



Receive  
the

*gift*

of the

*Holy  
Spirit*

May 31, 2020

Introduction and Welcome  
Invitation  
Invocation

Call to Worship:

Hey! This is the day! It's the church's birthday! Let us celebrate with joy for the gift of the Holy Spirit who empowers us to share the message of God's love in Christ to all! Hallelujah!

Hymn:

"Surely the Presence of the Lord"

UMH #328

Reading the Word: Acts 2:1-8, 12-21

Message: "Come, Holy Spirit"

Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson and Dave Atkinson

Prayer:

Spirit, all powerful, so often we don't experience your presence even though you are right here with us. Jesus told his disciples that you would remind us of all he had taught them, and that message is for us, too. There are times when we may not realize how much you work in our lives until we feel a nudge to give someone a call or do something to make someone else's life a little better. You are why we continue to be the Church in the world. You are on our paths of faith, of ministry and mission. May we turn to you and trust your guidance for our lives individually and as a church! Amen.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Hymn: "Spirit of the Living God"

UMH #393

Blessing

## Acts 2:1-8

### The Coming of the Holy Spirit

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

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?"

### Acts 2:12-21

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

### Peter Addresses the Crowd

But 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. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

'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.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord  
shall be saved.'



SERMON TRANSCRIPT GIVEN BY  
REV. DR. DEB HANSON

**Message “Come, Holy Spirit”**  
**Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson and Dave Atkinson**

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” Acts 2:1-4 (NRSV)

So, what do you think about this story of Pentecost? It is pretty fantastic, isn't it! But then I am reminded that there are times when God does amazing and hard-to-believe things! This event certainly grabbed the attention of devout Jews from many different countries who had immigrated to Jerusalem and were participating in the Festival of Shavuot.

Shavuot celebrates the giving of the law (the Torah) to Moses on Mount Sinai, and it also has been celebrated as a harvest festival. As the disciples poured out of their hiding place and into the streets, the eclectic crowd around them heard the message of God's love in their own languages, and they were puzzled, afraid, and curious. Others accused the disciples of being drunk, even though it was early morning, although Peter stepped up to assure them that they were NOT drunk but filled with the Holy Spirit so they could share the message.

What fascinates me about the disciples' sudden ability to speak in different languages is that they were able to communicate in a person's mother-tongue, even though they had not actually learned the language. In his first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul referred to “speaking in tongues” as “Glossolalia” which is derived from the Greek for “tongues” or “speaking.” While that is what we most often hear as the definition of speaking in tongues, this does not explain the disciples' experience on Pentecost.

Rather, the disciples actually spoke in the languages of the people who were there. Imagine being able to speak Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, French, or whatever language you wish without having to actually learn it first! I think my French teacher would have loved to have that happen with all of her students!

Anyway, the whole point here is that the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to spread the message of salvation through Jesus Christ to everyone from many different backgrounds. They witnessed to their belief in Jesus as Savior and of God's grace and love through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection. They now had been empowered to be and to become the Church of Jesus Christ and to carry on his mission and ministry in the world.

That is what we are called to do, too. So many faithful Christians struggle to witness to their faith. Maybe we hesitate because for so many years, we have found it uncomfortable to tell people about our beliefs and why we live our lives the way we do. Maybe we are afraid of rejection. Maybe we are worried that we will lose a friend if we tell them about our faith journey. Witnessing for Christ is a challenge in this day and age, for sure!

When I began seminary and began to serve a church, I found myself hesitating to tell people that I was a pastor because I was afraid of being shunned by people. In fact, that has happened by many outside of church settings or by those who don't attend church regularly. Try going to a wedding reception and sitting at a table where people say, "Oh, oh, I have to watch my language now," or they just ignore you and pretend you aren't there. I suspect many thought I would preach to them or pass judgement on them for some reason.

Finally, I decided that just being who I was, and letting people know that I was a pastor, could be a door opener or a witness without me preaching to them. In actuality, that also has happened!

I'm not sure that we in the mainline churches, especially, have found the excitement and inspiration from the Holy Spirit that the disciples received that day. But there are ways we can witness to our faith even when we are uncomfortable or hesitant. One of my favorite quotes is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi: "Preach the gospel to all the world. Use words if necessary."

That is a powerful statement! I have used it fairly often in my sermons, and it is something that I encourage everyone to really consider and live by as a starter for sharing our faith with others. It opens doors to speaking and inviting others to know Christ. Someone might ask, "But what if they reject me?" To be blunt, we can ask ourselves, "So what?" Jesus sent the disciples out two by two, and he told them to shake the dust off their feet if someone didn't want to hear their message, and then to move on. (Matthew 10:14)

It isn't about receiving us, anyway, it's about sharing Christ with the world. We will still be the same whether someone welcomes our message or not. We can allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and trust that we will not be let down as we live our lives for others to see Christ in us. The United Methodist Church's mission calls us to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world." We can do that one person and one congregation at a time, even as we join together with Christians all over the world to make a difference and to manifest the Kingdom of God here on earth. We can open ourselves to receive and build upon the fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23: "love, joy peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." When we live our lives growing into those fruits, and when we share our lives with others, we have become witnesses for Christ.