

PREPARING AT HOME

June 3-9, 2019

Focus reading: Acts 2:1-21 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=424165650>)

Other lectionary readings: Psalm 104:24–34, 35b; Romans 8:14–17; John 14:8–17, (25–27)

Theme: A Spirit Powered Faith

On Pentecost Sunday we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, bringing God's presence to people who no longer have Jesus walking beside them. The liberating work of God's Spirit challenges the politics of empire and celebrates the diversity of God's people. Jews from different parts of the Roman Empire are gathered together in Jerusalem to celebrate a religious festival. When Jesus' disciples proclaim God's saving acts, each person hears the message in his or her own language. There is no need for people to learn an official common language! While the power of empire is maintained by conformity, the power of the Spirit honors diversity. When some suggest that alcohol is responsible for the strange occurrence, Peter reminds them that it is too early to purchase alcohol. To explain the phenomenon, Peter turns to the prophet Joel, whose words offer more evidence regarding the ways in God's vision stands in complete contrast to the imperial vision of the Roman Empire. The Spirit calls all people, with no exclusions or limitations. Young, old, male, female, slaves, and free are empowered by the Spirit and given a common mission that does not require conformity. The Spirit not only gives the mission, but empowers people to carry it out. It is a mission of liberation, transforming people and unjust social orders. It is a mission that will challenge the status quo.

WIND AND FIRE

The surprising events of Pentecost are described with the help of some very vivid metaphors. Go outside on a breezy day. Can you hear the wind? How is God's Spirit like the wind? Light candles. Why would the flames be described as "tongues"? What colors do we see in the flames? How is God's Spirit like fire? The sanctuary will be decorated for Pentecost. Talking about the metaphors in advance will help your child recognize the fire colors and other symbols in the sanctuary on Sunday.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, CHURCH!

Pentecost is referred to as the "Birthday of the Christian Church." Have a party! Bake a cake! Make a card and bring it to church! Wave crepe paper streamers outside and watch them dance in the wind! Be sure to come to the Pentecost Party following worship on Sunday!

PRAYER

God of love,
we give thanks for your Spirit,
given to men and women, young and old.
Help us to share your good news
that others might understand how much you love each of us
and want us to love one another.
Amen.

Prospect Presbyterian Church, Maplewood, NJ, www.prospectchurch.org

Rita Boyer, rita@prospectchurch.org