



June 9, 2019

## Are You on Fire ?

The disciples were all together. They had followed Jesus' instructions and had gone to an upper room and they waited. Where was this "advocate" that Jesus had promised them? Can't you just see them? Pacing back and forth wondering what or who this Advocate was going to be. It might be like waiting to meet your daughter's boyfriend, hoping for the best and yet wondering if you should expect the worst.

When the day of Pentecost arrives--Pentecost was originally a festival when the Jews would celebrate the wheat harvest, which fell exactly 50 days after the first day of Passover—the disciples are together. And then there was a sound from heaven "like a rush of a violent wind" that fills the entire house. Tongues, as of fire, appear and rest separately on each disciple. With the gift of the Spirit bestowed upon them, the disciples begin to speak in different languages. Outside in the street, a crowd gathers to see what all the noise is about. The crowd is amazed because they can all understand the disciples even though they are from different countries speaking different languages. The disciples are overcome with the Spirit of God and cannot help themselves; they are compelled to tell of the mighty power of God. They tell of how God had divided languages at the tower of Babel so they could not communicate or get along with each other. This was God's judgment on them because they had attempted to do without him. But now the gift of the Spirit had come and God's judgment and those divisions were overcome.

I love this description of Pentecost. Ever since I was a child I can just see the disciples standing there with these tongues of fire on top of their heads. For the disciples it must have been one enormous hot flash! The Spirit of the living God was upon them and they were set ablaze with the presence of God.

When one is in the presence of God's Holy Spirit, you are changed. Your physical being changes, your spiritual being changes,

your emotional being changes. Much like the transfiguration of Jesus, there is something about the Holy Spirit and God's presence that changes us inside and out.

It must have been an incredible thing to witness. The crowd that had gathered was blown away. In fact, the disciples were so changed that the crowd accused them of being drunk. Haven't you met some folks who are just so happy and so joyous that you wonder what they have been drinking or what they have been smoking? It was the same on that first Pentecost. But the disciples weren't drunk on alcohol; they were drunk with the presence of God, the Holy Spirit.

You see that is what God can do. That is what God has done. That day of Pentecost took on a new meaning. It became Pentecost, the birthday of the church. With the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, the church was formed.

Isn't God just amazing and wonderful? God did not want his followers to be lost and alone. So God in God's infinite wisdom and love sent the disciples an advocate. God still does the same for us today. God does not leave us to our own devices; God leaves us a powerful advocate.

Are you on fire? Can you feel the mighty presence of the Holy Spirit right now? Are you filled with the Spirit of the living God? Are you so passionate and energized by God's presence that you are about to scream? Let's as churches and people of faith in the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference be empowered by the Holy Spirit, and let's show all who see and hear us that we are on fire, on fire with the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- Rev. Sharon S. Morris, Associate Conference Minister



In next week's Communitas:  
 Report on the PSEC Annual Spring Meeting held  
 May 31-June 1, 2019

