

Reflection for Pentecost and Children's Sunday
May 23, 2021

Let us Celebrate!
Acts 2:1-21 (The Whirl Story Bible)

There is a birthday celebration today. That is the reason why I'm wearing a little bit of red that I was able to find in my closet, and I decorated with streamers, as well, as you can see up on the wall behind me. In some places, in the country where I grew up, when people see you walking on the street wearing red, they will greet you, "Happy birthday!" To the people there, when you wear red, it is your way of telling that you're celebrating a joyous occasion in your life, specifically, a birthday, because red is a celebratory colour. Whose birthday is it today? It's not my birthday nor those of you who are wearing red, I suppose.

Today is Pentecost Sunday. Angela and Zion together with Zoe read to us earlier how this occasion happened based on the book of Acts chapter 2 verses 1 to 21. This day is special, because it is the day when God's Holy Spirit came to guide the church. That is why red is our colour for this Sunday, because it symbolizes fire, spirit, energy, passion, strength, power, intensity, courage, and determination. It makes us remember the flames or "tongues of fire" dancing over the disciples and friends of Jesus gathered on that day. If you are able to make the Pentecost headband or hat at home, now is the time to put it on as you will see on the slide here - some of our Sunday School kids are wearing it (*put on the "tongues of fire" headband/hat*). In the story, it does not say that there was actual wind and flame, instead there was something unfamiliar, inexplicable

and strong that took place. The most fitting way to describe it is to say that it was like wind and flame. However, what matters is that the disciples were certain that God was with them in a very significant way. The disciples or the apostles later on, were then encouraged to go out into the streets and tell everyone about Jesus.

The celebration of Pentecost is actually a Jewish harvest festival called Shavuot. That is the reason why a lot of people were visiting the city of Jerusalem that day. They were people from different places and spoke different languages. However, these people were surprised to hear that the apostles were talking to them in a language that each of them can understand, it could be in Latin, Greek or Arabic, because it is their language from the places where they came from. Jesus fulfilled his promise to send the Holy Spirit; it is God's Spirit that gave the apostles the ability to do something that they had never done or known before. What did they tell these people who came from different places? They told them about the love of God. Peter shared the great news about Jesus, the living God. Those who were listening believed, and there were 3,000 or maybe more of them. After they were all baptized, the church was started! This Pentecost day is the church's birthday! Happy Pentecost, let us celebrate! We are celebrating today, because just like the apostles- the followers of Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, God has given us the abilities that enable us to do God's work on earth. God inspires us, has given us gifts which are our talents, and works through us.

There is a children's book written by Ysaye (ee-za-ee) Barnwell called, "We Are One." There is a copy in the library, but it is not available at the moment, so I am not

able to actually show the pages to you. You will see on the screen though what the cover looks like. If you have ever had a chance to read it, you will find that in every page of the book, it features a short phrase that reminds us of a prophecy from the book of Joel chapter 2 in the Old Testament and the truth of Pentecost expressed wonderfully. I will read to you what the book says;

For each child that's born

a morning star rises and sings

to the universe who we are.

We are our grandmothers prayers

we are our grandfathers dreamings,

we are the breath of our ancestors.

We are the spirit of God.

We are Mothers of courage

fathers of time.

Daughters of dust,

sons of great visions.

We are sisters of mercy

brothers of love

lovers of life and the builders of nations.

We're seekers of truth

and keepers of faith,

makers of peace, wisdom of ages.

We are one.

May we be able to live by these gifts that God has equipped us with, through the Holy Spirit, as we continue to be part of the church called by God to serve.

On behalf of the Sunday School Group, I would like to greet you with a Happy PENTECOST using this acrostic: Happy...

P- arty hats?

E- nergy! Enthusiasm!

N- ew signs of life!

T- alents that people share!

E- ncouragement during COVID 19!

C- ourage when starting something new!

O- ther languages on church signs!

S- ymbols of peace in our community!

T- hankfulness for the church!

Amen.

Works Cited

Barnwell, Ysaye M., and J. Brian. Pinkney. *We Are One*. Harcourt, 2008.

PMRC First Third Ministry, United Church Of Canada. *PENTECOST Acrostic*.

Embracing Spirit! Celebrating the Liturgical Seasons of Pentecost and Ordinary Time, at home, 2021.