

**Confirmation Survivors**  
**Pentecost ~ Confirmation Sunday**  
**June 4, 2006**

**Acts 2:1-21**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup>Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” <sup>12</sup>All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup>But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

<sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup>‘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. <sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

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Today is Pentecost; the birthday of the church. Christmas is the day of Jesus’ birth. Easter is the day of Jesus’ resurrection. Pentecost, the 50<sup>th</sup> day after Easter is the day of the church’s birth. The traditional color for this day is red; the color of fire. It is said that the Holy Spirit descended in tongues of fire, welding peoples together into one community, one Christian church.

All week long, in anticipation of Pentecost, I’ve been trying to imagine a Pentecost world where everyone could understand each other. And I don’t mean just each others language and native tongue, but I mean really understand each other. What would our world be like if the spirit descended and suddenly there was acceptance and respect and tolerance and even love and peace among all peoples? That is what happened on the first Christian Pentecost, and that is what I believe Jesus’ expects of us, his disciples, on this Pentecost – June 4, 2006.

Isn’t that one of the most important purposes of the church? to teach and preach and learn how to live the gospel of Jesus Christ – a gospel that calls for tolerance and respect, love of neighbor, even love of enemy. It sounds like such foolishness in today’s world, but it’s the bottom line for Jesus’ disciples of any age and any time.

I delight with all of you that there are nine young people who are ready and willing this morning to join the church,

to become bearers of this message of peace and reconciliation, tolerance and respect and love in today's harsh world. These young men and women have spent the last 5 months studying scripture, learning about the history of Christianity and our Methodist heritage. They are theologians who have expressed their beliefs in personal creeds. I am very proud of each one of them. It has been a privilege to be part of their faith journey. Their parents and mentors and Sunday School teacher have all been part of this confirmation process. It is a moment of passage in which they choose to become part of the church universal and an active member of Holy Trinity.

I want you to see them in action this morning and gain your own appreciation of this confirmation class. So would you come forward as I call your name and stand across the front of the church?

Rebecca Bay   Dylan Cain   Paige Clarizia   Sarah Gutz   Tanner Henry

Dean Loeper   Aaron Pydynkowski   Beth Ramsdell   Emily Rennard

I wracked my brain this week trying to find a reality show or a game show on TV that we could play this morning to demonstrate your confirmation wisdom. But I had trouble locating anything that reflects the Pentecost and gospel message of unity and good will, acceptance and love. For instance, how could we use *American Idol* as a model? You have all learned that in the ten commandments as well as in the New Testament, you are instructed to have no idols in your life. You are to love God and only God. *American Idol*? I don't think so.

Similarly, we can't play *Deal or No Deal* because United Methodists are not supposed to gamble.

I thought of *The Apprentice*, but somehow the values of Donald Trump don't mirror the values of Jesus since Jesus tells the rich young lawyer to go and sell everything that he has and give it to the poor.

It came down to *Survivor*. There was something appealing about it. At times, I'm sure that you've all felt like a confirmation survivor! whether it be when you were memorizing the books of the bible or practicing your readings for Holy Thursday. But if we were to play by the worldly rules, only one of you would be confirmed today – everyone else would be voted out. And that is completely contrary to Pentecost where everyone was voted in! So, here's the deal. Let's play Confirmation Survivor. We'll start with one confirmand and end up, hopefully, with everyone surviving confirmation. I'll ask a question of the first person and if that person survives, they will get to choose another confirmand to join them to answer the next question. Once you are a survivor, you may consult with other survivors about the answer. I'd like each one of you to give an answer to one of the nine questions. If you get them correct, you will all be confirmation survivors. So, who do you choose to be the first survivor?

1. Name the books of the bible that make up the gospels, the good news of Jesus Christ.
2. Name the books of the Torah in the Hebrew scriptures.
3. What is the first line of the Apostles Creed?
4. What are the two sacraments of our church?
5. Who makes up the trinity?
6. Name 4 great events from the bible.
7. What is the last book of the bible?
8. Beginning in Advent, name the 6 liturgical seasons in order.
9. Who will you choose to follow this day as you take your vow to love God and your neighbor and be a faithful member of Holy Trinity UMC?

Congratulations! You are confirmation survivors, ready to be confirmed in the faith!!