

From the Pastor's Desk – June 2019

Summer is almost here and with it the beginning of the Pentecost season in the church calendar. Have you ever wondered what Pentecost means? The word "Pentecost" derives from the Greek word "*(Pentēkostē)*" meaning "fiftieth". It refers to the festival celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Jewish Passover also known as the Feast of Weeks. The Christian holy day of Pentecost is celebrated on the seventh Sunday after Easter and commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the first followers of Jesus when they were in Jerusalem. This event is described in the Book of Acts and represents the birth of the early Church. Since its date depends on the day that Easter falls on, Pentecost is not always on the same day each year.

During the season of Pentecost we use the colour green instead of the white we use during the Easter season, the blue of Advent, and the Purple of Lent, as green represents growth, which is what the early church experienced as those first disciples, apostles, and followers of Jesus went out into the streets, fields, towns, cities and beyond to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ. Pentecost is the longest season in our church year and falls appropriately at the same time as the plants in our fields and the trees and flowers, etc, in our forests and gardens begin to grow and produce a bountiful harvest.

Pentecost is meant to be a reminder to all Christians that we are all called to proclaim the Good News of God's love for the entire world and help promote love and well-being among all of God's creatures. Sometimes we do this amazingly well and sometimes we seem to fail at doing this horribly. I hope we all take time this Pentecost season to reflect on God's gift to us of Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the blessing this gift has been to us.

I know that there are times when we might wonder about God's work in the world and whether God really cares about us, especially when we experience times of suffering and pain. There is nothing wrong with such questions because faith is best learned from experience and sometimes even the school of hard knocks. It's easy to believe in God and proclaim that we are Christians when everything is going smoothly and life is good. It's not so easy when this isn't happening.

I hope that this Pentecost season might be a time of growth for all of us, including those whose life is going well at this time and those for whose life is sputtering along. Of course, I pray that anyone who is experiencing difficult times might find their burdens lifted and their loads lightened so that they might enjoy life fully. We are told in the scriptures that God is love who desires only the best for all of us – a God who does not use fear or punishment to promote faith but makes full use of grace and mercy. May we believe and trust in this Good News.

In God's love, Pastor Dave