



MAY 31, 2020

LOVE FIRST, FIRST LOVE

WEEK DEVOTIONAL BASED ON SUNDAY'S WORSHIP SERVICE

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP SUNDAYS 9:00AM AT
WWW.FIRSTLUTHERAN-BARRON.ORG OR ON THE RADIO 97.7FM

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." Peter Addresses the crowd 14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. 18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19 And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20 The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. 21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

HOLDING IN PRAYER

For health and healing we pray for: Valri Scheps, DeAnn Anderson, Eugene Olson, Ron Kahl, Kathy Weghorn, Betty Missling and Gail Larson

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God, on this day you open the hearts of your faithful people by sending into us your Holy Spirit. Direct us by the light of that Spirit, that we may have a right judgment in all things and rejoice at all times in your peace, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR'S "LETTER FROM A BIRMINGHAM JAIL"

"I must make two honest confessions to you, my Christian and Jewish brothers. First, I must confess that over the past few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in his stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate, who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says: "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I cannot agree with your methods of direct action"; who paternalistically believes he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by a mythical concept of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait for a "more convenient season." Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection."

REFLECTION

BY PASTOR RON MATHEWS

The church understands pain. The Church understands suffering, oppression, and injustice.

For the past several months we have been struggling with this pandemic that has shaken our world. But it is not the first pandemic the Church has stood against.

Many leaders of faith have served in times of pandemic. Several beloved songs of our church were written out of grief and suffering. I want to talk briefly about two that were written out of pandemics. Out of suffering, several songs of our Church were written that have become favorites in our faith.

Pastor Rinkart composed "Now Thank We All Our God" in 1649. Rinkart was the only surviving pastor in Eilenburg, Saxony and conducted over 4,000 funerals during this pandemic. Filled with what I can only image could be described as uncontrollable grief and deep sadness, Rinkart's heart was moved to write a song that began with thankfulness to God. Verse one reads "Now thank we all our God with hearts and hands and voices, who wondrous things has done, in who this world rejoices; who, from our mothers' arms, has blest us on our way with countless gifts of love, and still is ours today." Moved to write these words in the midst of chaos, where everyone around him was dying. Rinkart's heart found strength in the hope of God and finding God's grace to continue to persist despite what was happening.

Another song is a much beloved Reformation hymn, "A Mighty Fortress is Our God." The words of victory put to a dynamic tune that moves the soul leaves the church feeling empowered. While we sing this song with all the stops pulled on the organ, it was in fact written to be a song of comfort, composed during the outbreak of plague in Germany c 1527. The verses contain images of our God as a fortress, a refuge, a strong hold to our souls.

God is the implements of war - a sword and shield - and breaks the cruel oppressor's rod. No strength of ours can match God's might. God fights by our side

with weapons of the Spirit and Jesus is our champion whom God elected. This hymn uses battle and war and fighting imagery to depict three important points. First, we are in the middle of a fight where people's lives are at stake. Second, we do not fight alone but we fight with the might of God and with weapons not of this world. Third, we do not do the bulk of the fighting, Jesus fights on our behalf as our champion.

Our world is hurting, both from the pandemic as infection and death rates continue to increase and systemic racism that has resulted in violence and death. The church is not apart from this pain. Rather the church is right in the middle of it, working for peace. Not a negative peace of trying to maintain status quo, but a positive peace of justice. The church is working towards a peace that is filled, moved, and curated by the Spirit.

Spirit comes again following the confusion and emptiness after the death and resurrection of Jesus. And out of that post-cordial chaos came a power that witnessed to every tribe and nation, proclaiming the resurrection and hope and power of God in Jesus Christ. The peoples decided were united in witness. And all of them together heard of the miracles of God in their own language. Different races. Different languages. Different customs.

**ONE CHURCH,
ONE BODY,
ONE FAITH,
ONE GOD.**

**WE ARE THE BODY OF
CHRIST. TOGETHER.**

**AND TOGETHER THE
CHURCH WILL CONTINUE
TO STAND FOR
PEACE AND JUSTICE.**

