

April 29, 2024

Going Beyond

[Acts 10:44-48](#)

They began to speak in new languages and give praise and honor to the Great Spirit. (Acts 10:46 - First Nations Version)

These 5 verses are the last part of the story of Peter the Apostle and Cornelius, a Roman Centurian, a Gentile, an Outsider, who had a vision of a Messenger of God, and was told to ask Peter to come to his home. I commend that entire story to you.

As is often the case in the Revised Common Lectionary, we are looking ahead even as we wait. Pentecost has not yet happened, yet here we read of the Holy Spirit coming down on those hearing Peter speak at Cornelius' house. And as happens at Pentecost, those touched by the Spirit speak *"in new languages"* as the *First Nations Version* says or "other languages" as expressed in the CEB.

A Roman soldier, an outsider, has connected with Peter and asks Peter to tell those gathered what God has instructed Peter to say. And even as Peter is speaking, the Holy Spirit acts, confirming for Peter and those who had come with him that God's message is for *all nations*.

"Possibilities Ahead" is the theme Bishop Sandra suggested for these Easter Seasons Devotions. The possibilities in this story are immense. New languages or other languages, depending on the translation or version, open wide fields of opportunity for the work of discipleship. Peter and the others at Pentecost and at Cornelius' home heard human speech; they were given the languages they needed to take the Gospel to all lands and peoples.

We humans have many ways of communication: by touch, by facial expression, by body language. There is a language of the love of God. What "new language," what "Fresh Expression" might God be setting before you as a possibility? What new way of communicating God's love might the Holy Spirit be gifting us with at this time and season?

Possibilities Ahead. This is a time of transition for many United Methodist churches. What possibilities can we look for? This Easter Season we celebrate the Resurrection, an un-looked-for possibility to the Christ-Followers of Jesus' day. What might we imagine for our own spiritual journeys, for our Church's journey, at the local level and beyond to the wider church, in this celebratory time?

Prayer: *Lord God, as we celebrate the Resurrection, send your Holy spirit to open our hearts and eyes to wider and unimagined possibilities. In the name of Christ, Amen.*

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