



## First United Methodist

Become a part of God's family at First UMC

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*Vision: Hamilton First: a growing extended family sharing Christ's love  
in the heart of the city (A United Methodist Congregation)*

*Mission: To Know Christ and Make Him Known in the World*

May 23, 2010

Dear Friends:

I have had a restful vacation to return to my favorite celebration of the year, Pentecost. On May 23, 50 days after Easter we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Don't get me wrong, I love Christmas and Easter, but Pentecost is the time when the story of faith moves from God to us. What do I mean?

Christmas is about God coming to be one of us, so that we might believe in God's love for us. God walking among us, teaching us what is important.

Easter is about the depth of God's love for us. As Jesus stands up to the powers of earth and faces death, it is easy to feel that God has been defeated. We understand this because there are times in our lives when we feel defeated. It is this ultimate time of being without God, that God wants us to understand that Jesus has been there, knows what it feels like, and remains faithful even unto death. When the surprise of the resurrection happens, we are assured that nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from God's love. Our sins are forgiven, not because we deserve to be forgiven, but because God's love and grace are that big!

So why not stop there? What does the story of faith need beyond what God has done for us? If we buy new clothes, put them in our closet and never wear them, they do not become our clothes. It is only as we wear them that they become ours. This is true of so many things in life. If we stand at a distance, what we observe is not ours. It is only as we get in the middle of it and "wear" it that we learn how to make something in life our own.

Pentecost is about people, you and me, accepting that we need to be in the middle of faith. But, as always with God, with a twist. We need to make it our own, but in partnership with God. God does not stand back and say, go ahead and do this and I will watch. God, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, says together we can do this. I will give you power and authority to share your faith with others.

Pentecost is about accepting that the mystical is a part of our lives. It is about the birthday of the church. It is about others finding the saving grace that we have experienced in Jesus. Pentecost is a celebration of the Holy Spirit in me or you or that person next to you.

Some of the symbols for Pentecost are wind – that which we cannot see or explain, but which we feel and know is real. Fire – do you remember Moses standing next to a burning bush and discovering God? Fire, that which burns out the things in our heart which should not be there and tempers us for God. A dove – such as what descended upon Jesus when he was baptized. The church – is the final and most important, for the church reminds us that now it is our task to share the good news.

We will enjoy a celebration of Pentecost on May 23<sup>rd</sup>. If you cannot be there, look for a cloud moving across the sky and think of God's power in the wind. Think of the church and all it has meant to you. Think of that first day of the church's birth. Think of the disciples who were so moved by God's Spirit that they spoke up and the people around them who thought they were drunk. The disciples felt so moved by God's Spirit they could not keep it to themselves. On that day they birthed the church. This same Holy Spirit allows you to relax in your faith. It ensures that you can feel God's enduring presence. The Spirit strengthens us for whatever happens in life.

Happy Pentecost! Have a good walk with God this week.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy".

Rev. Peggy