

# The Messenger

## *The Long Stretch of the Season after Pentecost from the Priest-in-Charge*

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**Ordinary Time specializes in the sayings of Jesus instead of his actions... as to how to listen to Jesus' sayings: Ignore the ones that are clear, that you understand. Go after the ones that make no sense.**

Dear Friends,

THE LONG STRETCH OF THE SEASON AFTER PENTECOST, beginning with Trinity Sunday, is called "Ordinary Time" in some traditions. By that name, they mean to say that no special events in the life of Jesus are celebrated—no births or resurrections or rushing winds of the Spirit.

Ordinary Time specializes in the sayings of Jesus instead of his actions.

To say that Jesus spoke powerfully is to understate the case. His words resonate down through history and across the world. The words themselves have astonishing power, transforming the lives of people in lonely hotel rooms (the Gideons got it right), in combat foxholes, in church services of every kind. Seekers, who want to know what it's all about, how to live life, what makes for happiness and peace, how to get along with difficult people, what's true and how to know it—seekers are energized and confounded by his words, much to their benefit.

The Gospels call the sayings of Jesus "parables." But his words come in many forms: some stories, like the Prodigal Son; some wise sayings, like "No good tree bears bad fruit;" some paradoxes, like "Happy are those who mourn;" some startling predictions, like the destruction of the Temple. He acted in speech, too, instructing sick people to do certain things that healed them, commanding others to "let down your nets" to have a huge catch of fish. He engaged in controversies, confounding his enemies in a way that brought light to those who listened and confusion to those who wouldn't.

A suggestion as to how to listen to Jesus' sayings: Ignore the ones that are clear, that you understand. Go after the ones that make no sense. Start with the notion that he knew what he was talking about and that he is trying to show me something I never heard of before.

We go naturally for instantly understandable sound bites. The Good News, however, requires some work. It is mostly counter-intuitive, contrary to what we would ordinarily expect. The trick to opening up the sayings of Jesus is to dwell in them. "Dwell"—sit for a while, wondering what Jesus could possibly mean. "No man puts a candle under a bushel basket." Well, of course not! Why is he telling us that? What's he up to?

Summertime, the first three months of Ordinary Time, is supposed to be relaxing time, slow-down time. Perhaps, but it remains a good time to dwell in the words of the Master, to whose leadership we have committed ourselves.

Warmly,



## *A Personal Portrayal of Pentecost in Words and an Iconic Picture*

*by Azim Mayadas*



An Eastern Orthodox icon of Pentecost. This is the Icon of the **Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles**. At the bottom is an allegorical figure, called *Kosmos*, which symbolizes the world.

AS A PHILOLOGIST—I.E., A LOVER OF LANGUAGE—I knew that the origin of the word Pentecost was rooted in the Indo-European root for five, namely, Sanskrit *pañca* and Greek *pente*, wherefrom the Greek Πεντηκοστή (Pentekoste) that means 'fiftieth'. But therein lay the mystery: "Fiftieth what?"

As it turns out, the Jewish feast of Pentecost (in Hebrew *Shavuot* – the Feast of Weeks, one of three pilgrimage festivals) arose by way of celebrating the end of the spring grain harvest, which began in Passover *50 days prior to that*. There are numerous references to it in the Bible. From Rabbinic times, the festival has commemorated the giving of the law to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

On the Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus (*50 days* from the Passover in which He was crucified), the Holy Spirit, as narrated in the second chapter of the Book of Acts, descended on the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire accompanied by the sound of a rushing wind, and gave them the power of *speaking in tongues* in such a way that people of different languages could understand them. The Christian feast of Pentecost is an annual commemoration of that event, and it is solemnly observed as the birthday of the church and the feast of the Holy Spirit.

In ecclesiastical calendars Pentecost is the seventh Sunday after Easter and closes Eastertide. In the Western Church there are special observances, e.g., a penitential vigil, and in ancient times neophytes were baptized at this time.

**The Holy Spirit... descended on the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire accompanied by the sound of a rushing wind, and gave them the power of *speaking in tongues* in such a way that people of different languages could understand them.**

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From the white garments of those converts comes *Whitsunday* (usually shortened to *Whitsun*, an English name for Pentecost.) The great liturgical Latin hymns *Veni Creator Spiritus* and *Veni Sancte Spiritus* were composed for Pentecost. The Sunday after Pentecost is *Trinity Sunday*, until Advent the weeks are counted from Pentecost or Trinity.

Apart from the purely liturgical narrative above that defines Pentecost, what has always excited my interest is the preternatural gift of 'speaking in tongues'. I remember quite vividly my first encounter 60 years ago at the Central YMCA in London with a self-styled professor of 'phrenology' – that is a would-be and often discredited science of mental faculties supposed to be located in various parts of the skull and investigable by feeling the bumps on the outside of the head. Dr. Don Law—that was his name—did have one outstanding gift, and that was the gift of tongues. He was a polyglot of the first water and when I met him could comfortably talk and converse endlessly with anyone in the general "Y" lounge, which at any given time would be swarming with young men from literally around the globe. When pressed, the good doctor would humbly confess to having achieved fluency in 15 mainly European languages, but still hoped to achieve within a few more years his goal of having 20 tongues under his belt—including Turkish and Arabic!

I should point out that Don was an agnostic and probably knew nothing about the Pentecost. But he was a humanist and philanthropist and a devoted follower of Heidegger's controversial philosophy. Is there any paradox between Don's unusual linguistic talent and his mostly purblind approach to religion; between his gift of speaking in tongues and the meaning of what that means during the Pentecost season that is upon us?

**Apart from the purely liturgical narrative above that defines Pentecost, what has always excited my interest is the preternatural gift of 'speaking in tongues'.**

### June Birthdays

6/01 Ruby Bannister	6/05 Katherine Anderson	6/13 Barbara Hemink
6/01 Ariana Berry	6/05 Annele Neils	6/13 Joanne Mullings
6/02 Delores Kinloch	6/07 Ormand Harrison	6/16 Adaeze Ibeabuchi
6/03 Bianca DiGiovanni	6/08 Andrea Oberbeck	6/16 Haili Nelson
6/04 Paul Forste	6/11 Helen Thompson	6/22 Issie Cherevko
6/04 Jean LeMée	6/12 Paris Simms	6/24 Sandra Bogert
	6/12 Paul Oberbeck	6/30 Adrienne Anderson

### Adult Forum

June 6 <sup>th</sup>	Carl Smith, Consul General for the Bahamas
June 13 <sup>th</sup>	Dr. Sharad Wagle, Holy Name Hospital Physician This is his second presentation on Hinduism
June 20 <sup>th</sup>	Dr. Richard Pierson

**ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL  
CHURCH**

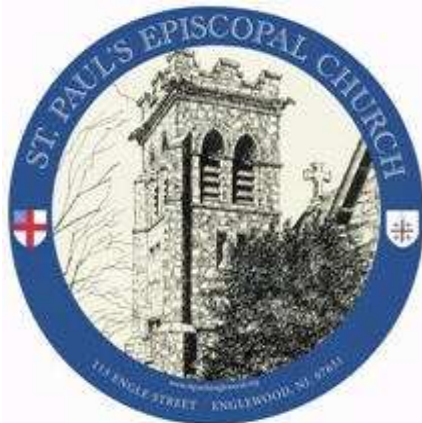
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*Where We Are*

*by Bill Payne*

**Still in Deficit**

**WE CONTINUE TO RUN IN DEFICIT EACH MONTH.**

**As of April 30, 2010, year-to-date income was \$149,998, about \$12,500 above the budgeted \$137,493. This is less than the overage as of March 31 by about \$7,000 mostly due to late quarterly rent payment from *Kol Haneshema*. The expenses as of April 30 were also above budget year to date: \$185,272, about \$27,500 above the budgeted \$157,699. The deficit for April was about \$13,000, and the deficit thus far for 2010 is about \$36,300.**

**The value of the Endowment Fund is \$1,096,479 as of April the 30<sup>th</sup>.**

*UTO In-Gathering*

*by Peg Slaven*

**THANKS TO ALL WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE MAY  
INGATHERING OF THE *UNITED THANK OFFERING!*  
ST. PAUL'S WILL SEND \$225.00 TO THE DIOCESAN  
*UTO.***

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

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