

Allow Me to Re-introduce Myself
Sunday, June 5, 2022, 11:30 a.m., All Saints Church, Pasadena
The Rev. Mark Chase

Ya'll may be seated, wow, ya'll look good on this Pentecost Sunday, look at your neighbor and say "You were almost the best looking thing in here, but I decided to come to church.

The Year, was 2003, the artist was none other than Sean Carter, better known to many of us as Jay-Z. And in 2003 Jay-Z released his hit song entitled "Public Service Announcement", it would later go on to be a worldwide anthem on it's to topping the billboard charts, now in this song Jay-Z is making a statement, a statement about who he was and what he was about to the world, a statement that began with one 5 word...sentence, Allow me to re-introduce myself! As I say from time to time, Google is our friend, and so is Youtube...but that statement, that "Public Service Announcement" was the beginning of Jay-Z, sharing with the world, his history, his character, his skills, and who he was and what he was really like...

All Saints Church...Pentecost, is the moment in the Christian Calendar, where we remember, that the Living God, waaaay before Jay-Z, released her own Public Service Announcement, where she said to the world....Allow me to re-introduce myself....this, is who I really am, and this, is what I'm really like...Just in case you got it twisted, misconstrued, or tangled up,

Just in case you thought, my love, my power and my presence, was restrictively exclusive, and not radically inclusive, allow me to re-introduce myself; and pour out my spirit; on All People!!!
Some African People and Some Brown People

Just in case you thought my wisdom, anointing, and brilliance, was given out along lines of gender, Allow me to re-introduce myself, and pour out my Spirit on All People, not just cis-gendered, male, heterosexual people

Just in case you thought I was generous, according to socioeconomic status, Allow me to re-introduce myself, and pour out my Spirit on ALLLLL Flesh, not just privileged, wealthy, and entitled People, but People that have experienced the brutality of enslavement, and economic oppression

Just in case, you thought, I reserved my wonder, for those who were Old enough to "understand", Allow me to re-introduce myself, and pour out my Spirit, ALLLL People, from Babies, to those old enough to have Grand-Babies...

Ya'll, Pentecost, is the Public Service Announcement of Divinity, Letting us know what God is like, by showing us what, The Spirit is willing to do, And where the Spirit is willing to go, and upon whom the Spirit is willing to rest, and in whom The Spirit is eager to dwell!

This Pentecost Sunday beloved, I wish I had about 3 people, who are ready to Let God, re-introduce, God's self! Up in this place! This morning!

Who is this Spirit, What is she like?

Well She is Proximate and Intimate. And I use the feminine gender intentionally, because as Dr. Wil Gafney reminds us, an Aramaic speaking Jesus, would have referred to The Spirit as feminine, as that is how the Spirit is almost exclusively referred to in Hebrew Scripture, though sexism and patriarchy, have done their best to try and erase that from the Biblical text, but The Spirit, She is proximate and intimate. Jesus says, in today's Gospel that she will abide IN US, and make her home in US, That is dripping with proximity and intimacy, So close your eyes, Put a hand over your chest if possible, take a deep breath in, hold it, take a deep breath out, now just find a good rhythm of breathing, this applies to you if you're watching online as well, just follow and track your breath back and forth, in and out, you don't have to try to control it, just follow it...

Pentecost reminds us Beloved, as we take these intentional breaths, That our lungs, are the very living room of God....

Every Breath, carries with it, a poetic intention,

For those of us wracked with anxiety, please know, that any anxiety that calls your body home, cannot scare away The Spirit, who sits even closer than our worst fears, and who is pleased to wrap around those fears, and hold them tenderly, to remind you and to remind us, that even when your own body doesn't feel like home, The Spirit is still pleased to make her home, IN US!

You can open your eyes, look at you neighbor and say "what an honor it is to breathe next to you this morning, you still the second best looking thing up in here though."

She is proximate and intimate!

And yet at the same time, The Spirit is powerful, and capable. Willie Jennings reminds us, The best metaphor they can come up with for the Power of the Spirit is the wind, the wind which is powerful enough to blow down structures that have been in place for generations, that same power, makes her home, in their bodies, enabling them to do what they could not do, in their own strength, which is come together, and bear witness to the world that a different way of being human is possible. What Good News for us today church, who have that same wind, and breath, and power, coursing through us, making her home in our bodies, enabling us to come together, and bear witness to the world, that a different way of being human is still possible, Yes beloved, we are endowed with the power of the wind, and are powerful enough to affect structures of White Supremacy, Patriarchy, Homophobia and Capitalism, that have been in place for generations....

The Spirit, she is about community and interconnection. She makes her home IN US, and that means you, but that also means WE. Why else connect us through language. It's a revelation, concerning the heart of God, and it's a revelation as to what should be at the center of

ours...Our systems don't condition us for this, Capitalism conditions and leads us to competition, The Spirit of God, conditions and leads us to, connection...White Supremacy, with its age old companion, the Gun, which backs up its systems and institutions, violently pull us apart, as we have seen most recently and tragically, in Uvalde, and Buffalo, but The Spirit of God, she powerfully, and beautifully, pulls us, together...and her age old companion, isn't the gun, it is Goodness! The logic of white supremacy, creates a hierarchy, that places Blackness at the Bottom, and Whiteness at the top, and judges everything in between, in relationship to how close it can get to whiteness, but The Logic of The Spirit, disrupts hierarchy, and places human flourishing and love at the top, and hope at the bottom to hold it all together, for no matter where we find ourselves in between, the Grace of God can meet us there, and not leave us there...

She is about community...The Spirit, and being about community she doesn't pass over anybody, which is Ironic because Pentecost occurs approximately 7 weeks after The Festival of Passover, in which our beloved Jewish siblings, mark the Goodness of God, by who God...Passes OVER! And now, here at Pentecost, out of the heritage of our Jewish roots, we have another story, in which we as Christians, mark the Goodness of God, by who God... DOESN'T PASSOVER, and that is precisely, NOBODY!!!!

somebody oughta shout right there, The Holy Spirit of God, didn't pass you over, didn't look you over, and swipe left, (our high schoolers know what I'm talkin about), but she stopped, rested, dwelled, and poured herself out, on All People, the not put together people, the unread emails in our inbox people, the imposter syndrome 8 days out of the week people, The I'm still recovering from The Pandemic and I still need a minute People, All People, The Spirit, doesn't Pass Over, anybody...

In a world obsessed with Anti-Black violence, Black suffering, and Black Death, The Spirit centers Black Joy, Pouring out herself on bodies of African descent who are present, Black Bodies dancing and hoping, and laughing, and speaking, and hearing, and experiencing, the beauty and wonder of God, what would it do to our collectively psyche, if we knew what The Spirit knew, that Black People deserve Joy, and Liberation, as our birth right as humans.

The Spirit is Queer. The Spirit is Queer. Cmon ya'll, they had to stop and ask if everybody was just drunk. This was outside of what conventional wisdom said, an experience with God could ever be like. I sometimes wonder if even Jesus was surprised by Acts chapter 2, because if you read John 14, it don't really sound like Jesus knew it was gonna be crackin like this...So next week, in the church calendar, is Trinity Sunday, but it sound like, somebody in the Trinity missed an email...Because Jesus is over here in John14, talkin bout "peace I give you, not as the world gives you, peace, peace, gentle, peace..." Acts chapter 2 ain't that! I can only imagine, his disciples heard that, and they were waiting for the local, and got the express!!! Can you imagine how mad the disciples had to be at first... like "a heads up woulda been nice" Like that must have been fun, I don't know which person of the Trinity it was, but after Pentecost somebody sent out the proverbial "PER MY LAST EMAIL" Message. But Beloved, The Spirit arrives in a manner that is Queer, The Church begins and operates in a manner that is Queer...hmmmm, I

wonder if that has ANY IMPLICATIONS AT ALL FOR US TODAY! The Church was Queer before it was conservative, The Church was Queer before it was evangelical, The Church was Queer before it stood against more things than it stood for, the church was Queer before all these theologies, I've heard for years the phrase, let the church be the church, well if we're looking at Acts Chapter 2, in order to do that, we have to let the church be Queer.

Allow me to re-introduce myself, Finally, The Spirit, she is not finished! She is not finished... A friend of mine Delonte Gholston actually reminded me of this fact earlier this week. He was actually quoting Indigenous Pastor and Theologian Mark Charles, who reminds us that the Fullness of Pentecost, happened, not in Acts chapter 2, but in Acts chapter 10. Because in Acts chapter 10, The Spirit is poured out, on All Gentiles in Acts Chapter 10, as multi-ethnic and as diverse as this group was here in Acts chapter 2, they were still all Jewish, so as radically inclusive and powerful, as the moment that we remember today was, there was still, another moment to come, and while that might feel a little anticlimactic for Pentecost, ahhhh beloved that is Good News, for the Present

Because if the Spirit wasn't finished back then! Then that means the Spirit isn't finished Right Now

And if you woke up today, and you still have breath in your body

The Spirit, is not finished, with YOU, and The Spirit is not finished, In You!

The fact that we are gathered here this morning, is evidence that The Spirit is not finished with US, and The Spirit is not finished IN US!

There are prophets left to speak

There are more visions left to be had

There is more liberation left to be experienced

There is more justice left to roll down like water,

There is more righteousness left to roll down like a mighty stream,

The Spirit wasn't finished then, and the Spirit isn't finished now!

I wonder what would happen, if there was a people, or a church who knew the power of God, the Love of God, the Hope, Mercy, Justice, and Wisdom of God, was still being Poured out, on All People, and desired to be Poured out, through all People, for the common good of All people... I wonder what that church would sound like, I wonder what that church would look like, I wonder how often such a church would put their body in the street, advocating for Black and Brown lives, because it knew change was possible, and it wasn't advocating in it's own strength,

I wonder what a church like that would dream of, think of, and become....

A church, that had allowed The Spirit, to re-introduce herself...