

June 9, 2019 | PRIDETIDE

Celebrating Pentecost: Born This Way!

Ancient Reading ~ Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they all met in one room. Suddenly, they heard what sounded like a violent, rushing wind from heaven; the noise filled the entire house in which they were sitting. Something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each one. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as Spirit enabled them. Now there were devout people living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled. But they were bewildered to hear their native languages being spoken. They were amazed and astonished: "Surely all of these people speaking are not Galileans! How does it happen that each of us hears these words in our native tongue? We are Parthians, Medes and Elamites, people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya around Cyrene, as well as visitors from Rome — all Jews, or converts to Judaism — Cretans and Arabs, too; we hear them preaching, each in our own language, about the marvels of God!" All were amazed and disturbed. They asked each other, "What does this mean?" But others said mockingly, "They've drunk too much new wine." Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed the crowd, "Women and men of Judea, and all you who live in Jerusalem! Listen to what I have to say! These people are not drunk as you think — it's only nine o'clock in the morning! No, it's what Joel the prophet spoke of: 'In the days to come — it is Our God who speaks — I will pour out my Spirit on all humankind. Your daughters and sons will prophesy, your young people will see visions, and your elders will dream dreams. Even on the most insignificant of my people, both women and men, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. And I will display wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below: blood, fire and billowing smoke. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon will become blood before the coming of the great and sublime day of Our God. And all who call upon the name of Our God will be saved.'"

**Second Reading ~ adapted Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson in
*"Outing The Church: 40 Years [now 50] in the Queer Christian Movement"***

In the late Sixties and early Seventies, "gay" was a new power word and women were just connecting to the word "lesbian." "Homosexual" was the civilized word emerging from psychiatry. We did not have the more middle/upperclass urban image we sometimes have today. We were still considered mostly pretty unmentionable and sleazy, and there were plenty of derogatory labels and words to go along with the attitudes. Most of us identified with other social outcasts and misfits. We felt brave to find each other— whether in a bar or an MCC church. We had felt the terrible sting of rejection and the pain of inhospitality, and, in MCC, we were determined, with every breath, not to exclude anyone. We were going to welcome all people into our churches

and hearts. We who had been rejected by the church and the culture couldn't bear to do it to anyone else. In taking this stand, we found ourselves tackling the tendencies of some of the largest institutions in the country: the army, the prisons, the churches, and the hospitals. Places others were trying to get out of, we were trying to get into! We were searching for our people. As a group of people, we LGBTIQQ folk have familiarity with jails and prisons. They are a part of our history. I remember making my first visit to a lesbian bar in downtown Boston in the early 1970s, and having to run out the back door because a police raid was happening. Every now and then, the police would just rush in the front door of a gay bar and begin rounding everyone up, busting the heads of those who resisted (and the heads of some who didn't). It was during just such a raid in 1968 that someone said to Troy Perry that surely God couldn't love us. It was this statement that propelled Troy into actually holding the very first MCC service.