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Pentecost Sunday C Confirmation
Peace, Seattle
May 23, 2010 epk
Acts 2:1-21, Romans 8:12-17

LIVE AND BECOME

Did you notice the very Lutheran question in the middle of the lesson from ACTS:
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? (v. 12)

Bewildered and befuddled, yes, but more than that—deeply CURIOUS about the manifestation of God's presence in wind and tongue and flame, the expectant disciples of Jesus began probing immediately for the meaning behind it all.

That's when the light went on for Peter: WHY, IT'S JUST WHAT THE PROPHET JOEL SAID!
he told the crowd, GOD'S SPIRIT POURED OUT ON ALL FLESH, YOUNG AND OLD,
MALE AND FEMALE, SLAVE AND FREE.

Fast forward 20 centuries and WHAT DOES THIS MEAN? continues to be a question Lutheran Christians ask not only because of Brother Martin poses and answers it over and over again in his Small Catechism, but because faith that is alive, faith that lives and becomes doesn't simply repeat the answers of previous generations, it engages in a conversation of its own at the intersection between God's Word and human experience.

Really, that's what we—what you—have been about these last two years:
- Entering into a conversation with the faith you have received from parents, grandparents, congregation and tradition;
- Moving toward a place of deeper understanding and curiosity in matters of faith,
- Beginning the process of finding your own voice in it all,
- and today, publicly affirming your trust in the One who called and claimed you in baptism and promises to voyage with you throughout this life and into the next.

Of course you didn't arrive here today alone. Those who love you—your families and extended families—have done their part in bringing you to the Font and to the Table, and they've been joined by this congregation and others who have supported and participated in your growth in faith, and who, whether from near at hand or from across the ocean, have celebrated your joys and mourned your sorrows.

NICOLE PLANNED TO BE HERE TODAY—HOPED TO BE HERE, BUT A LITTLE MATTER OF GIVING BIRTH INTERVENED.

Anticipating that this might be the case, on Friday she wrote down some remarks that I want to share on her behalf at this time.

Today you stand up and say, *"THIS FAITH IS MINE."*

I have no doubt there will be times in your life when you will ask tough questions about what this faith is really about. I don't doubt it because I've already seen it. Keep asking questions.
The more you ask the more it will become your own. Erik, you don't need to raise your hand.

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I see in each of you a rooted compassion. You are all so different.

- Lucille with her own style and joy in performing. It may have been nice to have another girl in the group, but you took the boys in stride.
- Erik, we never know what you will say, until your hand shoots up and then you often have a really interesting question or comment.
- Peter who likes to challenge himself physically whether on the slopes, the soccer field, or getting a dead fish in a canoe. And is genuinely a nice guy.
- I'm so glad we have Ben's smile and good spirit. Ben has learned a lot this year, such as it is important to bring two pairs of shoes when going on a retreat. You have been very dedicated despite the miles, especially when it came to meeting with your mentor each week.
- David, the Lenten vegan, you are a joy to have around with your smile and spirit of hospitality. He and Sofia made a great Japanese dinner for the youth this year. I appreciate your enthusiasm and zest for life.
- All of you, with your variety of gifts and personalities care deeply for each other, and that is what brings together the community.

We didn't get to every topic we wanted to this year.
Pastor Erik and I would make a list of what we wanted to cover each session, thinking through what we hoped you would come away with, and looking at your questions and what you wanted to cover. We'd make the list and then chuckle as we realize that once again there was no way we'd be able to cover it.

Then we'd scale it back to a reasonable level, but we never, not even once, made it through even our scaled down version. But I wouldn't take back our conversations on topics such as how do you pray for your enemies.

I mention this because I look forward to continued conversations with you around your faith on Sunday mornings or retreats or other times as we continue to unpack who this Amazing Living God is and what it means to live in a world as a Christian.

I'll keep making lists we never get through. Together we'll keep unpacking what this faith life is all about, but more importantly keep loving each other.

I'm glad each of you are confirming your faith today. I know for each of you that faith looks a little different. **But it is yours.** It is your gift from the Holy Spirit.

You may not always agree with each other, myself, your parents, Pastor Erik, or other Christians. But together we are a community of messed up sinful people who try and fail and are most importantly are forgiven and loved.

Thanks for a great year. I will miss you this summer as I start a new stage of my life, but have already starting thinking about all the adventures we will have in the fall together.

Affirming your faith today, as Nicole says, doesn't mean that all the questions are answered and all the issues are settled. Some of the best questions are still ahead of you, waiting to be discovered, probed, lived. So in that sense your Confirmation is much more a beginning than it is an ending.

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Yet, you're on your way. You have a compass, and a fundamental benchmark from which all your ventures can be plotted.

We want to hear from your voice. And so I invite each of you in turn to come up at this time and to share in your own words, something about the faith you are claiming as your own.

[CONFIRMANDS SHARE PORTIONS OF THEIR STATEMENTS OF FAITH.]

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Thank you Confirmands.

You know, guys, when we first set out in those canoes across Lake Sammish on our retreat, it took awhile to learn how to paddle so that the canoe headed in the direction you wanted it to go.

There was a learning curve. But by the end of our time, you all got the hang of it.

Lucille, David, Peter, Ben, Erik:
You've shown us that you're getting the hang of this faith thing, too, and that you are ready to join the rest of us as we voyage and sometimes muddle our way through the bigger waters of life, ever relying on the gracious hand of our loving Creator, the call and challenge of our risen Lord, and the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, to guide us on our way.

Amen.