

**Not One but Many Pentecost Stories**  
**The Rev. Dr. Anne Miner-Pearson**  
**Pentecost Sunday, June 9, 2019**

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You have to admit that Pentecost story is a whopper! It has everything a good story needs:

- Dramatic beginning: When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly....”.
- Sound effects: ...there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind....
- Visual effects: “Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them...
- Startlingly details: “...and a tongue rested on each one.”
- Amazing results: “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages...”
- Giving life: “... and I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.”

Now I ask you: how would you like to preach a sermon on that story? Well, I admit I was stumped. Not that I don't know the story. Not that I haven't preached on it over the years. But, suddenly this year, it seemed overwhelming and beyond me. I couldn't make any connection with it that was worthy of your time this morning - and frankly, as I struggled to write, I was boring myself! Time to stop, I said, and laid on the couch with my cat. That story was just too far out. Not that it couldn't have happened. It's just that such a Pentecost story has never happened to me.

Hmmm. With my cat napping on my chest, I was caught with the thought of such a Pentecost story never happening to me. Hmmm. I wonder.... Is that true? Has no such Pentecost story never happened to me? Have I never, have you never been in one place with a group of people who've gathered for a reason, or even no reason, and had a profound and unexpected experience of creativity, explosive insights, fast-moving tongues, blowing out the walls of, if not the building, at least your minds and hearts?

Able to put aside differences and explode with the dazzling swell of being carried beyond, if not heaven, at least into fresh, exciting ideas, possibilities - yes, even visions! No Pentecost story? For me? For you? At this point, I'm jumping up and leaving my cat without a bed for her nap.

My Pentecost story comes into my head. It's about my experience as a member of the Episcopal Creative Arts Day Camp planning team, a ministry I've been doing for 6 years. Called ECAD for short, the camp is held at St. Mark's Cathedral the last week in July. Some 12 Episcopal congregations around the metro area are represented. Trinity always has one of the largest groups! Here's my story:

And when the day of the meeting came, the planning team of this summer's Episcopal Creative Arts Day Camp was in an upper room of St. Mark's Cathedral in Minneapolis. We had met before and worked out the theme for this year: Sacred Seeing. The focus is icons as way to learn, play, create around seeing deeper into the holy, beyond the first glance. As our baptismal covenant says: "to respect the dignity of every human being", to re-spect, keeping looking until all the differences didn't matter because a oneness emerged.

Yet, at this meeting, we were going deeper into the details of the week. We were selecting biblical stories about seeing and blindness - Saul on the road to Damascus, Jesus' healing with mud and spittle - and it sounded like the rush of a mighty wind. Suggestions about children's stories, games like "I Spy" and creating a scavenger hunt were appearing among us like dancing tongues of fire, sparking an idea here and darting across the table to ignite another idea.

And what about the mid-week field trip? Where is the perfect place to expand the experience of "Sacred Seeing" beyond the walls of St. Mark's and scope of the planned activities? Who can partner with the ECAD community to help us see with new eyes, listen to different voices and stories, help us to find the holy - to re-spect and re-spect and re-spect yet again? The breath and fire of the Spirit came again. Of course, visit a Greek Orthodox Church. Those brothers and sisters in Christ know about icons. Icons are in their DNA. They can teach us their language. They can teach us to talk about icons.

I offered to follow the Spirit on this detail and call St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church near Lake Calhoun. Now, do you know there are two St. Mary's Orthodox churches in Minneapolis? I didn't and stumbled into calling the "wrong one". So, I just decided to make two calls. Imagine that - how inefficient. But by the end of each call, there were two excited communities eager to welcome ECAD into their space and share their passion for icons. They are offering names of congregational members who know how to write icons and love to work with children.

What an abundance of richness. At my report, the room at St. Mark's was filled with energy, delight, deep appreciation of the team's various gifts. There were moments of gratitude at what the Spirit within us and between us. We felt our "all together in one place" was more than just physical. We were giddy that morning as if drunk with new wine.

Yet, fullness is about giving away. We couldn't imagine holding on. There are campers - from Edina, Excelsior, Eden Prairie, White Bear Lake and St Pau - age 4-grade 5, youth leaders, grade 6-12, and a handful of adults who will expand God's circle at ECAD. Thank you, Eric, for joining us this year in this Pentecost story, a story that really is as spectacular as the one in the book of Acts.

Because, in the end, Pentecost is really believing that the Holy Spirit lives in each one of us. We each have our own Pentecost story and following Jesus helps us to find it and tell it. That's my Pentecost story. What's yours? Amen.