

## **Barre Congregational Church**

May 23, 2021: A Pastoral Message by Pastor Margaret Keyser

~ Day of Pentecost ~

***“I will Pour My Spirit on All People”***

Our services can be found on our website at [www.barrechurch.com](http://www.barrechurch.com) and Facebook page.

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### **Scripture Reading: Acts 2 v 1-21**

#### **I. Introduction:**

I do not enjoy flying, but I like being at airports, especially international airports where I see all kinds of people and hear all kinds of languages. It is interesting, and awesome to see the diversity of God’s people, and how we all travel on our different journeys. It is interesting to meet and work with people of different cultures and languages, to learn about their persuasions and beliefs, what is important for them. Among other groups, I am reminded of my five-year work with Palestinians and Israelis, as they were trying to come together towards mutual understanding of their differences over the land, and the conflict that has troubled the Holy Land for so long. I remember giving them a painting project to do, which, when finished, depicted their conflict, and how together they walked out of the dark soil, through the land they both love, and into the sun with the olive tree they both cherish on their journey. To complete the project, they wrote their names all around the painting, in Hebrew and Arabic, their heads touching each other, and they came together in new ways.

#### **II. They were all together on that morning**

The scene on the Day of Pentecost, was during the Festival of the new Grain, or the Harvest Festival, when Jews thanked God for the gifts of the grain harvest. The festival took place 50 days after the Passover. Here we have a scene of about 120 people in Jerusalem, followers of Jesus Christ, women, and men, including the mother of Jesus, and the twelve disciples. They were probably together in prayer and worship and sharing bread together and just having a friendly gathering together, when suddenly they heard a loud and wild wind blowing right through their gathering. The wind which came from heaven filled the

whole house where they were sitting. The next thing they saw was the manifestation of lights that looked like tongues of fire on each person's head. This was followed by all of them speaking in other tongues or languages. They were filled with the Holy Spirit but did not know that.

The crowd, which was moving around in Jerusalem at this festival, heard the strange voices of people speaking in their languages, all at the same time. They were utterly amazed, excited, and perplexed, because this group of 120 people were speaking in their languages. The crowd was made up of at least fifteen different ethnic groups and regions as described in verses 9 to 11. They must have come for the festival, or some of them may have returned to Jerusalem from the places where they had moved to. We do not know. How could it be, they asked themselves that these Galileans were able to speak their languages? Where would they have learned it? Some were surprised and others were skeptical and made fun of them, we read. The experience of the people there in Jerusalem was that of a burst of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, says Eckard Schnabel in his commentary on the Book of Acts, where they experienced the miraculous work of God in and through them, and where the content of their message in those various languages was about the mighty deeds of God, in and through the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, His death and Resurrection His ascension into heaven. The crowd themselves acknowledged that in verse 11, and they could not believe their ears. What does this all mean?

### **III. I will Pour My spirit on All People**

This passage leads us to the speech of Peter, where he corrected the perception by some that they were drunk from wine. Instead, he says, they were filled with the Spirit of God, as prophesied by Joel 2 v 28-32 in the Old Testament. In these last days God will pour out God's Spirit on all people, he said. These last days meaning during the time of Jesus, and until the last day when Jesus returns. We are living during that dispensation of the Holy Spirit with us. The Holy Spirit will not distinguish between race, ethnicity, class and so forth. That is the long-term promise that the Holy Spirit will be poured out onto all people. The implications of that are described in verses 17 – 21. Young and old will prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams. Many wonders will happen before the Lord comes. His speech does not end yet, but in this passage, it ends with the words, "And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord, will be saved."

As I was preparing for this sermon, I was reminded of the year when, at sixteen years old, I had my first experience with God speaking to me and when I received my call to the ministry. After that experience, my sisters and I joined a group of youth leaders for a spiritual youth camp. I was new into that “kind of thing”, but I had started to build a relationship with God. It was at that camp where I experienced the power of the Holy Spirit as it entered my body, my whole being in the most powerful way, something I will never forget, and would put me on the road of deepening my relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the presence and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

#### **IV. The Church in the Power of the Holy Spirit**

In Peter’s speech in verse 36 he declared that Jesus Christ has poured out the Spirit which they saw. In this, Jesus completed His work, He commissioned the disciples for their work in this world, and the Holy Spirit ushered in a dispensation where, says Jurgen Moltman in his book, “The Church in the Power of the Spirit”, “the church and its ministries is conceived in the movement and presence of the Holy Spirit”. That means, the church, the congregation is a congregation of the Spirit, and it is the Spirit that makes the ministries of the congregation into a living community, says Moltman. We become a congregation of the Spirit, where Christ is the Center and the Head of the Body. The Spirit calls the people of God into life, and the Spirit of God gives the community of faith the authority for its mission.

#### **V. Closing**

As we celebrate this Day of Pentecost, we do this as people from different homes, backgrounds, and different stories and persuasions. In our differences we are bound together by the love of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit within us. This happens in different ways and in different gifts we received through the Spirit of God. We are made alive through the Holy Spirit. We serve through the Holy Spirit the church, the congregation, with Christ in the Center and at the Head. As we serve, and as we speak, and as we perform our duties, may we be blessed by the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in us, and through us always. May others recognize within and among us, the work of God and message of God, about the life and work of Christ. Amen