

The Rev'd Misty Kiwak  
Grace Episcopal Church, Bath, ME  
Pentecost 2026

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 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. (Acts 2:1-2)*

The Trinity of God breathed life into Creation, and continues to sustain life; God is life and life emanates from God. The word “wind” in today’s verse is the Greek “pnoe”, feminine. (The corresponding word in Hebrew, used throughout the Hebrew scriptures is “ruach”, also feminine.)

We can think of the Spirit of God as a passionate mother, a life-giving mother. At Pentecost, this Spirit mother comes down in flames of fire to enliven and instruct her children, to empower them to go forth.

When God moves us, breathes on us, sends us, what prevents us from going? From going to see about the poor, the grieving, the unhoused, the lonely, the depressed? Not all of them are strangers; some are our neighbors or our family. Some are our enemies. Does fear prevent us, uncertainty of our call, reluctance to look like the lunatic fringe when we share what God had done for us?

That’s a valid concern. When the apostles are touched by the Spirit of God, deafened by wind and flames of fire, and begin speaking in a myriad of languages about God, those who witness the chaos—the townspeople—sneer and laugh and say, “They are drunk on cheap wine.” How embarrassing.

But the Spirit did not roar down at Pentecost to form a club of nice people who agree with one another about how to be nice. The Spirit empowered the disciples to go to the ends of the earth to preach a life changing word: God came to live upon earth to teach us how to be more like God, and God is love.

Pentecost empowers us to fulfill the Great Commission Jesus gives in Matthew, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (Mt 28:19-20).

In his missionary journeys, Paul, looking for a man who came to him in a dream, instead found a woman, Lydia, in Thyatira, modern day Turkey. Paul preached, and Acts 16:14 reads, “*she opened her heart to accept Paul’s words*” and she and her household were baptized.

Today, 2000 years hence, because individual Christians have continued to invite others into the love of God for millennia, many of them giving their lives, and because all of you here have picked up the baton and have witnessed the love of God to those who walk through the doors, we have the privilege of witnessing the baptism of another Lydia and her children, Quincy and Cameron. (Dad, Brandon, was confirmed last month here.)

The Spirit moves us to love. The Spirit gives life. The Spirit instructs. The Spirit is maternal. The following poem by Julia Kasdorf has always struck a deep chord in me. Only in writing this sermon did I see the action of God. If your mother, like mine, wasn’t very loving try to think of who in your life was or is. For me it is my best friend Maria in Arizona, or my father. The poem is called “What I Learned From My Mother” by Julia Kasdorf.

*I learned from my mother how to love  
the living, to have plenty of vases on hand  
in case you have to rush to the hospital  
with peonies cut from the lawn, black ants  
still stuck to the buds. I learned to save jars  
large enough to hold fruit salad for a whole  
grieving household, to cube home-canned pears  
and peaches, to slice through maroon grape skins  
and flick out the [sexual] seeds with a knife point.*

*I learned to attend viewings even if I didn't know  
 the deceased, to press the moist hands  
 of the living, to look in their eyes and offer  
 sympathy, as though I understood loss even then.  
 I learned that whatever we say means nothing,  
 what anyone will remember is that we came.  
 I learned to believe I had the power to ease  
 awful pains materially like an angel.  
 Like a doctor, I learned to create  
 from another's suffering my own usefulness, and once  
 you know how to do this, you can never refuse.  
 To every house you enter, you must offer  
 healing: a chocolate cake you baked yourself,  
 the blessing of your voice, your chaste touch.*

In this poem, Godlikeness is expressed in a mother who visits the sick with flowers cut from the lawn, makes fruit salad for a whole grieving household, attends viewings of people she doesn't know so that she can visit the lonely and comfort the sorrowful, "eases awful pains materially, like an angel." Who has mothered you that well? That's a model of the Spirit of God.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended in tongues of fire igniting a sort of drunken ecstasy not for the sake of a jolly good time, but so that the disciples might comfort souls, bringing souls into the healing love of God.

Go out of this place empowered by that same Spirit to NURTURE, to FEED, to LISTEN, to ACCOMPANY. Go see about others like a mother would. MOTHER one another, MOTHER the unlovable, the untouchable, the seemingly irredeemable and the forgotten. Be so radically on fire with love so as to look inebriated at 9am.

And remember in this mission, Jesus is with us, even to the end of the age. (Mt 28:20)