

“...And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this.”
Esther 4:14b NIV

Charles Dickens begins A Tale of Two Cities with these words: “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” These words could probably describe Esther’s situation also. She had been chosen from among the young women in the land to become queen. She had had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments and pampering before being brought into the presence of the King. She had kept her nationality secret, she was a Jew. She won. She pleased the King and was appointed Queen. It was the best of times.

However, if you remember the story there was an advisor in the Kingdom who did not like the Jews. He had conspired to get rid of Esther’s uncle, Mordecai and all of the Jews. An edict had been written to rid the whole kingdom of the Jewish people. Mordecai goes to Esther and tells her of the plot of Haman to rid the land of all the Jews. Esther wonders what she can do. No one can approach the King without being summoned - to do so could result in death. Maybe because she is in the royal place she will escape the edict, after all no one knows. It was the worst of times. But, Mordecai, in his wisdom, warns her that she will not be protected, “And who knows but that you have come to royal position for such a time as this.” Esther approaches the King, is welcomed and in the end is responsible for saving her people. She was where she was for “such a time as this.” Read the story of Esther again - it is fascinating.

We have just celebrated Pentecost and the coming of the Holy Spirit. It was a time when Jerusalem would be filled with pilgrims from all over the world. It was one of the required Feasts when all males were required to present themselves before the Lord - The Feasts of Weeks (Lev. 23:15; Deut. 16:9-10). It was a day when no work was done and Israel gathered to thank God for the harvest. This was a day when Jerusalem was filled with those from around the known world, a perfect day for the Spirit to come and empower those in the upper room to go into the streets and proclaim the Good News of Christ. One could say, “it was for such a time as this.”

For me, Pentecost reminds us of God’s timing. I am sure the disciples would rather not have had to wait for the Spirit’s coming. After all, Jesus had promised that the Spirit would come and “guide them into all truth” (John 16:13b). But, there was a good reason for the delay, Pentecost. In a single day, we could say, the whole world was told the story of the Living Christ - the message was given to each in their own tongue. There were witnesses to the Spirit’s coming from the whole world. The story would travel. “Do you know what happened when we were at the Pentecost festival in Jerusalem?” The way was prepared for the Gospel to be shared. It was the perfect time, the perfect day! It was worth the wait, the anxiety.

A recent article in the Washington Post (online) talks about the shift in the world - as the US becomes less religious the rest of the world is becoming more religious. It notes that one of the reasons for any of the growth in US churches is from immigrants coming to this country. As we look at Evergreen we are growing because of the number new Burmese churches that being formed by the Burmese immigrants who are settling in our area. These are lively congregations that owe their beginnings to American Baptists and the Judson’s (who began a work in Burma over 200 years ago). We are experiencing the fruit of their labor. What a joy it is to have them be part of who we are - We are here, “for such a time as this.”

We, too, are here “for such a time as this.” This is a faith statement - it a Pentecost statement. We are here because kids need support in reading, AA groups and Girl Scouts need a place to meet. We here because God has a purpose and a plan for us in this place. We have resources (land/building) and a mission. There are financial challenges to keep us in this place but we are here - our mission may change - it may look different than we had hoped or imagined but it is in faith that we believe we are here, “for such a time as this.” Esther took a step of faith - without being asked she appeared before the king (After requesting all the Jews in Susa fast and pray along with her and her servant girls for three days). The King was pleased - the Jews were saved.

It for “such a time as this” that we are in the place. A time for prayer. A time for listening and waiting. A time for the Spirit to come again and bring freshness and new life to the Church.

Heavenly Father, I may not understand how everything will work out, but I trust you. I don't see a way, but I know you will make a way. I have faith at this very moment you are touching hearts, opening doors, and lining up the right breaks and opportunities. Things look dark and bleak now, but I have faith that my dawn is coming? In Jesus Name, Amen