

A few weeks ago, I was handing out communion,  
when I noticed that most of the kids who were coming up  
had red paint stains on their hands.

What was the paint from? I thought,  
and then I remembered:

*Right, they learned about Pentecost in Sunday School today.  
They obviously did some craft with red paint,  
so now they've got  
Pentecost hands.*

*Pentecost hands.*

That phrase stayed with me as our worship continued.

We were saying the refrain,

“We are Easter People, raised up for the sake of the world!”  
and I started to think,

*Yes, we are Easter People . . . and we've got Pentecost Hands!*

From our sermon series since Easter, we learned how  
Easter People are the folks who first believed in the resurrection of Christ.  
But, *what are Pentecost Hands?*

Well, let's start the story of Pentecost Hands from the beginning.

Forty days after his resurrection,  
it's time for Jesus to ascend into heaven.  
He's no longer going to be around in body.  
So, Jesus takes his disciples outside Jerusalem  
and promises them that the Holy Spirit will come upon them  
and they will be Christ's witnesses to the ends of the earth.  
And then . . . *up he goes* into heaven.

The disciples follow Christ's instructions  
and go wait, in Jerusalem, for this promised Spirit.  
That's when the story we heard from Acts chapter 2 this morning happens.

The disciples among those in the house  
would have been the first to recognize  
how this strange multilingual experience  
was Jesus' continued work in the world.

They would have recognized Jesus  
 in how the Spirit was bringing diverse people together.  
 They might have connected the Spirit's descending like a dove  
 at Christ's baptism  
 to this moment, when it comes like tongues of fire.  
 The amazement and astonishment they felt would have reminded them  
 of their amazement and astonishment  
 all those times Jesus did something powerful and miraculous;  
 What happened in the house  
 connected to the apostles' experience of seeing and following Jesus  
 in the world.  
 This is how they knew the Spirit was from God.

And when the Spirit came that day,  
 it filled all who believe,  
 from the top of the tongue of fire on their heads  
 down to the bottom of their feet  
 and out to edges of their fingertips.  
 This coming of the Spirit anoints all of them  
 and gives them Pentecost Hands:  
 hands that could perform the work of Jesus;  
 hands that could do God's deeds of love and power;  
 hands that went with the people and apostles  
 when their whole bodies left that house.

The rest of the Book of Acts  
 is story after story of those Pentecost Hands at work,  
 performing Jesus' mission and God's deeds of love.  
 Peter's hands embrace people different from him  
 and share food without distinction.  
 Paul and Silas' hands visit people in prison  
 and make music that shares hope;  
 Dorcus' Pentecost Hands sew garments for those in need.  
 Lydia's Pentecost Hands give generously and open her home.  
 In the lives of these Easter People we see the Spirit at work,  
 giving them Pentecost Hands so that others may know God.

And the work of Pentecost Hands

trickles down through generations of believers  
to inspire and include and perform God's deeds of power  
for others  
even today.

And in just a moment, we will lay Pentecost Hands upon Bryce  
to confirm that yes, we have seen the work of the Spirit in Bryce's life.  
As a teenager, it's been a while  
since Bryce used red paint in Sunday School,  
but his hands are surely covered in and anointed by the Spirit.  
Bryce's Pentecost Hands  
have rung chimes to make music on Sunday morning.  
They have carried in the light of Christ  
and offered the Cup of Salvation when he's an acolyte.  
Bryce's Pentecost Hands throw balls and lead games  
at Vacation Bible School  
and work on Scouting projects all around the community.

Just as the disciples saw the Spirit  
and recognized the signs of God that day in Jerusalem,  
we've come to recognize the signs of God  
and the mark of the Spirit in Bryce's young life.  
And so, in just a moment,  
we will pray that God continue to grant him the many gifts of the Spirit.  
That his hands may continue to be covered in the Spirit  
and engaged in the mission of Christ.

And we pray that for us as well.  
That through worship and our presence in this place,  
we will recognize God's power and work,  
and God will move us in such a way  
that the world recognizes God in our deeds.

We pray the Spirit may stain our fingers  
with Christ's intentions for the world;  
so that all can understand our speech and deeds of love as from God.

We pray that, with Christ having raised us to be Easter People,

the Spirit may anoint us and inspire our Pentecost Hands as well,  
even if it won't involve any red paint.

AMEN.