



Raquette Lake Chapel Sunday Blast May 31, 2020: The Day of Pentecost

Pentecost: the festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension, held on the seventh Sunday after Easter. Churches often decorate in red to symbolize the Spirit “descending like tongues of fire.”

Readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for the Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21: The Holy Spirit descends on the disciples hiding in the upper room.

Psalms 25-35, 37: A hymn of praise to God as the creator.

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13: Paul writes that the Christians at Corinth “are not lacking in any spiritual gift.”

John 20:19-23: The risen Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon the disciples hidden in the upper room.

Not a sermon... (“Where is church?”)

Acts and John report the Holy Spirit descending on the disciples locked inside. I wonder if that influences our decisions about church these days. Is church always “inside,” in a specially designated area? Or, can church be elsewhere. People (well, “churchy people”) may be overly-fixated on opening up church. What if we discovered that church is not “in there” but “out there”? I am a little hesitant to ask this, but: do we also hide, like the disciples, in our churches, afraid of what is “out there”?

In no way am I denigrating church buildings or their purpose, that is to gather as a community to honor and worship our creator and become aware of how we can help each other. After looking at some of the incredible cathedrals built hundreds or a thousand years ago, I can’t help but think “we don’t build anything like that anymore! What devotion those people had to construct buildings that took generations to complete!” And look at the Raquette Lake Chapel, and think about the care that has been taken for that building and the love of God which inspires that care today and inspired its building in the first place 100 years ago in the Adirondack wilderness.

While the Spirit came to the disciples hiding in a locked room, we also learn that they didn’t stay inside! Peter, speaking to the amazed crowd outside who hear the disciples speaking many languages, says, “God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.” This Spirit goes to work in our daily lives, in our homes, in the market, and at work, if we let it.

I knew a woman minister with five small children who was worried about her spiritual life because she seemed to spend all day cooking, cleaning, and washing and folding clothes. (I can’t even imagine!) Her spiritual advisor said, “you can honor God by cleaning house. You can honor God by folding clothes. You can honor God by caring for your family.” In other words, you do not have to be in church all the time! You can honor God in your daily life.

In that same spirit we can go “out there,” we can conduct our daily affairs in a manner which honors God and serves our neighbors. And we don’t have to be inside a church to do that. May it be so. Amen!

-Blessings, Vance

Prayers for the Raquette Lake Community working under unusual circumstances to prepare for the summer season, especially Jim.
