

Home Church Package, Sunday May 31st, 2020
Pentecost!

Materials prepared by Jenn Swanson

“Light and Fire Divine: Spirit of the Living God”

This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost, the birth of the church. We discuss what the Holy Spirit means to us, and ask you to explore the same question: What is the Holy Spirit? How does it impact your life?

Opening Prayer/Poem: By Anna Murdoch

WHY, THIS GATHERING PLACE? (Pentecost ponderings)

In the one place, they waited
and prayed and with hushed voices,
wondered why.

Why, this gathering place?

They remembered the words, “Wait. Gather together and wait.”
That is what they had come together to do -
WAIT.

What was keeping them together?

Memories and murmurs and questions
filled the room while waiting
and Waiting
and WAITING.

They heard the words
from the One whose death and now presence
had moved them from deepest grief to bewildering joy -
“Believe in God, believe also in me.”

It was slowly becoming
more about the confidence

in the continued journey
with him than the destination.

Why were they still in this place?
Why were they waiting?

The puzzle pieces were falling into place.
“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.”
All that they had heard
while with him became infallible promises.

WHOOSH!

Their questions were suddenly answered
in ways that were unimaginable to them.

The Holy Spirit rested upon them as tongues of fire.
They were not consumed but their lives would be consumed forever.
The Advocate made a forever-dwelling-place within each one
gathered in this place.

HOLY GROUND
REMOVE YOUR SANDALS!

The door is now opened!
The wait is now over!
“Go and tell others!”

YES, LET'S GO AND TELL OTHERS!

Pentecost:

The word “pentecost” comes from a Greek word which means “fifty.” Pentecost is the fiftieth day—its tradition began in Judaism as a celebration of the fiftieth day after Passover. For Christians, it is the fiftieth day after Easter and celebrates the beginning of the church....so it is actually the church’s birthday! And the reason we dress up in red and orange and yellow when we are together is to celebrate the fire...the Holy Spirit that came down like fire and wind on the people in the text.

Scripture Reading: Acts 2:1-21

2When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

14But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: 17‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. 18Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. 19And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. 20The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. 21Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’ *This is the witness of the Early Church. Thanks be to God.*

Going Deeper with Reflection

Imagine what it would have been like to be gathered with people who spoke so many different languages—to be in a room with a bunch of people you couldn’t understand for worship.

1. What might it have felt like to suddenly understand one another?

2. Sometimes it is hard to understand even when we speak the same language! Is there someone you have trouble “getting”? What might help you to connect or deepen your relationship in order to better understand them?
3. Think of a story about a time you finally understood something.

Closing Prayer:

Holy and Loving Spirit,
Stir us from complacency.
Move in and through us to cause loving action to unfold in our world.
Connect us, inspire us, breathe us,
And help us to know most deeply
That even in this time of isolation and separation,
We are One...
Never alone...
Held as ever in God’s tender embrace.
Amen.