

Ezekiel 37:1-14  
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b  
Acts 2:1-21  
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

## **Sermon May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Pentecost Sunday**

### *God Has Something in Store for Us!*

In our gospel, Jesus acknowledges the grief the disciples are feeling as Jesus says goodbye. We feel pain when we have to say goodbye to our spiritual leader. Like we feel pain when we say goodbye to a friend or a family member or to a community. There is pain whenever we say goodbye to someone we care about. Someone who cares about us.

But Jesus reassures the disciples, us, that God doesn't abandon us when our spiritual leader leaves our community. As we see in our story in the book of Acts, God sends us an advocate, a helper, to help us continue God's work. To help us take care of one another. To help us love one another. As the old saying goes "As one generation dies another one is born."

The Holy Spirit is our advocate, our helper, who empowers us to keep doing ministry even in the absence of a spiritual leader. And this promise of Jesus to his disciples that he will send them an advocate also empowers and calls spiritual leaders in the community to keep teaching the believers, to care for one another. To love one another. And the hope is a new spiritual leader will emerge to replace the spiritual leader that leaves a community.

This is my last Sunday as your spiritual leader. I see that for a lot of you there is pain. Grief. We carry with us a lot of memories of doing ministry together over the past eight years. I have walked with many of you through joyous and painful events in your lives.

We have done a lot of ministries together. From growing the clothing giveaway into a ministry that helps hundreds of people every year, as well as, brings different faith communities together in a common cause. To working with our Muslim and Jewish friends to grow in relationship with one another. Helping build a more harmonious Calgary. From all the different bible studies we did to help us better see how our holy scriptures help us understand and deal with the challenges in our context. To all the confirmation classes I taught to help prepare our youth for a life of faith. From all the experimental worship services we participated in. Sometimes being so surprised at what we saw when walking into the sanctuary on a Sunday morning. Or into the yard for that matter. To the Holy Week marathon many of us came to love. From all the different fellowship gatherings we shared in together, including the young family potlucks Erin, the kids, and I really enjoyed. To all the ecumenical and interfaith

gatherings, we shared with our ecumenical and interfaith neighbours. From all the mental wellness gatherings we participated in together. Supporting each other. To walking together through the lockdown parts of the pandemic to keep our ministries going. We did a lot together to proclaim God's grace and love.

I also know that sometimes the messages I was proclaiming, the ministries I was inviting you to participate in challenged you. Pushed you outside of what was comfortable for you. But as much as a spiritual leader is to reflect God's grace in what we say and do, we are also, called to challenge those we lead. So to, help you learn and grow in your faith. And I believe through some of these more challenging messages and ministries you learned and grew as a community. As well, I learned and grew as your spiritual leader.

We grieve today as our relationship comes to an end. We celebrate today all the memories we share of the ministries we participated in together. All the work we done in Jesus' name.

But as we grieve, remember, and celebrate the past please remember that though our relationship is ending, God is not done with you. God has something wonderful and amazing in store for you.

Today is Pentecost Sunday. Today we see that the gift of the Holy Spirit renews the believers. Empowers them to continue the Jesus movement into the future. Reassures them that God isn't finished with them. God has something wonderful and amazing in store for them.

In our gospel, we see that Jesus recognizes that his time here is finished. He needs to step aside to allow the Spirit to do what it needs to do.

A year ago, I realized that my time here was coming to an end. And I need to now step aside to allow the Spirit to do what it needs to do in this community to renew you, to re-energize you.

In three weeks, I will start a new journey with Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church in London Ontario. Participating in the work God has called me to do in that community.

While you will be living out your identity as the priesthood of all believers. Continuing God's work in this community until a new spiritual leader is called. Waiting for the next wonderful and amazing thing God has in store for you as you work with this new spiritual leader. The ministry will go on.

And so, yes. We grieve today. But feel reassured in Jesus' words today. God isn't done with you. My time has come to an end with you, but everything we have done together has paved the way for someone new to come in and take you down the path God has

prepared for you to walk next. God has something wonderful and amazing in store for you. May you find hope in this promise.

Let us pray, comforting God, we grieve today the end of our relationship together. Be with Pastor Wallace and his family as they embark on a new journey in London Ontario. Be with us as we continue to do ministry during the vacancy. Living out our calling as the priesthood of all believers. Give us wisdom and patience as we discern a new spiritual leader. And give us hope in your promise that you still have wonderful and amazing things in store for us. In Jesus name we pray, **Amen.**

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