



# First Presbyterian Church

SIXTH AND JEFFERSON STREETS  
ROCHESTER, INDIANA 46975  
(219) 223-5919

## We Are the World

by Rev. John C. Ramsey

Date: May 26, 1985

Sixth Sunday in Easter

Text: Acts 2:1-13

Lectionary Text, Year B

Place: First Presbyterian Church

Rochester, Indiana

Today, most Christian churches are celebrating Pentecost, the last major Christian holiday that hasn't been discovered by the advertising and sales agencies. At Advent and Christmas we celebrate Jesus Christ coming into the world, at Pentecost we celebrate Jesus Christ going out into all the world. Listen to this description of events at the first Pentecost recorded in Acts 2:1-13. This the story of the day the worldwide Christian church was born.

This speaking in foreign languages or "in tongues" as the King James and Revised Standard versions translate this section is not a "heavenly" tongue that is understandable only by those given the gift of interpretation. It is a gift that allows me to hear someone and understand another person and enables that person to hear and understand me no matter what language we speak. It is like having an instantaneous translator whispering the translation into your ears.

Due to this new understanding, all were amazed and confused saying to one another, "What does this mean?". Our reading from Acts 2 tells us about a new, amazing thing that happened, the gift of the spirit and the birth of the Christian church. What happened? Does this describe it? "Behold, they are one people and one language and this is only the beginning of what they will do, and nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them." I think that is a very good summary of what happened that Pentecost...The only problem is that this quote is not about the Pentecost experience in Acts. It is not even in the New Testament! It is in the Bible, in Genesis chapter 11, in the story of the tower of Babel. God says this to himself right before he confuses the one language of humankind into many tongues and separates humans into different peoples.

## "We Are The World"

Pentecost is the reversal of Babel. Where at Babel humankind was separated by language, at Pentecost all were united by language. Pentecost brought down the barriers of different language erected by Babel in Genesis Chapter 11. At Babel, the Bible tell us that human language was confused and humans were divided. Here, in the New Testament, all humanity is united with one language. They can understand one another no matter what their nation is, no matter what their language is.

In Acts 2 all the people HEAR. This is usually the proof text for glossialia, speaking in tongues, but the emphasis here is not on speaking but on HEARING. This not a new kind of babbling but is Babel in reverse! Now all understand, hear each other. The Spirit of God, the master builder laid the foundation of the church against the rubble of Babel. While human selfish, power-hungry efforts to build leads to confusion, God's sacrificing, power-giving efforts to build leads to hearing, to understanding. The birth of the church occurs in the context of listening to one another. As Christians our birthright is listening and hearing each other.

Pentecost is God's vision for the church, united together. Not that everyone exactly alike, but that all different types, races, nationalities, political and economic beliefs, are united by God's Spirit understanding one another as well as if they all were our own brothers and sisters.

On Pentecost there came the newness promised by Jesus that replaced the old way of relating of to God. Following Jesus as a disciple had ended, but had given birth to the church. The loss of the personal relationship as Jesus' disciple was real. Yet only by this loss, was the possibility of the good that is the church able to become real.

When we choose the spirit, we lose the other choices. We must put aside our pride and our individual distinctions. I becomes we. We say good-bye to rivalry, to power-plays, to privilages we get because of our economic status, our race, our nationally, or our sex. We lose much, so we can gain the fruits of the Spirit.

I think this is why people were afraid of the change that happened during that first Christian Pentecost. The newness was so overwhelming they couldn't accept it, they mocked it as the drunken result of new wine, and they refused to believe such a thing could happen by being confused and perplexed. For they were losing something, they were losing their identity as Parthians, Medieans, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Asians, Egyptians, Libya and even Jews, becoming united as new members citizens of Christ's land, Christians. The gain was great and good but the loss is still real.

## "We Are The World"

I like to think the song "We Are The World" captures a piece of the Pentecost spirit, the spirit of all humankind joined together. There are some that laugh and mock that idea. They jeer at the efforts of others in advancing God's will that all people live together in one big family, all different, but all caring for one another and understanding each individual. In the first century, they say they were filled with new wine, drunk. Such a vision of peace was possible to only to one drunk. Today they might insist that peace is possible only if the "other guy" changes first or that peace among all people is the responsibility of someone else, government, the church, or even rock and roll stars. Friends, there is no other guy, we are the world, we are the children of God who have been called since Pentecost almost two thousand years ago to live together as one people.

The World must come together as one. This is the promise offered by Jesus Christ to all those who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin into God's great big family. Make the change, let us realize that a change can only come in this world when we all stand together as one faithful people having taken the name of Jesus Christ.

### W E A R E T H E W O R L D

Written by Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie

There comes a time when we heed a certain call  
When the world must come together as one  
There are people dying  
And it's time to lend a hand to life  
The greatest gift of all

We can't go on pretending day by day  
That someone, somewhere will soon make a change  
We are all a part of God's great big family  
And the truth, you know,  
Love is all we need

Send them your heart so they'll know that someone cares  
And their lives will be stronger and free  
As God has shown us by turning stones to bread  
So we all must lend a helping hand

When you're down and out, there seems no hope at all  
But if you just believe there's no way we can fall  
Let us realize that a change can only come  
When we stand together as one

-- CHORUS --

We are the world, we are the children  
We are the ones who make a brighter day  
So let's start giving  
There's a choice we're making  
We're saving our own lives  
It's true we'll make a better day  
Just you and me

# First Presbyterian

First Presbyterian Church wants to assist you in the crises and the joys of your life.

YOU ARE INVITED to join us this summer.

9:30 a.m. Worship Service

10:30 a.m. Fellowship and Friendship

First Sunday · Bible Trivia Contest

Second Sunday · Worship Class

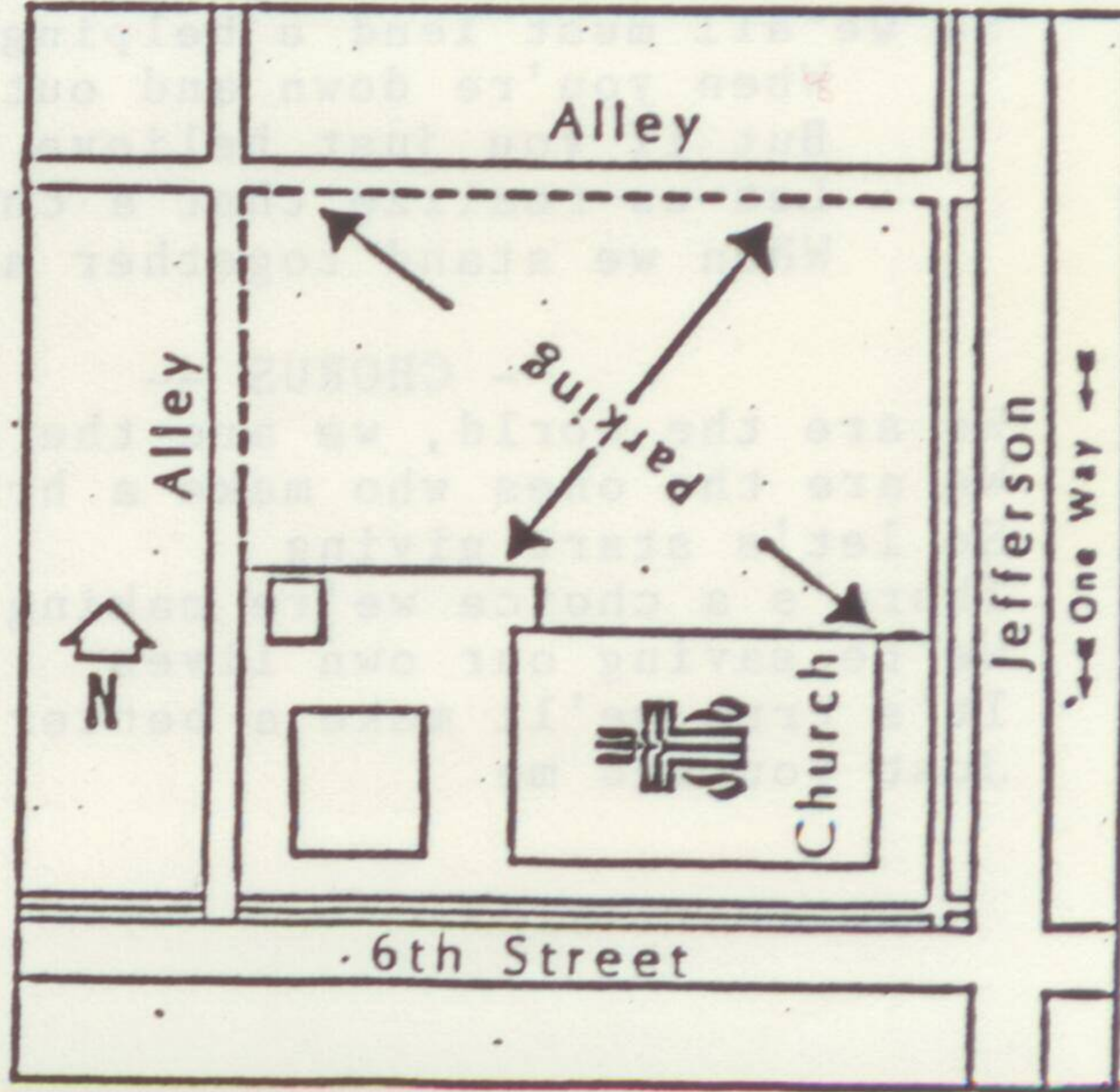
Third Sunday · Films and Slides

Fourth Sunday · Hymn Sing

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
SIXTH AND JEFFERSON STREETS

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# First Presbyterian

Presents

The

Sunday Morning

Message

May 26, 1985

"We Are The World"

Acts 2:1-13

JESUS APPOINTED SOME TO BE APOSTLES,  
OTHERS TO BE PROPHETS, OTHERS TO BE  
EVANGELISTS, OTHERS TO BE PASTORS  
AND TEACHERS. HE DID THIS TO  
PREPARE ALL GOD'S PEOPLE FOR THE  
WORK OF CHRISTIAN SERVICE IN ORDER  
TO BUILD UP THE BODY  
OF CHRIST.



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