

## **Acts 1:1-14**

### **Children's sermon:**

What is a "Witness"?

(I will move an object....). Ask someone what they saw...

Then they all close their eyes except one.

Ask congregation to do what I do (raise hand)

Kids open eyes

Ask kid what did he see/witness? Tell the other kids!

Now, all the kids are witnesses too! Because you know that it is true. So you can go and tell other people even if you didn't see it for yourself, but you know that it is true!

That's what Jesus is talking about today that we should all be witnesses. Even though we didn't see Jesus with our own eyes when he rose from the dead, his disciples did and some of his friends. They went and told other people and they went and told other people and eventually someone told us. We are to go and tell other people too about Jesus and how he loves us and cares for us and will never ever leave us.

Can you all be witnesses?

Let us pray:

## **Acts 1: 1-14: And so we wait...**

### **Adult's Sermon:**

Happy Easter to you all! It seems like it was just yesterday that we were rejoicing, singing Hallelujah and celebrating that Christ has Risen (Christ has risen indeed!).

And we are still celebrating that today. But our text today is pushing us quickly along as we look at the questions of "What now?" "Where do we go now?" "What was the point of all of this – of Jesus raising himself from the Dead?"

In First Century Jerusalem a whirlwind of events has occurred in such a short time:

- Jesus had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Passover.
- He had been betrayed by Judas
- He had been arrested.
- He had been abandoned and denied by Peter.
- He had been tried before the Sanhedrin.
- He had been condemned by Pilate to crucifixion.
- He had died a horrible death on the cross.
- He had risen from the dead.
- He had appeared in Jerusalem – along the road to Emmaus – at the Sea of Galilee and upon a mountain.
- He appeared to the disciples a final time – on the Mount of Olives – about 3/4 of a mile outside the Old City of Jerusalem.

And in our reading today, in this final encounter with the Risen Christ – the disciples ate with him. As they dine, He instructs them to go into a period of waiting – Christ says to the disciples that they must wait for a few days – that they will be baptized by the Holy Spirit. The disciples want to know when it will be – and Christ tells them, "It is not for you to know the times and dates the Father has set by his own authority."

And then Christ gives them a promise and a mission: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

With that – Christ departs from this earth. He is taken up to heaven in a cloud of glory.

The flurry of activity – all of the excitement – all of the emotions – all of the confusion about what it all means -- it all comes to an end. A hush falls over the disciples. They are

alone. Christ is gone – The Holy Spirit has not arrived –

The great events of the life and ministry – the death and resurrection – of Jesus are over.  
The great mission of the church has not yet begun.

The disciples are left in a waiting period. This small group will become the core of the church -- they will soon burst forth in a new flurry of activity -- the church soon will explode across the Roman world -- but for now there is a small group of people – most likely a group of exhausted and confused individuals -- waiting for what comes next –

What do you do when you are waiting on God like that?

I think of my final year of seminary, before I was called here to First Lutheran. I had been assigned to NEMN Synod, but hadn't graduated, didn't know if there would be openings in the synod, let alone one that would fit with the kind of ministry that God was calling me to. I was pregnant with my second child...moved out of my house that I owned in Stillwater and moved into a small rental apartment with my husband and child...all in hopes that it would work out. It was a time of waiting. I had no clue what God had in store for me. I was anxious and fearful all at the same time. What if something didn't work out? Then what? I had to work, so I took a job at a Methodist church being an interim children's director while they were in transition. Should my husband quit his job? We were just waiting to see what God had planned for us.

We have all had times when we are waiting for God.

This time of year when students are looking towards graduation – there are those who have a firm sense of direction and purpose – They have a goal for the future -- something they want to accomplish. But there are others -- those who are at a loss -- those who do not have a clear vision of the future -- those who are waiting for God to act -- those who are waiting for a sense of direction.

Or you might think of someone in the middle of life. Suddenly the plant closes – your job is eliminated. What to do now? What do you do when you are waiting for God to speak?

There are people who are waiting for God to bring healing. There are people who are waiting for God to restore relationships. There are people who are waiting for God to provide the gift of forgiveness. There are people waiting for God to soften another person's heart so that they may be forgiven. There are people who are waiting for a "sign" that gives birth to their faith. There are people waiting for God to provide justice or peace.

What do you do when you are waiting for God to act? What do we do when we are waiting for God to bring peace to this troubled world?

It is hard to wait. We do not want to wait. We want to speak with God on our time – not on his. We want him to act – Now!!!

Jesus tells us today that God will act – He always does – In his way – In his time – In His wisdom.

Isaiah the Prophet reminds us:

*My thought are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

Maybe during our waiting, God uses us and people around us anyway. Maybe during our waiting, God places people in our lives as witnesses to Him, people who love us and pray for us and care for us. Maybe during our waiting, God provides us with the time or the opportunity to take a step back to reflect and gain some perspective on what has happened in life. We reflect backward so that we can live for a better future. Maybe this waiting time can be a time that prepares us. Maybe during our waiting, God waits with us and uses us to spread His kingdom anyway.

When the disciples were waiting, they went to Jerusalem where they devoted themselves to prayer and worship. They deepened their faith, they ate with our Lord, they listened to what Jesus was saying to them. They were in fellowship together. This is how we wait and this is how we prepare to be sent out. This is the power of the Christian Community and Christian worship together. This is a place of holiness. Not a place to stay, but a place to be equipped to be sent out and to be witnesses to Aitkin and Minnesota, and all the ends of the earth.

Christ has promised us today...“you will receive power...you will be witnesses”. It’s not about what we are doing, but what we have been given and then what we do with it.

We can have confidence - His mission will never fail because He has ascended! Through Christ’s death and resurrection and ascension, we have been given the promise that God is with us...guiding us, leading us, providing for us, and loving us. This is the promise of His powerful spirit...the reminder of our reigning Lord.

Thanks be to God. Amen.