

June 5, 2022

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

Title: "A Charge to our Confirmands and to Us All"

On this Sunday we call "Pentecost" we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit signifying the beginning of the Christian church. One of the things that we see in this passage from the book of acts is that the Spirit seems to invoke a new enthusiasm, a desire to learn and grow in one's relationship with God and to then share the message of Christ. At Pentecost, there was a new sense that the God that Jesus had told them about was the real deal. So this day that we remember the coming of the Spirit is an appropriate day to welcome you both, Olivia and Sophia, as a fully participating members of St John's church.

When you met with our elders last Sunday it was mentioned and worth repeating that we are happy with you that you've completed the confirmation program and that's something to be proud of but it's not the end of something we celebrate but your spiritual future that is the exciting thing. We celebrate, with the hope that your future will be one of 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.” Here are three things that we have great hopes and prayers for you both today.

1. We’re hoping and praying that you are going to **continue on the path of spiritual growth**. Stick with this faith you are professing today. I don’t know what would be more important and valuable for one’s life than to walk with the Lord. Keep learning. Do some reading in the scriptures and prayer every day. Keep connected with God. It’s just as important as, and possibly more important than exercise and healthy eating which we make a big deal about. And it’s just as hard because so many things can entice you away from Christ and down a troubled path. We all know this and for some of us know it all too well. We may have made wrong choices and only by the grace of God have we been able to returned to Him. Continue on the path of spiritual growth.

2. **Stay connected to the church**. 3000 people became believers on that day of the coming of the Holy Spirit. That first message that Peter preached on Pentecost resulted in a lifechanging response. It was amazing! It immediately led to the beginning of the church and its mission of sharing 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. I say that to all of us. 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, **developing a heart for this world for whom Christ died.** Being a Christian is all about learning to love. It's about putting others first but the message we hear around us these days tends to be about what can I get for myself. The prayer of St. Francis says that 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. You learn it by doing it and the church is the best place for that to happen.

And of course these three things I'm asking you to do today, continue on the path of spiritual growth, stay connected to the church, and develop a heart for others, are things we all need to recommit ourselves to, all of us!

Our hopes and prayers that we offer for both of you, Olivia and Sophia, today come right back to ourselves as well. God's blessings to the both of you! Amen.