

WELCOME

The season of Easter concludes with today's celebration, the feast of Pentecost. On Pentecost we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles gathered in the upper room in Jerusalem; this event marks the beginning of the Church.

God With Us

**Oh, You've come to bring peace, to be Love,
To be nearer to us;
You've come to bring life, to be Light;
To shine brighter in us;
Oh, Emmanuel; God with us.**

**Our Deliverer, You are Savior;
In Your presence we find our strength;
Over ev'rything, our Redemption;
God with us; You are God with us.**

**Oh, You've come to be Hope to this world
For Your honor and name;
And You've come to take sin, to bear shame,
And to conquer the grave;
Oh, Emmanuel; God with us.**

**Our Deliverer, You are Savior;
In Your presence we find our strength;
Over ev'rything, our Redemption;
God with us; You are God with us.**

**You are here; You are holy;
We are standing in Your glory.**

**You are here; You are holy;
We are standing in Your glory.**

**You are here; You are holy;
We are standing in Your glory, Lord.**

**Our Deliverer, You are Savior;
In Your presence we find our strength;
Over ev'rything, our Redemption;
God with us; You are God with us.
Oh, God with us; You are God with us.**

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INVOCATION

PASTOR: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.
CONGREGATION: Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION (Acts 2:21)

PASTOR: "Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."
Come, then, let us confess our sins to the one who is faithful to forgive.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

CONGREGATION: Merciful and gracious God, our hearts cry out for you to make us whole again. Even as we celebrate that You have come to dwell within us, we have sinned against You and abandoned Your commandments. We have been jealous, possessive, ambivalent, and impulsive. We have not heeded Your Word and we have not cherished Your covenant. Help us to glorify You in all times and in all places. As our souls thirst for Your living waters, quench our needs and satisfy our love, that we may come back to You and be sent forth to fill the world with Your mercy and grace. In the name of Your Son, Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit who is at work within us, Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON (John 20:19–23)

PASTOR: "Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'" Upon this your confession, I, as a called and ordained servant of Christ, and by His authority, forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

CONGREGATION: Amen.

LITANY FOR PENTECOST

PASTOR: God of rushing wind, coming from where it wants and going to where it wants,

CONGREGATION: pour out Your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: God of fire, flaring on gathered disciples and burning away their stubborn pride,

CONGREGATION: pour out Your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: God of miraculous speaking and hearing, amazing the faithful and riveting their attention to what is about to happen,

CONGREGATION: pour out your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: God of the young who see visions, of the old who dream dreams, of male prophets and female prophets,

CONGREGATION: pour out Your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: God of wonders above the signs below, God of blood, fire and billowing smoke,

CONGREGATION: pour out Your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: You raised up Peter to prophesy on Pentecost, Peter to preach straight truth to a crooked generation, Peter to accuse people he loved of complicity in the death of Jesus.

CONGREGATION: pour out Your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: God of wind and fire and tongues, God of visions and dreams and prophecies, God of signs and wonders,

CONGREGATION: pour out Your Spirit upon us.

PASTOR: You raised up Peter to preach Jesus to a skeptical audience, and with the two-edged sword of Peter's word you cut through the armor of a crooked generation, you pricked their hearts and saved them.

CONGREGATION: Great God, send Your Spirit to save us too.

PASTOR: You sent your Spirit to assail hard hearts. You sent repentance and faith, baptism and forgiveness, teaching and fellowship, communion and prayer.

CONGREGATION: Great God, send Your Spirit to save us too.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

PASTOR: Lord God, we praise You for the gift of Your Spirit, whom You poured out on fearful people to make them bold witnesses of the mighty acts You accomplished through Your holy Son, Jesus, the Christ. Give us the power of Your Spirit that we may serve You without fear. Regenerate us by Your Spirit that we may live each day as new persons in Christ. Fill us with Your Spirit that we may reach out in love to all people. Help us to see our baptism as the seal of the Spirit and the pledge of greater gifts to come. By Your gracious gift of faith enable us to walk in the Spirit and to live in hope. Seal us in Spirit that we may be Yours eternally. We pray through Him who promised that You would send the Spirit in His name.

CONGREGATION: Amen.

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Numbers 11:24–30

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it. Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

PASTOR: This is the Word of the Lord.

CONGREGATION: Thanks be to God.

SECOND READING

Acts 2, selected verses

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine." In the midst of all this excitement, the apostle Peter spoke up and got the crowd's attention. Then he said to them, "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken of by the prophet Joel..."

And beginning with those words he preached to them about Jesus. He told them, "Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know. ...and you, with the help of wicked men, put Him to death by nailing Him to the cross. But God raised Him from the dead..."

"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call."

With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about 3,000 were added to their number that day.

PASTOR: This is the Word of the Lord.

CONGREGATION: Thanks be to God.

PASTOR: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the seventh chapter.

CONGREGATION: Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 7:37–39

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

PASTOR: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

CONGREGATION: Praise be to Thee, O Christ.

APOSTLES' CREED (spoken in unison)

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.**

**And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.
From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.**

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life † everlasting. Amen.

Take My Life and Let It Be

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee,
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee,
Ever, only, all for Thee.

SERMON

We celebrate the birth of Jesus and all the world pauses to celebrate Christmas with us. We celebrate His resurrection and much of the world recognizes Easter as a very special day on the calendar. But today is Pentecost, and hardly anyone realizes it. Yet, this day is important, because Pentecost is the birthday of the Church. The church is God's idea. It is a divine institution. He called it into being and He has given us the wonderful opportunity of being a part of it.

It's in the 2nd chapter of the Book of Acts that we read about the beginning of the Church. The first chapter of Acts tells us about the Ascension of our Lord. I read that account to you this past Ascension Day. It told us of Jesus meeting with the apostles on the Mt. of Olives. There He told them that they were to be His witnesses to all the world. He also told them that they were to wait in Jerusalem until they received power from on high. Then He ascends out of their sight. They leave and go to Jerusalem to pray. There the Holy Spirit descended upon them. It's interesting that some people thought they were drunk. That tells us something of the excitement & joy that filled them that day.

I like the story about the three prospectors who found a rich vein of gold in California during the gold rush days. They realized what a great discovery they had. They decided "**We've got a really good thing going here as long as no one else finds out about it.**" So they each took a vow to keep it secret. Then they headed for town to file their claims and get the equipment necessary to mine the gold. True to their vows, they didn't say a word to anybody. They filed their claim, bought the equipment, and headed back to their mine. But when they did a crowd followed them. The reason was because the expression on their faces had given them away. Their faces were aglow in anticipation of the wealth that soon would be theirs. People knew that they must've found something very special. So, a crowd followed them out of town.

A famous motivational speaker was once asked about his most difficult speech. He answered, "**Well, it was when I was asked to speak at a national convention of undertakers. My topic was to explain to them how to look sad during a \$30,000 funeral.**" You see, when there is joy inside, it's awfully hard to keep it from showing. We learn from that first Pentecost that the early Christians discovered unspeakable joy in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Again and again.

Paul writes, **“Rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, Rejoice!”**

The Holy Spirit’s empowerment is what fills us, changes us, transforms us and enables us to exhibit what He wants – the love, the unity, the sacrifice, the selflessness, the exhibition of the personal relationship between Christ and us, His church.

But that means walking with and submitting to the Spirit. The more we do that, the greater will be the smile on our faces. How much of you does the Holy Spirit have? How great is your joy in Christ? How deep and true is your fellowship with the Holy Spirit? How alive in Christ are you?

A pastor tells of visiting a church in California and finding a stirring red and orange banner on the wall. “Come, Holy Spirit, Come. Hallelujah!” Those words were printed under a picture of a burning fire. The Pastor was also interested in the sign directly underneath the banner which said: **“Fire extinguisher.”**

So much for that church’s commitment to spiritual renewal. How can revival take place if a church is dead and there is no voice to speak life into it? Such is the state of affairs in some churches today. We must ask ourselves: Are we among those who will stand in the gap and not only pray but act on God’s behalf to revive and resurrect the church? To be filled with the Holy Spirit means that we allow him to occupy and control every area of our lives. How much of you does the Holy Spirit have?

When did you last pray for revival? When did I? When was the last time that you asked God to open the windows of heaven and pour out his Spirit upon you?

**Let Your Spirit fall here / Wind from Heaven blow
Purify our hearts today / Fire of Heaven glow
Manifest Your glory / Boldly now we call
Nothing else will satisfy / Let Your Spirit fall.**

God commands us to be filled with the Spirit. If it weren’t possible it wouldn’t be a command. God commands us to be filled with the Spirit; and if we aren’t filled, it’s because we are living beneath our privileges.

Martin-Lloyd Jones wrote, **“When God sends revival, he can do more in a single day than in fifty years of all our organization. That is the verdict of sheer history which emerges clearly from the long story of the Church.”**

Radical living was not only for the early church believers, but it's what the church today is also called to. Do you really want to live out your Christian faith? Do you really want to be like Christ? Do I?

Pentecost was a once in history event, when the Church was born. So, let me share with you three things that we learn from "Pentecost."

I. THE CHURCH WAS CREATED BY God. The Church was created by God. The church is immortal. It is God ordained. It is God’s idea. From the beginning of time, before the foundation of the world, God had in His mind the Church. And He promised that even the gates of Hades would not prevail against it. Jesus came into the world, and after His death and burial and resurrection, the Church is formed. The Church comes into reality on the Day of Pentecost.

Sometimes we act as if we think that Peter called a meeting of the apostles and said to them, "Now we are here today to talk about whether or not we ought to start a Church." They discuss that for a while. Then James makes a motion that they start a Church. John seconds the motion and they vote to start a Church. So, they start a Church in Jerusalem.

It didn’t happen that way! Did you hear what the Word said? It said, **“Suddenly, a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from. . .”** Where? **“From heaven.”** God started the Church! God created the Church. The Church is God’s idea. God brought the Church into being. It is His Church, not ours. We are just a part of it. It is essential for us to realize that.

The Church will never be the most popular institution in the world, because the Church goes counter to popular culture. In fact, the more the church represents Christ the less popular it will become. Popular churches stand for nothing or say what people want to hear or emphasize certain things and live out hard truths. But God wants the Church to stand for the truth, to be unshakable in its presentation of the Gospel, because the Church belongs to God. It is His Church, not ours.

II. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH IS TO COMMUNICATE THE LOVE OF GOD. The mission of the Church is to communicate the love of God to a lost and dying world. The theme of Pentecost is communication. It's really a shame that the whole idea of speaking in tongues has become such a controversial issue. When you read about Pentecost, the truth that comes to the surface is that God gave the gift of tongues to the apostles for one purpose. That was for the purpose of communication.

They had a problem with communication because people had come from many different nations. And when you read the long list of nations, you realize that a language barrier existed. Because God wanted each of them to hear the message in his own language, He performed a miracle. He gave the apostles the gift of tongues so that they could communicate His message. The mission of the Church is to communicate the message. Now if God wants to give us a miracle to do that's fine. But, mostly it's just hard work. Translating the Scriptures into different languages. Trying to win converts from different countries, and sending them back as missionaries to their own people.

We must do whatever we can do, but the mission has never changed, and the moment you became a Christian, the moment I became a Christian, God commissioned us to share this simple message with our little section of the world. When you and I were saved by the blood of Jesus, and added to His family, then God expected us to do the best we can to communicate that message to a lost and dying world. That is the mission of the Church.

III. THE GOAL OF THE CHURCH IS TO ESTABLISH A FELLOWSHIP THAT IS UNIQUE. The goal of the Church is to establish a fellowship that is unique. Can't you see these early Christians after they first hear the good news about Jesus? On the Day of Pentecost there are 3,000 new converts, and they suddenly share something that has never been shared before.

All of them know that they are guilty, that they have crucified Christ with their sins. But now they have repented of their sins. They've been baptized. They've been redeemed, and they've been given the gift of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly, they are part of a new society. They've come out of a world of slavery and superstition. They've come out of a world of selfishness and greed and dishonesty. Now they're part of a new fellowship where they can share things about themselves with others whom they know will listen and be kind and compassionate toward them. Suddenly a whole different atmosphere prevailed because here were 3,000 changed people that God had made different and new. They were "born again."

No wonder their number quickly grew to 5,000, and then into multitudes as the Church spread throughout Jerusalem. More and more people were attracted to them. It was different from anything else in all the world.

The Church must always be that. Most institutions are only interested in what they can get from you, but the Church wants to give. Many will take advantage of you, but the Church is where you can come and hear the truth, be ministered to, and have the needs of your life fulfilled.

We are to be a different people, a different culture. An oasis in the midst of a desert, a shade tree on a summer day, a cup of cool water when you are thirsty, a place to come and to know that you won't be rejected, that you'll be accepted and loved, brothers and sisters, the family of God.

The world changed after Pentecost because of the Church's influence on that world. And it ought to be the same today. This morning, if you're lonely, or tired, or feel taken advantage of, then know that there are people just like you. So, we can come without pretending. We can just be ourselves with all of our warts & blemishes. With all of our scrapes and scratches, and find love and acceptance, because that is what the Church is to be, the family of God.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is peace;
Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is love;
Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is comfort in life's darkest hour,
Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is light and life;
There is help and power in the Spirit, in the Spirit of the Lord.

There Is a Redeemer

There is a Redeemer, Jesus God's own Son,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah, Holy One.

Thank You, O my Father,
For giving us Your Son;
And leaving Your Spirit
Till the work on earth is done.

Jesus, my Redeemer, name above all names,
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,
O for sinners slain.

Thank You, O my Father,
For giving us Your Son;
And leaving Your Spirit
Till the work on earth is done.

When I stand in glory, I will see His face;
There I'll serve my King forever
In that holy place.

Thank You, O my Father,
For giving us Your Son;
And leaving Your Spirit
Till the work on earth is done.

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PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

PASTOR: Almighty God, You have blessed us in love with the Savior to whom the nations cry and in whom is forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Grant to us Your Holy Spirit, the Comforter whom You have promised, that we and all who call upon His name shall be saved. Help us to treasure in our hearts Your mercy and to give ourselves fully to Your service. Lord, in Your mercy,

CONGREGATION: **hear our prayer.**

PASTOR: Almighty God, You delivered Your Word through Moses and the prophets and fulfilled Your Word in Christ. He was planted in death for our sins and raised for our justification, and in Him shall all the nations of the earth be united. Give us pastors who will preach this Word faithfully and church workers who are devoted to Your service. Lord, in Your mercy,

CONGREGATION: **hear our prayer.**

PASTOR: Almighty God, You have promised the thirsty will drink and from the empty will flow forth rivers of living water. Help us to show forth in holy lives the fruits of the Spirit and to live with love toward our neighbor. Give us a servant's heart that doesn't seek our own way but walks on the path of eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy,
CONGREGATION: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Almighty God, You have promised to make one people from the many. Take from us all pride, prejudice and hate, that we may not hinder the cause of the Gospel by our shame but give welcome to all people in the name of Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,
CONGREGATION: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Almighty God, have mercy and spare us. Put an end to the pandemic, and restore the communities of the world to their common life. Lord, in Your mercy,
CONGREGATION: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Almighty God, You have given our nation the gift and heritage of freedom. It came at the cost of many lives on battlefields far and near. Receive our thanks for their sacrifice, and give us the courage to preserve liberty in our own time and use it honorably. Lord, in Your mercy,
CONGREGATION: hear our prayer.

PASTOR: Almighty God, hear Your people for the sake of Him who loved us even to death and who lives to call to Himself all who will be saved. You know what we need and those things we should ask in Your name. Grant them to us for the sake of our crucified, risen and ascended Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
CONGREGATION: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER (spoken in unison)

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 and ever. Amen.

BENEDICTION

PASTOR: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious unto you.
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ✠ give you peace.

CONGREGATION: Amen.

PRELUDE: *The Spirit Song*