

**Pentecost - Year A**  
**11 May 2008**  
**Saint Anne's Episcopal Church**  
**Lee's Summit, Missouri**

**Acts 2:1-21**  
**John 20:19-23**

The wind is blowing again,  
The wind is blowing again,  
Just like the day of Pentecost, the wind is blowin' again.

There was a crowd gathered from all over town,  
They came to see what it was all about;  
There was a sound that came down from the upper room,  
Where the Holy Ghost was being poured out;  
It sounded just like the roar of a mighty wind,  
As it fell on ev'ry one of them,  
And the wind that blew at Pentecost,  
Praise God, it's blowin' again!

The wind of God is blowin' thro' the world today  
As the prophet Joel said it would do;  
For Peter said on the day of Pentecost,  
It's for you and your children, too;  
So, open up your heart and let the wind blow in,  
You'll never, never be the same again,  
For the wind that blew on Pentecost  
Keeps blowin' and blowin' again!

Yes, the wind was blowin' on that Pentecost Day when all the disciples were gathered together in  
a room in Jerusalem.

Could this have been the same wind which on the very first morning of all mornings swept across  
the dark waters, the wind of creation? Yes, this was indeed a life-giving wind. A wind that  
would bring something new into being.

And, there were “tongues like fire” on that Pentecost day. Could this fire have been the fire that Moses encountered in the bush on Mount Horeb, the bush that was blazing but not consumed? Yes, this was indeed a fire that signaled the very presence of God.

Yes, there were wind and fire in that room on the Day of Pentecost. Wind and fire. Signs that God was bringing new life, life empowered by the Holy Spirit. Wind and fire.

And, what was the result of this rush of wind and the tongues of fire that rest on every disciple gathered together that day?

The result was miraculous, bold proclamation. A miracle of speaking in previously unknown languages, so that all those in Jerusalem who had come from many different places and who spoke many different languages could understand the “good news” of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection in their own tongue.

And, boldness, incredible boldness in witnessing to the risen Messiah. A boldness evidenced in Peter’s response to those in the city who questioned just what in the world was going on.

It’s a strange twist to the post-resurrection story, isn’t it?

For it hadn’t been too very long ago that these disciples were gathered together in a room under very different circumstances than those on Pentecost when the wind and fire came, as our reading today from the Gospel of John has reminded us.

**When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear...**

Frightened disciples, behind locked doors.

And, what about Peter? It hadn't been very long before that Peter was so afraid that he denied that he even knew Jesus – not one time, but three times!

What had changed so much? How did the disciples go so quickly from fear and denial to bold proclamation?

Well, our texts make that answer very clear. It was the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was the power that enabled those disciples to “go public” – to proclaim the good news of Jesus boldly. The wind of the Spirit literally blew the doors off the room that the disciples had locked with fear.

And, it is that same Spirit that continues to be the power which enables us in our own time and place to “go public” – to proclaim the good news of Jesus boldly.

You see the wind really is blowin' again, as we sang a few minutes ago.

Now, a word of caution about all of this talk of the Holy Spirit.

Think about wind and fire for a moment. Wind and fire both have a certain uncontrollable character. Just to emphasize what was really going on that Pentecost Day in Jerusalem, the writer of Acts even told us that this wind that came on Pentecost was sudden and violent. Wind and fire – they are unruly and they are risky and they are unpredictable.

Wind and fire. Let's face it, when we call on the Holy Spirit to empower us, we're taking a risk, because we can't be sure we know where that Spirit will take us.

As one preacher has said, "it is the nature of the Holy Spirit to want to take over wherever he, or she, intrudes." The Holy Spirit can be down right pushy and can lead us to places that no right-thinking, rational person or group of people would voluntarily want to go.

The Holy Spirit just seems to want to take control. And, that can be difficult, even unthinkable, for those of us who really like to be in control of our own lives, our own futures...thank you very much.

But, before we all run screaming from the building at the prospect of wind and fire and a Holy Spirit that's just too dangerous – too risky - to deal with, let's recall what the wind and fire brought on that Pentecost Day in Jerusalem so long ago.

First, if it had not been for Pentecost, the story of Jesus would never have been told. It was on that day that the disciples quit living in fear and began to garner the strength they needed to fulfill what Jesus had promised at his farewell dinner with his disciples. The promise of "greater things than these will you do" began to come to fruition at Pentecost, and God was glorified by the work they did in Jesus' name.

And, Pentecost brought new life. The power of the Holy Spirit - sent by the Father and promised by the Son - created an inclusive, loving, praying, witnessing, outreaching community of believers. And, what resulted was so attractive that it literally drew people, by the thousands, to it; it didn't frighten them away.

The wind and fire of Pentecost didn't create fear and chaos. No, it created a community characterized by what the apostle Paul would later call the fruits of the Spirit - love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity and faithfulness.

Today, to commit ourselves to be like those disciples on that first Pentecost Day - to be open to God's creating, transforming, upending, renewing wind and fire – well, it's still risky business.

But, I'd like to think that we - the church in this place - is willing to take that kind of risk. Because, only by taking that risk, can we be the church that continues to proclaim God's liberating love boldly in this broken, imprisoned world of ours, in a world that is literally dying for the hope that Christ can give.

God created and empowered the church on that Pentecost Day – through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What would the church be like today if we truly trusted that God can continue to empower and sustain the church now – through the gift of the Holy Spirit?

A radical trust not in what we see and hear and touch, but trust that the Spirit will direct and move us in the right way? Radical trust that the Spirit will give us all we need to move beyond our fear to bold proclamation.

Because, you see, the church is really the church only when it lives in the power of the Holy Spirit – and not in its own power.

So - come, Holy Spirit, come. Let your wind blow freely so that the doors of our fear are blown off. Kindle in our hearts the fire of your love, so that we are strengthened to speak the love of the risen Messiah boldly to a hurting world. So that we can be the church.

AMEN.