

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Two weeks ago I was leading a class on worship with 2nd graders and their parents. I was talking about the 4 parts of our worship.

You can see them in the bulletin. Gathering – Jesus gathers us together as the people of God. Word – through the reading of Holy Scripture and the sermon, we listen to the Word, the message Jesus has for us today. Meal – then Jesus feeds us at his table with his body and blood. Sending – Then Jesus sends us out in his name and with his blessing to serve and be his presence in the world.

Katie Peachey raised her hand and asked the following question:

How can Jesus be with all of us at the same time? It's a very good question. I told her that when Jesus was on the earth he couldn't be with everyone at the same time. Just like Katie and I couldn't physically be sitting in Underwood Hall and the sanctuary at the same time, neither could Jesus when he was on earth with his disciples. But after he rose from the grave, Jesus ascended into heaven and told his disciples that he wouldn't abandon them. He would always be with them. So Jesus sent his followers his Spirit that would guide them and continue to show them what he wanted them to do. This way Jesus would still be with them even if they couldn't see him physically with them anymore.

This is what we celebrate happening on this day of the church year. On Pentecost we remember Jesus pouring out the Holy Spirit on those who followed him. Was Jesus finished? Was his work done once he died on the cross, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven? Do we think that he got up to heaven, sat down on his throne, put up his feet, poured himself a big glass of lemonade and is just taking a break until the end of time?

It's a ridiculous image, yes. But because we can't physically see Jesus

here with us, it's easy to think that Jesus isn't doing anything at all. Jesus has not finished the job he was sent here to complete. His work isn't done until this whole world knows the love of God who created them and saved them. Jesus' work is not done until every knee bows and every tongue confesses that he is Lord.

So what's Jesus doing up there? He's pouring out his Spirit on those who follow him. On that first Pentecost, the Spirit of Jesus came down on his followers with power. Flames of fire appeared above their heads. The whole city of Jerusalem was shaken by the sound of the rushing wind and wondered what was happening. The Spirit of Jesus took a group of scared disciples huddled in a room hiding behind locked doors and transformed them.

They boldly stepped out into the streets of Jerusalem and proclaimed to the crowds gathered there the good news about Jesus, the crucified and risen Lord. The Spirit gave them courage. It gave them the words to say. It helped them to speak in all the different languages of the people gathered there so that everyone could understand who Jesus is. From Jerusalem, the disciples carried this message to Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth. With power they healed the sick, raised the dead and proclaimed that Jesus is the Messiah who sets us all free and brings us home to God.

The problem is that a lot of the time we just don't believe in Pentecost. Sure back then, Jesus sent his Spirit on the disciples and they did all these incredible things, but the world is different now.

It doesn't work the same. We don't have the same powers.

We don't have the Spirit in the same way that the first disciples did.

This is often what we think isn't it? How could you or I possibly have the power to heal people or bring back the dead or take violence and change it into peace?

When we think of people possessing incredible power and abilities we think of superheroes. This would all be different if you and I were like Superman with strength and the ability to leap buildings in a single bound. Or if we had those snazzy bracelets like Wonder Woman and could deflect speeding bullets or shoot webs from our wrists like Spiderman and catch the bad guys. What wouldn't you give to have gifts and powers like that...to have a belt like Batman that always had the right gizmo on it to get him out of every situation or have any of the powers of the Fantastic Four?

When we were baptized, Jesus poured out his Spirit on each of us. And Jesus decided what gifts / what powers he was going to give us and have us develop. Some of you were given the gift of music and so you lead us in singing and praising our God. Others of you were given the ability to teach and so you teach Sunday school and help others understand the stories of faith. Some of you know how to use a hammer and power tools and so you work with Habitat to build someone a home. Some of you have the ability to listen and show the care of God and so you serve as Stephen Ministers. Some of you have either bore or adopted children and demonstrate the love of God in your role as mothers.

Each of us has been given gifts. Each of us has been given power by the Holy Spirit. By us using our gifts empowered by the Spirit of Jesus, Jesus continues his work in the world of bringing everyone to the love of God. In the rack in front of you, where your hymnal fits, some of you have a bible there as well. Who all has a bible? I will need you to help read a passage to the rest of the congregation. Please turn to the 34th chapter of Acts.

In the spring of that year a young girl in the church became ill with a terrible pain in her side. Her parents took her to the physician who said she would need to undergo serious surgery.

Maggie Falk was taken to WakeMed. Leaders of the church came, laid hands on her and prayed for the Spirit of Jesus to be with her and guide the hands of the doctors and nurses. The youth of Heartsong gathered after PizzaPizza on Wednesday night to pray for her recovery. People in Martha Ministry brought food to the house. The women in the Prayer Shawl ministry brought Maggie a prayer shawl to wrap her in the warmth and love of Christ. People from Good Shepherd called her grandmother & parents & the church to see how she was doing.

They sent her cards and came by the hospital to see her.

Pentecost this year came about six days early for Maggie Falk and her family for the spirit of Jesus and the power of Jesus fills her room at WakeMed. Jesus came to her through you. Jesus came to her through his body that still is in the world, the church.

The Holy Spirit is alive and well. Jesus is continuing his work through us with all the amazing gifts he has given us. With our gifts Jesus speaks to people just like he did on that first Pentecost. Through our different gifts Jesus speaks with power and shows people his love in a language that they can understand. The Acts of the Apostles is not a finished book. It will not be complete until Jesus finishes his work in the world through us.

So on this day of Pentecost, how has Jesus poured out his power and his Spirit on you? What gifts /what language have you been given to share the love of God? How will the next chapter in the book of Acts read? May Jesus help us recognize the power we have been given with his Holy Spirit & use it to share his love.