

May 23, 2021

Texts: Proverbs 3: 1-12; Acts 2: 1-8, 12-21

Title: "A Charge to our Confirmand (and to all of us)"

On this Sunday we call "Pentecost" we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit which signifies the beginning of the Christian church. One of the things that the Spirit seems to accomplish in people's lives is a new enthusiasm, a desire to share the message of Christ, and there was a new sense that the God that Jesus had told them about was for real. So this day that we remember the coming of the Spirit is an appropriate day to welcome you as a fully participating member of St John's church.

We're glad you've completed the confirmation program but it's not the end of something we celebrate after the fact. We're celebrating your future here today ahead of time. A future with a growing faith in God that will help to define who you are and how you find your place in this world in the years to come.

Our hopes and dreams for you are pretty much summed up in the reading today from the book of Proverbs, chapter 3. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Specifically, there are three things today that we are celebrating for you Ethan, ahead of time.

1. We're celebrating ahead of time that you are going to **continue on the path of spiritual growth**. Stick with this faith you are professing today. Keep learning. Come up with a plan to read the scriptures a little bit and connect with your God

each day. It's just as important as, and possibly more important than exercise and healthy eating. And just as hard because so many things can entice you away from Christ and down a troubled path. Continue on the path of spiritual growth.

2. We are celebrating ahead of time that you are going to **stay connected to the church**. 3000 people became believers on that day of the coming of the Holy Spirit. That first message that the apostle Peter preached on Pentecost resulted in a lifechanging response. It immediately led to the beginning of the mission of the sharing of the love of Christ with others. That's our mission here as well, led by the same Spirit. By staying together as a church, we keep each other on the path of serving Christ. So don't give up on the church. Even if you're not interested in everything we do, you need us and we need you. The church is old, we get stuck in our ways. Change is possible but you have to speak up and participate and we have to encourage and allow that to happen.

3. Finally, we're celebrating ahead of time that you are **developing a heart for this world for whom Christ died**. Being a Christian is all about learning to love. We were created to put others first but the message we hear around us these days tends to be about what can I get for myself. But like St. Francis said, its actually "...in giving that we receive." We got it backwards. Jesus wants us to care about ourselves but with a heart for others. That doesn't come naturally for most of us. We need to learn by doing it.

Oh, by the way, this message is for all of us. In a way, we're celebrating our future also. God's blessings to you Ethan and to us all. Amen.