Spirit, come, inspire us to speak your language of love. Amen.

### **Lord's Prayer**

#### **Hymn #286 Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness**

<https://www.firstpreswh.org/daily-devotional/spirit-spirit-of-gentleness-hymn-291/>

### **Benediction**

Thank you for watching! Happy Pentecost everyone!