



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**
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June 2025

Message from the Interim Pastor:

Promises! Promises!

Jesus said, *“I am going away, and I am coming back to you.”*
(John 14:28)

Jesus kept his promise (as always!) He told his disciples and followers that he would be returning to his heavenly home, and, as we know, forty days after his resurrection he ascended into the clouds and beyond. (His ascension was the focus of last month's article.) He also promised that his Spirit would come upon those first believers, and he would be with them forever. As always, Jesus kept his promise!

Ten days after his ascension, fifty days after his resurrection, his Spirit came like a mighty wind, blowing new life into the hearts and minds and souls of those that he had chosen to continue his mission and ministry in the world that he had redeemed. It was the high festival of Pentecost! Jerusalem was filled with people from all over the Mediterranean world. What a wonderful opportunity to start something new!

The Spirit of Jesus, just as he had promised, descended upon the apostles. They were filled with the fire of faith, with new and courageous boldness. They now were ready and wanting to tell his story to neighbors, friends, strangers, foreigners, everyone! There were people from other cultures, backgrounds, ethnicities... persons whose languages and attire certainly indicated they were from other lands and places... and the Gospel story of Jesus was for them!

The disciples were given the miracle of tongues, able to speak in languages they had never known or learned. They told the story of Jesus. They told of God's love and grace. They called upon the people to repent and believe that the Lord God, in and through the person of Jesus, the one who had been crucified and buried, had broken down the barriers that would ever separate them and the rest of humanity from a loving God who created them and had compassion for them.

This same Jesus rose from his tomb on the third day! He ascended on the fortieth day! His Spirit breathed new life and excitement into his followers on the fiftieth day! In the days that would follow, that same Spirit of Jesus would give birth to a new way of thinking and believing and doing. A church was born... Christianity!

Today the spirit of Jesus moves among us! We too are the church born of this Spirit--a community of faith, people who repent and believe, people washed and baptized, followers of Jesus, yes, indeed; and also disciples called to share, tell and retell the story of God's love, Jesus promise, and the outpouring of God's grace and love.

Jesus kept his promise, as always! You and I are recipients. Our congregation, and so many others, exist because the Spirit of Jesus continues to move and blow among us, through us, in us, and beyond us!

The day of Pentecost is June 8th, a wonderful festival day in the Christian Church calendar. We are encouraged to wear something red that day to the worship service. The sanctuary will be filled with that color and other symbols and signs of the Holy Spirit's presence among us. We will gather to celebrate a God who keeps promises... the greatest of those to love us, to save us, and to make a place for us in God's own heart and home. Thanks be to God who keeps promises!

+Pastor Murray D. Finck

The Rev Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus