

Sermon - Bell's Corners United Church - May 27th, 2023 - Pentecost Sunday

May 21, 2022 was the day that the storm hit, or it has since been called, the direcho.

That weekend I had been at the cottage with my family, my brother and I had gone swimming that afternoon when the wind had started.

My mum and I stood on the dock, watching as the clouds began to overtake the sky.

Out of the whole storm the wind was the part I remember the most. The way it overcame sound so I couldn't hear anything else other than the rush and speed of the wind.

It wanted to be listened to, not talked over or ignored, it wanted someone, anyone to listen.

After the rain began to fall we walked back up to the cottage just in time to watch the canopy that we had set up on the deck twist and bend in the wind before being thrown to the side as if it weighed nothing at all.

Thinking about it now, two words come to my mind. Strength and Power.

Wind can be much more than just a light breeze on a hot summer day, it can be a huge storm that can bring chaos and destruction.

But wind is much more than just broken power lines and thawed out freezers.

It can bring the holy spirit and sometimes, Mary Poppins.

So when a huge gust of wind blew over and filled the place where the Judian's where gathered,

They stopped. And listened.

I have been in the United Church my WHOLE life and the minister will talk about the books of the bible and Acts would be one of them, even though I had no idea what they were talking about, it was fine because in a few minutes I would get to go to Sunday school.

So when someone suggested doing a youth led service one of the first things I asked our Youth Leader Tamara was...

"Can I write the sermon?"

It wasn't until later that I realised three things

1. I don't know how to write a sermon
2. I didn't read the lectionary

And 3. I didn't know what the lectionary was...

The stress didn't hit me till this past Monday.

The people in the passage we heard are coming together just as we do today.

They were gathering to celebrate Shavuot (sha-VOO-ut).

I learned about Shavuot from the website "My Jewish Learning".

It says
*The Jewish holiday of [Shavuot](#) is often confused with a Pentecost,
a Christian holiday that happens around the same time of year.
But Shavuot is not the Jewish Pentecost.*

*Shavuot, which comes from the Hebrew meaning “weeks,”
celebrates the early barley harvest and the giving of the Torah on Mount Sinai.*

*“Pentecost,” which comes from the Greek meaning “fifty,” commemorates
the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles and the birth of the early church.
Both Shavuot and Pentecost are celebrated after a count of seven weeks.
Which is why one means “weeks” and the other means “fifty”.*

*Shavuot is celebrated seven weeks after [Passover](#),
and Pentecost is celebrated seven weeks after Easter.*

This is not a coincidence.

*The Greek term “Pentecost” is used by some authors of the [Septuagint](#) (Sep-two-a
jew-in) an ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible and by the author of Acts
to refer to the Jewish celebration of Shavuot.*

*Just as Easter (in Greek “pascha”) is a holiday derived from an adaptation of the
Jewish Passover, so too Pentecost is a holiday that is derived from an adaptation
of Shavuot. But for more than a thousand years, they have been very different
holidays for their respective communities, with different meanings and rituals.*

In the passage we heard Peter is the only one who is named and the one to
explain to the Judian’s about the holy spirit and the miracle they were seeing, But
let’s go back a bit,

Where did Peter come from? Peter is first called to be a disciple of Jesus after he
and his brother were fishing in the sea and Jesus called him to be a ‘fisher of men’.

This term means that Peter finds people who were willing to follow Jesus,
and he continued to do this even after Jesus’ death. Peter is doing just this in the
passage, he is calling people to trust in the holy spirit and listen to God.

In Acts chapter 2 verses 1-21 something that stands out to me is that
something happened, a series of events took place for all of these people
People from different places all around the ancient world People who ended up in
the same place

And the right time

to be able to witness that miraculous moment

and all the wonders that came from that experience.

Talking about how the wind wants only to be listened to,
in the passage it did just that,
and to make sure it was being heard,
it spoke in many different languages to make sure they all understood.

I think what the text is trying to tell us is that God listens to us in many ways, Prayer being one way.

God is always listening so when *God* wants us to listen
it's not simply asking us to listen or tapping us on the shoulder to get our attention,
It is done through simple ways such as the wind cooling us off on a warm
summer day,
or big, huge gusts of wind that knock things over
and break things because it wants and,
it *needs* to be listened to.

A way that we can relate to the passage is,

Imagine you have taken a trip to another country or place that doesn't speak
a language you know.

You might feel like an outcast or alone.
But as soon as you hear someone speak in a language that you understand,
you're drawn to it,
wanting to listen and seek the comfort of your home.

Even if you have never been in a situation like that,
it happens where you live as well,
maybe choosing friends or family that think and act like you,
who have the same interests, lifestyle.

It's all forms of finding what you refer to as home or something you can relate and
be close to.

Something that the passage of Acts can tell us is that we need to look further
than just what makes us feel comfortable, we need to see what else is out there
and how we can enjoy it and our lives further, as well as opening your heart and
using your courage to put yourself out there and find out who you are, and the
amazing thing is that all it takes is just to listen.

Listening to people to make new friends, listening to others when they ask for help,
and listening to God when the wind speaks to you.

Listening is all it takes.

Amen.