**Pentecost, 2016**

**It’s Pentecost, the day we consider the birthday of the Christian church. Pentecost is also the birthday of The Episcopal Church, because on Pentecost in 1549, the very first service was done from *The Book of Common Prayer*. For almost five hundred years we’ve been saying the same prayers all over the world. We can go into any Episcopal Church anywhere across the earth and the words from *The Book of Common Prayer* will ring out, and we will know them and understand them. Every one of us can feel at home when we enter an Episcopal Church. We know the service and we become one with a vast community of people who have been worshiping the same way for nearly five hundred years.**

**When you come to church, stop for a moment and think of all the other people who are gathered with you in small churches like ours and in huge cathedrals all over the world. Somewhere in this world the services and prayers from *The Book of Common Prayer* are being said each hour of the day and every hour of the night. The services and the prayers are said day after day, night after night until they form a rosary of constant prayers going up to heaven, going up to God. The Episcopal rosary of prayers grows stronger year after year as more prayers are said.**

**Isn’t it wonderful for all of us to know we are part of this vast rosary of Episcopal prayers and services? Isn’t it also wonderful to know the first service done from *The Book of Common Prayer* was on Pentecost? This is the day Jesus told us he would send us an advocate, the Holy Spirit who would be with us forever. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the force breathing life into all we do as a church and as individuals. Jesus left us with the Holy Spirit to be our advocate, to reside in us, and indeed to reside in all life. He also said we would be able to do even greater works than he did while he was on the earth.**

**There are great women and men throughout history that have done immense deeds. They’re the heroes we admire. Yet most of us are not among the great heroes who have walked before us and even today live among us. At our best when the Holy Spirit moves us, we are able to do small acts for others, helping to bring a bit of grace and love into each person’s life we manage to touch in a positive way. It’s always important to remember each small act of kindness is magnified by all the other people in our town, our country, in the world who are also doing small acts of kindness and bringing the Light of God into people’s lives. Just like our small church is helping to grow the Episcopal rosary of constant prayer in the world.**

**This is Pentecost, the day the Holy Spirit was given to us, to help us and guide us, to help transform us into people who truly love one another. I don’t know how others experience the presence of the Holy Spirit. I can only tell you how I experience this presence. It seems to me as if an inner wisdom takes over, guiding me to do things I might not do without the Holy Spirit’s presence. Here is one example of how I function when I allow the Holy Spirit to guide me.**

**I was in the parking lot at HyVee and looked up and saw a woman sitting on the ground. A young woman was standing there with the woman’s husband who was frail and using a cane. The woman didn’t seem to be hurt; she just couldn’t get up. I walked over to them and said to her, “I’ll help you up.” I wasn’t thinking; I was just acting. If I had thought about it, I might not have been so sure I could help her up. But something in me knew I could help her. At times like this, a stillness comes over me and I move in unity with a deep place inside of me. A place filled with the Holy Spirit. Her husband said to me, “Be careful. She broke two ribs last week.” The woman said, ‘You won’t drop me will you?” I told her I wouldn’t and in that moment I knew I wouldn’t drop her or hurt her. I helped her up and she was grateful. I continued into the store to buy my groceries, and found myself back in my thinking mode. Back in ordinary time, back into my ordinary life doing ordinary things like going to the store and buying groceries for dinner.**

**I hope this little story makes sense to you. I think we’ve all had moments in time when we do things beyond anything we believe we can do. When our mind isn’t so much in control trying to convince us what we’re trying to do we may not be able to do. These are the times the Holy Spirit can move through us and we can move forward doing small acts of kindness helping others experience the Light of God. I believe Christianity out there in our neighborhoods, in our towns is not so much about words as it is about doing for others. Serving others and it doesn’t matter if they know you are working for God. If you help someone, they feel better, it lifts them up and gives them the experience of being touched by God. When we all are doing acts of love in small ways it helps God’s kingdom grow here on earth. We are in the business of sharing God’s love through our actions.**

**We can’t truly comprehend how our gathering together each Sunday in a small Episcopal Church is helping the whole of our community. Yet it does help, because we leave here every Sunday with the Holy Spirit renewed in each of us. We go out into our community and sometimes we act from that deep place inside of us, where there are no thoughts keeping us from reaching out to those around us. In those times we’re acting from the place where the Holy Spirit dwells within us. The Holy Spirit is always with us. We just need to have the faith and the courage to let the Spirit of God flow through us even in ways we can’t predict or plan. The Holy Spirit moves best when we can keep the words Jesus spoke in the foregrounds of our minds. “Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid.” Amen**