

Sermon for 5 June 2022 @ Bethesda UMC/Baltimore
Pentecost Sunday

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b (UM826); Romans 8:14-17;
John 14 :8-17, 25-27

« **Conclusion** »

With today's liturgy, we conclude the seven-week reflection on Easter that we make annually.

We have been following the early church's directions on how to absorb into our hearts and minds, our relationships and our literal bodies, the news that all of life and including death is good, hope is the proper response to any uncertainty, and love in the body is always our aim and option.

That means, of course, that grace abounds. What illustrates that this Sunday is the story of the first Christian experience of the Jewish Festival of harvest, or weeks, that had come to celebrate the giving of the law to Israel ... which for us turned into a miracle of understanding across language barriers, as well as flashes of light and other turbulence that may accompany spiritual ecstasy.

The point, as I understand it most clearly this year, is that we can devote ourselves to the belief that we really can communicate, we really can understand, our fellow human beings in a loving way, past all barriers, all impulses, and all prior experience.

That's the conclusion.

That's the final result of Easter.

That is the intent of the Creator, and that is where history is headed.

I'm curiously at a loss for words beyond this conclusion.

I want to hear what you think. I don't want to give you any excuse for not basing your life on this belief. I've got lots of examples, but I'd rather play Quaker meeting until one of you feels called to let the Spirit speak yours.

What does believing we can understand one another as a human race mean to you?

What are we going to do about that as a congregation?

What is the United Methodist Church going to do about that as a denomination?

Come, Lord Jesus. Fill us with the Holy Spirit, and give us understanding beyond anything we've had up to now. Hold us fast to this conviction. In His name we pray, Amen.