

**“Broadening our Vision and Dreams”**  
Sermon by Lisa Crismore  
May 15, 2016 – John Knox Presbyterian Church

Acts 2:1-21

Several weeks ago, I had this great idea that the Discovery Time children, who meet on Wednesday nights, would do the same shaving cream/food coloring project that the kids did last fall at Pyoca. Now you can imagine with shaving cream in the description, this project is going to be messy. At Pyoca, the project was done as one big mural on a concrete floor with 9 children. So, to keep it simple, I had this vision that we could do individual murals. Thinking we would have similar numbers from the past couple of weeks, we would have 7 or 8 kids. Shouldn't be too bad, right? Well, we had 18 children attend and most of them were eager to do the project since they had been cooped up with taking I-Step the entire day. We went through 16 cans of shaving cream and 12 bottles of food coloring. As you can imagine, it was chaos! Shaving cream was everywhere. The children started at different times and directions on the process were unclear as there were so many on different steps. I could hear a sprinkling of Spanish being spoken as the older children coached the younger ones. There is a mother who brings her preschool aged child and she speaks Spanish to her. Names didn't get put on projects so it became a guessing game on whose was whose once they dried.

Thankfully, the carpeting was covered, the children wore paint shirts and the shaving cream and food coloring didn't stain anything! The kids had a blast as they tried something many had never experienced. Yes, it was messy but there is no doubt that the Spirit was felt moving and flowing.

This is what was created that night:



I can imagine that day in Jerusalem when the mighty wind of Pentecost blew into town. Things got messy. It had to have scattered things all over the place. There weren't drop cloths and safety nets to keep things protected and in place. Then if that weren't enough, divided tongues as of fire appeared over individual's heads. Hello, that had to have shaken everyone up! And then as the Spirit took birth, everyone found themselves talking in different languages. Can you imagine all the confusion?

It was clearly something no one had ever experienced. It was messy and chaotic! Yet, that is how God's Spirit chose to come. For me, I think the Holy Spirit is the one form of the Trinity of God (God, three in one) that is the hardest for me to wrap my head around. We hear Jesus promise the disciples the last night he is with them before he is arrested and is killed on the cross that he will send an advocate. This friend that Jesus promises will give strength when I need it. It will be the sustainer that will get me through the most difficult times. It will fill me up when I have this deep void. All this is true and very comforting.

But the complicated thing about the Spirit is that it can also push me, stretch me, challenge me and broaden my views in ways that I could never imagine.

Frederick Buechner describes the Holy Spirit as the mystery of God within us (Daily Readings in the ABC's of Faith Beyond Words by Frederick Buechner; Harper San Francisco; 2004; p. 3940. God's Spirit is inside all of us. Peter goes on in our scripture to clarify that the people were not drunk. He says, "Remember, this is what the Prophet Joel spoke about it. The Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. All of us will receive it. It will allow for people to prophesy, to have visions and to dream dreams." I hear Peter speak of how the Spirit leads us into the future.

I want to go back and talk about our Discovery Time students. These children can be challenging and delightful. This year we have faced some difficult behavioral problems. We wrestled with what to do about these issues. It was becoming wearing on many of the adult mentors. Something had to be done but we didn't want to kick the difficult ones out of the program. That didn't seem right.

We had to broaden our view when it came to writing a covenant that the children, parents and mentors would sign saying that we promised to all behave in a certain way. We all had to be on the same page. This was vital for the future of the program. This was messy, not like shaving cream but when it came to our emotions. This took tough love as we had to set boundaries but I realized that is what good mentors do as we teach and guide these children.

I truly have seen how the Spirit has worked through this group of people. Through our cultural and language differences, we have seen parents affirm us not by words but by acts of love. We have had a parent give \$20 to support our activities. I am sure that was a lot of money for her to give. We have had a mother bake us homemade bread. We had 2 students, Michael and Joseph, attend our Bicycle Rodeo yesterday, which was muy frío - very cold! This signed piece of paper has solved the problems that we were having. The children with the behavioral problems have stopped coming. It has been tough because we love all the students. It has become clear to me that it is not about the numbers attending but we have received peace during our time together.

The Holy Spirit is such an amazing and mysterious gift from God. It can give comfort and sustain us. But it can also push us, stretch us and challenge us.

Later in the service, I wanted to share a video with you. It is about my husband and a boy. This was featured in an "Only in Indiana" segment on Channel-13 News. Yes, I am a proud wife. But, I wanted to show it because I think it speaks to how the Spirit can broaden our vision and open us to incredible possibilities. Thanks be to God for this amazing gift. Amen.

Here is the website for you to view it.

<http://www.wthr.com/search?vendor=e&qu=only+in+indiana+the+awakening>