

May 24, 2015 Sunday of Pentecost

Good Morning, Does anyone know what tradition from our church calendar we celebrate today? If you said or thought that today is the “Celebration of the Day of Pentecost” you would be correct. So what exactly is the Day of Pentecost about? The Celebration of the Day of Pentecost is when we remember the moment that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples after Jesus had ascended to heaven. I would like to read Luke’s scriptural account of what happened that day from Acts 2:1-4 **“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...”** You know what was interesting about that first historical Day of Pentecost was that it marked a major turning point in the beginning of the early Christian church. You see traditionally, the Day of Pentecost is a Jewish celebration for thanking God for the blessing of the harvest. It is also a time to remember when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. But what happened on this particular Day of Pentecost was much more than just giving thanks as it was the day when the Holy Spirit first came down upon each of the apostles and as a result they began their ministries to carry on where Jesus had left off and to continue to build Jesus’ church here on earth. And it didn’t take long for the Holy Spirit to get into action, as Peter, who was now filled with the Holy Spirit, began to preach to the large crowd where he explained to them about Jesus and God’s plan for their salvation. And as a result of Peter’s preaching about 3,000 people were baptized and added to the church that day. And today, more that 2,000 years later, we’re still finding that the Holy Spirit is very much alive and among us, as we continue to seek and find Jesus in our lives. Now comes the hard part of today’s message, do we really understand the mystery of the Holy Spirit? You know every Communion Sunday we join together and say the Apostle’s creed and in that creed we say that we believe in the Holy Spirit. So if someone was to ask us about the Holy Spirit what would we tell them? Like I said earlier, now comes the hard part of our message. I would like for us to think for a moment what our answers might be. Now that we

have given some thought to how we might explain the Holy Spirit let's hear some thoughts on the Holy Spirit that others have offered. ***Our first set of Thoughts; "as hard as I try, I can't seem to comprehend the role of the Holy Spirit. We always hear about God and Jesus, but the Holy Spirit often seems forgotten. Is the Holy Spirit the spirit of Jesus? Is the Holy Spirit the Spirit of God? Does anyone pray to the Holy Spirit? What is the Holy Spirit's role?" Our second set of Thoughts; The Holy Spirit is God's presence at work in the world. God is able to come to the world using the Holy Spirit. When you feel the presence of God or you feel God touching you it is His Holy Spirit. This is how I understand it. And our last set of Thoughts; The Holy Spirit is the Love between God the Father and God the Son. Whenever God gives us something out of love, we call it the work of the Holy Spirit. Since everything God has given us is given in love, the Holy Spirit is always active in our lives. Since the Holy Spirit is Love, it is the Holy Spirit in us that makes it possible for us to love God and others. We receive the Holy Spirit at Baptism, and get 'booster shots' all through our lives.*** Of the three sets of thoughts, I was most intrigued with the last one with its simplicity, that the Holy Spirit is "God's Love in Us". Let's take a moment and see what scripture is telling us about "God's Love in Us" ***John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. John 14:23 Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Romans 5:5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*** So what is it like for us to be in a loving relationship with Jesus through God's gift of the Holy Spirit? The moment we know that we are falling in love with Jesus is one of the most exciting and terrifying moments in our existence. When we are falling in love with Jesus it can be a bit scary because, for the most part, it is completely out of our control. When we are falling in love with Jesus, we can even understand Him without actually talking to Him. When we are falling in Love with Jesus we want to know every single thing about Him. When we are falling in love with Jesus we trust Him enough to tell Him our deepest, darkest secrets, and we know that He will be there with us and we will never be alone. When we are

falling in love with Jesus we feel comfortable enough to be vulnerable and we know that Jesus will take care of us and protect us. It is my hope that as I was reading the descriptions of our fallings in love with Jesus that we were able to find in our hearts those feelings and experiences. And it is also my hope and prayer that for those of us, who may not have felt a closeness with Jesus in their hearts that we take a moment and pray for the Holy Spirit to come upon us. Remember that today is the Day of Pentecost and it is when we remember the moment that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and it can also be the day that the Holy Spirit comes upon you, bringing God's Love into your hearts. So what if we take a step back from thinking about our personal loving relationship with Jesus and think about how the Holy Spirit comes to a church or community of believers? I know I have mentioned to you several times about one of the first times I met Kathy, here in this church, that she joyously announced that, "The Holy Spirit is Alive in this Church". And after almost two years I have come to know and understand that what she says is true. So how do I know it is true? Well, my most simple and direct answer is that "I just feel it". I know that whenever I'm here with all of you that there's something in my heart that just feels very comfortable and peaceful. You could say that being here at Weaver UMC just brings out God's love into each and every one of us. You know, it just makes good sense that when we're here it's like going to a spiritual gas station with our spiritual gas tanks on empty and saying "Fill Ur Up!" And what is it that our tanks are being filled up with? Well, according to Matthew 18, Verses 20, it is Jesus and His love that is being filled into our empty spiritual tanks or hearts as some may think. Matthew tells us from Jesus' voice that ***"For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."*** And we know that when Jesus is here His love for us is also here. So take a quick look around and see if we have two or more gathered here in Jesus' name. And if we do, we know that we are not alone as Jesus is right here in our presence. And it is through God's gift of the Holy Spirit that allows us to sense and know of Jesus' presence in our midst. Now, I wouldn't want you to just take my word for your spiritual tank being filled up at a church. You see there have been gas stations telling us for years that this is were "we fill ur Up". How many of us remember some gas station slogans like "You can trust your car to the man who wears the star" or how about "Put a tiger in your tank". And then there was the slogan that

even improved their message over time. You see the original slogan for 76 gas stations was, "Go with the Spirit...the Spirit of 76" and in the 1980s it was changed to simply "Get the Spirit". So for this next week when you pass by a gas station or church just remember they are both places where you can "Fill Ur Up"!

I would like to close our message today with a poem from an unknown author,

Glorious Trinity
Make your presence
known in this place
through our worship
our prayer
the reading of your Word
Father, Son, Holy Spirit
within whose unity
lies all that is you
perfect love
justice, peace
and power
As we gather here today
your body, your church
throughout this world
fill our outstretched hearts
with your spirit
encircle us with your love
Make yourself known to us
in new ways
exciting ways
challenging ways
Empower us
Inspire us
Glorious Trinity
Amen

Worship Service Reading - May 24, 2015

First Lesson - Acts 1: 4-8

And being assembled together with *them*, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” *He said*, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

**Please stand and join together as we sing
“Glory be to the Father” Hymn No. 70**

Gospel Lesson Act 2: 1-4

When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Please turn in your Hymnals to page _____ as we sing together
