

Numbers 11:24-30; Psalm 104:23-35, 37; Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23

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The Day of Pentecost – Year A – June 4, 2017

Trinity Episcopal Church

Yesterday I had the opportunity to attend the *Canton Districtwide Chamber Singers Festival* held at Collinsville Congregational Church. It featured the Canton Intermediate Chamber Singers, Canton Middle Chamber Singers, and Canton High School Chamber Singers. A number of you were there, and a number of our Trinity young people gifted us with their voices: Layla Foley, Lauren Marze, Emma MacLaren, and Sarah Marze. There were also other young people in the wider community I have had the joy of knowing. Needless to say their voices were phenomenal, and it was a privilege to hear them. I can only imagine how the pieces were carefully selected to honor their voices, to celebrate their gifts of music, and I'm sure to challenge them at the same time.

I was struck by the words of one song the Canton Intermediate School Chamber Singers performed: *We Are One* by David Osmond. These are the words:

I know we don't see  
everything in the same way  
but I know we won't be  
really free if we don't stay  
united, cause divided

we will fall for anything it's true  
so I have decided  
I will stand with you  
and I will.

*I will make a stand  
I will raise my voice  
I will hold your hand  
cause we are one  
I will beat my drum  
I have made my choice  
we will overcome  
cause we are one*

some say there's no way  
your way will ever be okay  
they say the best days are behind  
so rewind and you will find  
the times when the best men  
defend every friend, neighbor,  
countryman  
but now there's no where  
where you can speak your mind  
but I will.

*Refrain x 2*

Times may change  
but truth remains  
we won't be silenced  
won't be changed  
cause injustice anywhere  
threatens justice everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

*Refrain x 2*

The song was sung with fervor and conviction and great skill. My experience was that each song was given to us with that same passion, as if these young people were collectively and individually teaching us all something through their music. Music reaches the soul powerfully, and this particular song touched mine deeply as I continued to think about the Day of Pentecost.

We hear in our Scriptures today miraculous things about the Spirit of God. In Numbers we hear that the Lord came down in a cloud and spoke to Moses and “took some of the spirit that was on him, and put it on the seventy elders” that had been gathered together to help Moses. (Numbers 11:25). In the Acts lesson, “...suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind... and divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a

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<sup>1</sup> David Osmond and Jenn Blosil, “We Are One,” [www.musixmatch.com](http://www.musixmatch.com)

tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:2-3). They all began to speak in other languages and yet all understood the other, no matter what language was being spoken. *They were all one.* The prophecy of Joel had come into being. No one would be left out—all would receive the Spirit, and so it was that day. *They were all one.*

The Holy Spirit that we celebrate this day brings life out of death, hope out of despair, light out of darkness. We need the Holy Spirit every moment of every day. This has been another week of unspeakable tragedy in our world with terrorist attacks particularly in Kabul, Pakistan, and London and in our own country where people have broken and taken innocent lives or harmed people beyond understanding. I believe the situations around us call out to us to become people that are all one as the song I heard yesterday.

The disciples that day long ago become apostles who were given the gift of the Holy Spirit. They were given their voices as the early church to be heard, to be comforted, and to be strengthened to go out and share the good news of God in Jesus Christ. The same Spirit that rested on those early disciples and all who gathered with them rests on each of us. We come together as a community of believers each week and gather around this table to be fed. 4<sup>th</sup> century theologian St. Augustine wrote about the Eucharist:

“Behold what you are; become what you believe.” We are fed with Jesus’ body and blood to become what we believe.

Many of us have been praying since Ascension to this Day of Pentecost for *Thy Kingdom Come*. The short videos for adults and young people have been awe-inspiring. Archbishop Justin Welby’s final words in *Thy Kingdom Come* include: “Pentecost is the key moment in the church, not going inward but in being the church driven out to change the world.” We witness the promise that the spirit will come and that lives will be transformed. Welby calls it the “moment of prayer into action”, and invites us “to confront every injustice, every evil, every moment of darkness and to let the world know that we have the best news the world has ever heard.”

The Holy Spirit empowers us to do just that—to go out and live and share that we have the best news the world has ever heard. We’re empowered to be the Jesus movement of today—to behold who we are and become what we believe and to raise our voices witnessing to God’s dream for us all to be one. Our young people teach us many things, and I’m grateful for what they gave me yesterday. May the Holy Spirit and their gift make a difference in us as we go out from this place today.

*I will make a stand*

*I will raise my voice*

*I will hold your hand*

*cause we are one*

*I will beat my drum*

*I have made my choice*

*we will overcome*

*cause we are one*

*Amen.*