

**First and Center
Pastor's Blog
June 5, 2019**

PENTECOST! I feel like that should always be written in all caps. They are not angry all caps or yelling all caps, as some people do on Twitter. Rather, they are shouting-for-joy-and-wonder all caps. They are anticipatory all caps. They are “wow the Holy Spirit is still at hand” all caps.

Which, maybe, makes them a little bit scary all caps. The disciples did not know what was coming that day in Jerusalem. I'll venture they did not imagine the Spirit would propel them into the streets shouting about the mighty acts of God through Jesus, such that people heard what they said in a dozen different languages. I'll venture they had not imagined tongues of flame above their heads, and a gale-force wind moving them out of their comfort zones.

I often say that most Mainline Protestants are actually dual-tarians, rather than Trinitarians. They love God and Jesus, but are not really sure about that Spirit thing. When that Spirit is “the Comforter,” like a cozy fire, that seems lovely. But when the Spirit tries to move us where we are not sure we want to go, that's a whole different matter. We are calm people. We plan things and expect things to go according to plan. The Spirit doesn't always respect our plans. There's a great line in the Star Wars film *Rogue One* where one character tells another that he needs to trust the Force (which many of us equate to the Holy Spirit, as in “May the Force be with you,” “and also with you.”). The character replies: “I think the Force and I have different priorities.”

So, maybe we need to practice for Sunday now. Maybe it would be good to do something out of your comfort zone. You might even invite someone to church! Or talk to that person you avoid. Or be generous in a way that stretches you. Or just sit and pray for a longer time than usual, opening yourself to God and see what happens!

May the Spirit be with you, perhaps in all caps!



~ Rev. Shelly Stackhouse
Transitional Minister