

“Being Winds of Change”

Text: Acts 2: 1-21

Sermon – June 5, 2022

Pentecost Sunday

Prayer: Holy Spirit, who comes like wind and dances through the church like flames of fire, fill us with delight and transform us to be the body of Christ in the world. Amen

A few weeks ago, we were visited with a violent windstorm that swept many parts of Ontario and Quebec. It was called a “derecho”. A Spanish word meaning “straight” as in direction. A derecho, is a fast-moving thunderstorm that causes widespread wind damage. I’ve never seen quite a powerful wind like that. Trees and electric posts fell down, backyard trampolines and patio chairs flew out and about, some houses lost roof shingles and boats capsized. It was certainly a violent, scary wind to contend with. Our story in the book of Acts tells us of a strong wind that came to visit the followers of Jesus on the day of Pentecost. This is the Holy Spirit blowing through the place where they were. The first Pentecost was a wild, creative event, with rushing wind and tongues of fire.

The wind portrayed in Acts is so different from the wind in the Creation Story in Genesis. The “wind” in Hebrew is *ruach* which is transliterated as the breath or spirit of God. In Genesis, *ruach* is spirit of creation, soaring, stirring, blowing upon the formless, dark void, stimulating and energizing as it aids God’s work of ordering, creating and blessing. The wind in acts is a turbulent, disturbing wind that empowers, renews and energizes God’s people.

When the wind blows it changes things. I wonder how the followers of Jesus were changed on the day of Pentecost? The story tells us that the followers of Jesus found themselves speaking in diverse tongues, in different languages that told the mighty works of God that overcame race, colour or creed. A community of spirit was created as it broke through diversions and separations. The fascinating thing is that they can understand each other. And because they understood each other, they were able to bring good news to people in many places.

I wonder what the Holy Spirit looks like when it blows through us today? I wonder what we might do differently when the Holy Spirit blows through you and me? Today, we celebrate the

birthday of the church of Jesus Christ, not at as a building or a community centre or a landmark on a map but as a living, breathing community with a mission and vision bear the good news of the Gospel. That's why doing our all-ages service outdoors is very symbolic for us. Today, we focus on the work and the wildness of the Holy Spirit – that elusive and ever-moving third person of the Trinity; that fierce and feminine form of God's holy presence; that blowing and burning, soaring presence of God that touches us and spurs us forward in ways we often find it hard to name but also hard to ignore. Today, we're going to celebrate the Holy Spirit in word, in prayer, and in action in the world.

During the story time, Lorrie showed us how to make a pinwheel - a wonderful symbol to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Pinwheels show us that the wind is moving and blowing when they spin wildly reminding us that we, too will be changed in exciting ways so we can tell others about Jesus and God's great love for us all.

NOW BLOW ON YOUR PINWHEEL AND MAKE IT SPIN!

The only way we see the wind is when it moves things – leaves rustling in the trees, streamers fluttering in the breeze. We can't see it, but we cannot deny that we can feel the wind caressing our skin, pushing us in one direction with a strong and powerful gust.

BLOW ON YOUR PINWHEEL AND MAKE IT SPIN!

God's Holy Spirit – God's essential breath, moves time and time again throughout Scripture and through us today.

BLOW ON YOUR PINWHEEL AND MAKE IT SPIN!

And we remember that God is always moving ... always breathing ... always whispering and whooshing ... always nudging and tugging ... always rushing and disturbing in many ways.

Now - I want you to think of people and places that need our prayers. Write them on the 4 sails of the pinwheel.

On this Pentecost Sunday, we know for sure that no flame or wind or tongue can domesticate God's Spirit. How may the power of the Holy Spirit blow to us not only today but throughout the life of this faith community? How will the Spirit be poured out on us here in BCUC? How shall we express the deep, chaotic, creative longing at the heart of the Gospel and in the heart of God? How do we experience the Spirit in our midst? I wonder what happens if we stop taming that "violent wind" or to find a way around it? What if we aimed to welcome the tension as the beginning of understanding God?

Pentecost asks us, to open our ears to hear one another in many diverse languages - to welcome the untamed wind who blows through closed doors and closed minds- to be open to the flames of power to transform us, both as individuals and as a community. The diversity of this community is amazing, each one brings their authentic faith and gifts that have brought us together to this place at some point in our lives. In our stories, I hear an urgent message to this church—there is a hunger for deep joy, authentic experience, and the life of the Spirit, who not only comes to us decently and in order, but wildly and creatively, causing surprise, disquiet, renewed hope and love in community.

So let the spirit of God fall afresh on us, opening our lips to preach and sing and our hearts to love. Let the spirit of God ignite our hearts and enflame our souls that we may burn anew with God's love. May God gift us with the spirit of lively living, believing and holy babbling; to take our words and speak through them; to take our minds and think through them; to take our hearts and set them on fire.

Blow on your pinwheels and make it spin! Thanks be to God. Amen.