

Sermon for Sunday 19 April 2026 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore

Third Sunday of Easter/Native American Awareness Sunday

Scriptures: Acts 2:14a,36 -41; Psalter:837 (*Response 2: Spoken*); 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

Sermon

We jump ahead in time to the Day of Pentecost, where Jewish people and whole crowds of folks from other religions and even no religion are gathered in Jerusalem and find themselves able to understand one another regardless of their background... and Peter rises above all his mistakes and denials of the past to explain what is happening: a new day for the world and for all those present together.

It really is a “What it’s all about?” moment in human history, and a founding occasion in our identity as Christ-followers. Revelation: Something being revealed that never before was received or perceived.

Then the listening crowd, “cut to the heart,” asks Peter, “What can we do?” to his explanation that this is all related to Jesus’ crucifixion, in which some of them even participated... and he responds powerfully, “Repent and be baptized and go on to lead a new and redeemed life ..

Then the insight is tied together with long-standing scriptures in the psalm, which itself unites tradition with the freshly-established custom by Jesus at his last supper with his friends the day before he was crucified. **“I will lift the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord,”** we read together.

And the psalm’s connection leads on to the story after Jesus’ rising on Easter of the two friends who encountered Jesus on the road to Emmaus and ended up recognizing him as he lifted the cup at supper with them, and then vanished from their sight.

It is truly one of the deepest insights for us to refer to in our own devotions ... a rich description of what our life is about, both in surprises and in forgiveness and renewal, no matter where we are or what we have done or had happen at the moment as well as all along our way.

Then we, as United Methodists, take advantage of our own experience of fresh insight as Americans, and of repentance and growth as members of this part of humankind, to enlarge our own knowledge and become, God helping us, a sign of better citizenship and better grasp of our native roots and its religious insights for ourselves, our future life together, and a better example of the world’s development than we used to .be

It's all good training. It binds us to one another in freshly constructive ways. May it continue to increase our gratefulness for one another who come together to share such stories and to find fresh wisdom for doing our own witness to God, to Jesus, and to every insight from all the great faiths that we learn more about as we welcome the peoples of the world to our doorstep, and as we expand our own outreach of healing and peacemaking, locally and worldwide. Amen.

