



## DAY OF PENTECOST

June 4, 2017

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If heaven is a decadent 7-layer caramel cake made by our own Jane Mullins (which it is!), then Pentecost is that spoonful from the bowl before it goes into the oven!

God gave us Pentecost so that we might know both the glory which awaits us and the responsibility we have for working to make this world a reflection of the one to come!

As we see all these flags throughout the Sanctuary, it gives us the merest idea of how wonderfully wide Christ's church is.

I have shared with you the visceral joy that springs from the core of my being upon hearing Portuguese spoken, even though I do not understand it. I imagine the power of the Spirit and the tongues of flame are something like that, except multiplied many times over; all speaking different languages. But when the presence of God's Spirit is there, suddenly, they understood each other!

This is one of the most powerfully actions in the New Testament – since we all know how culture, class, and nationality can divide people and lead to violence, hatred, judgment, and war.

Tragically, in Portland, we saw the worst of the cultural/religious wars. One man filled with rage and hatred was bullying and threatening two young ladies. Three men stepped in to stand up for the young ladies and two of those men lost their lives.

The spirit not only gifts us with the divine presence, washing us in the glory of God, but calls us to action to stand up for the divine in all people.

That is the Pentecostal event: a deep experience of our oneness in Christ; a literal realization that we truly are all kin, both literally – in our common ancestors – and spiritually – in that we are all brothers and sisters in the one true God.

As a church we set out with a new mission: AIM, **All In Mission**. We believe that as God has called us and claimed us as his children, he has also commissioned us to remake this world after the spirit of Pentecost. A time of both oneness in the church and a time when people shared so generously, no one had any need.

So today we are going to hear from brothers and sisters from the Congo. No one wants to leave their homeland; would you? But if you are forced, you pray that someone will be there to receive you. If your children had to leave, you would pray that they would be received as if your children were their own.

Christ challenged us to care for the least - the least powerful; those with the least voice. In our times, that often means those with mental illness, whose needs are often shoved into the shadows where they can be ignored or forgotten. You will hear how you can be an advocate.

We all know how busy we are and our own familial responsibilities take up more than enough of our day. But sometimes God puts a call before you and you can answer it! Learn to listen.

Today on Pentecost let us all feel the Spirit's call and claim upon the whole earth – where every country and land knows God's love.

As you see these flags, let it be a sign and symbol of the wondrously vast reach of our amazing God – a sign of God's love for everyone – and let the flags also remind us of the vast family of God of which we are a called to be agents of peace, hope, and love. Amen.