



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

May 19, 2024

“Strangely Warmed”

Recap of sermon from May 19, 2024

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

The Holy Spirit swept through the house where they were gathered. There was noise. There was light. It was incredible. It was confusing. In the midst of the confusion something was born: The Church.

In the beginning of Acts, just before his ascension, Jesus tells those that are gathered that the Holy Spirit would come soon, and with that they would receive the power to carry the gospel through Jerusalem, to Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. And what is the first power that God grants through the Holy Spirit?

There was no water into wine. There was no calming of a storm. There was no blind person receiving sight. There was no raising of the dead. The first miracle of the Holy Spirit and the Church was the miracle of communication. In the midst of incredible diversity, the first act of the Holy Spirit was to bring people together through common speaking and miraculous hearing.

And some scoffed.

Some disregarded the miracle. They saw it as the effects of new wine. Instead of seeing a miracle unfold in front of them, they saw nonsense. They mocked the gathered followers of Christ.

It feels familiar.

“The UMC is No More,” was a headline from the Wesleyan Covenant Association last week. Another podcast interviewed a prominent traditionalist Methodist with the headline “Post Mortem on the UMC.” There are some who witnessed our General Conference and have decided that it was akin to a gathering of false witnesses, blowing more hot air than Holy Spirit.

I paraphrase Peter when I say, “Two Rivers Church! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! The church is not dead! Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: In the last days, God says, ‘I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophecy. Your young will see visions. Your elders will dream dreams.’” (Acts 2:14-17, sort of).



The Holy Spirit will be poured out on all people. General Conference acknowledged that Pentecost truth. What we need now is not catchy headlines or thought pieces about the demise of the church. What we need is a miracle of communication. In the midst of our incredible diversity as a worldwide church we need the miracle of common speaking and miraculous hearing.

While some will scoff, it is our duty to keep doing the work of the Church. We will continue to cast visions and dream dreams. Our vision is to create a community of generosity, grace, and celebration that crosses lines of nationality, gender, race, expression, and even language.

Reports of our church’s death have been greatly exaggerated. The United Methodist Church remains a place where people can come together – even in disagreement. We need to reserve room for conservative voices. As one conservative pastor said in an interview, “I’m OK with that language disappearing. It doesn’t change my beliefs, my understandings. It just takes us back to a time when it was not even in the *Book of Discipline*. I can live with that.”

We need another Pentecost miracle of communication. Speaking from our own lived experience but committed to hearing each other. Let me remind you of our Bishop Frank Beard’s constant prayer, “Lord, send the gentle wind of your Holy Spirit to blow upon the embers of my heart and fan me into flames for Jesus.” May the winds of Pentecost ignite in all of us a miracle of communication and a passion for sharing the good news of Christ to the ends of the earth.

Next Week: Part 2 of 6 of “Strangely Warmed”
Grace upon Grace, Romans 5:1-5, Ephesians 2:4-9