



Grow! Pray! Study!

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish—Weekly Guide—May 20, 2018
Pentecost Sunday

'Kindled'

A Sermon by

Rev. Dr. Chris McNeill

Scriptures:

Acts 2:1-8

Psalms 104:24-34, 35b

Romans 8:22-27

John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Scripture Lesson — Acts 2:1-8 New King James

2 When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and *one* sat upon each of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. ⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?" ⁸ And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?

Promised

"Thank you for flying (fill in your airline here). We know you have a choice of airlines. We hope you enjoyed your flight and we look forward to welcoming you onboard again soon."

Thank you for reading your Bible today. We know you have a choice in Pentecost passages and are glad you have chosen Acts 2. This is a happy passage. The disciples actually obey Jesus (there's a first time for everything) and stay in Jerusalem (when they really wanted to return to Galilee to see the fam) and they wait for the Holy Spirit who shows up with gale force winds and fire. Dramatic. Maybe a little scary (most of our experiences with strong winds and fire are not too good). But this is a good time.

You can also see the promise of Pentecost in the Gospel of John 14: ¹⁶And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever— ¹⁷the Spirit of truth..." Wow, a promise of the Holy Spirit. Except Jesus didn't find his disciples wowed after the resurrection. He found them with the deadbolt and chain on the door. You'd think they would believe Jesus by now.

Like us, the disciples had selective hearing/listening. If you've ever tried to raise a husband, you've been through this. There are different types. One is called 'segmentation.' That is when you are at a party and you are trying to hear your friend over the music and you try at least to get the important info. Or you are listening to the teacher and ignore the electric pencil sharpener. But then there's another type called 'segregation.' This is where unwanted information is ignored. So Jesus says, 'I have to go away....' the disciples shut down and they don't hear the promise of the Holy Spirit. Like when Jesus said, 'I am going to Jerusalem' and Peter is like 'Yay!' and then Jesus continues, 'to be crucified.' 'Nooooo...' Maybe that is why the Hebrew saying 'Shalom' means both hello and goodbye, so we don't have to choose. The problem is most of us just like the hello part, and for good reason. Goodbye and death have not been good to us. Nevertheless the Spirit is promised.

'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.' —Romans 8:2

'Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.' —Romans 8:26 (*continued*)



Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish

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'Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of

God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.' —Romans 5:5
The Holy Spirit is here whether we close our ears or listen, especially in life's difficult times. Maybe we should let Jesus finish his sentences: 'I must go away.... so the Spirit can come.' 'I will be killed.... but in three days I will rise.' We don't have to ask the Spirit to be here; It already is. Pentecost is not an event; It is something we choose to participate in every single day.

---What situation in your life right now needs to hear Jesus finish his sentence?

The Spirit is here. Now. For always. Promised.

Prayer:

'When was the last time that we heard the wind of your Spirit roar through this place?
When was the last time your fire lit up this room?
When was the last time we took you at your word and met together in expectation of your Spirit filling this place, and these lives with your Glory and Power?
Lord, you challenge us with Pentecost. Do we believe that this was a once in eternity experience, never to be repeated?
That the Holy Spirit was poured out on your followers for a single purpose, and ended His work at that instant?
If so, then maybe that is why the Church seems so powerless in this age, helpless when faced with the needs both spiritual and physical, that we see in the world.
Lord, as we meet together , and celebrate once again the memory of that first Pentecost, may it be for us as it was then a moment of empowerment, an awareness of your Glory in this dark world, a life changing experience. Amen. '

(continued next column)

Quote from the 6th century:

"'And my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.' My friends, consider the greatness of this solemn feast that commemorates God's coming as a guest into our hearts! If some rich and influential friend were to come to your home, you would promptly put it all in order for fear something there might offend your friend's eyes when he came in. Let all of us then who are preparing our inner homes for God cleanse them of anything our wrongdoing has brought into them."

St. Gregory Dialogos, on Pentecost in Be Friends of God

Lifting up Our Church Family in Prayer

Prayers of Praise and Thanksgiving:

For all of our leadership past, present, and future
For those who live with open hearts and hands

Prayers for Health and Healing:

Pastor Chris McNeill, Annie Gaspar, Nelda Zamora, Ruben & Elida Espinoza, Edna Henry, Wilma Beverly, Winna Bjornaas, Edith Owens, Patsy Welsh, Walter Welsh, Gloria Rae, Ruby Bolton, Justine Baly, Christopher Huron, Virginia Hardwick, Bobby Malek, Nathan Fleming, Anne Wofford, Linda Hulsey Bracewell, Alsine Ryan, Bob Allen, Ruth Allen, Wanda Arnold, Doann Flores, Astrid, Harry Rogers, Kim, Kailey, Mason, Mike Young, Alfred Wendelken, Eleanor Robinson, Bobbie Latham, Ed Pierce, Kevin Chapman, Ruben & Mary Espinoza, Juan & Maritza Zamora, Daniel & Tommie Mascorro, Bernice Steele, Nadine Bishop, Carroll Latham, Charles Robinson, Carolyn Dean, Jean Nichols, Leonard, Ashley Urbaniak, Doris Grauerholz, E'mile Landry, Kaylee Barfield, Stephannie Bryant, Jimmy McGee, Luis Ricardo Ochoa, Carol Siler, Julius Trotter, Charles Jager, Crossroads Community

Prayers for Hope:

Please let us know your prayers and hopes by noting them on the Registration pads with your name.

Prayers for Our Church, Our City, Our State, Our Nation:

Servants of Christ United Methodist Parish, its pastors and its people, City of Houston, Texas, the United States of America, and members of our Armed Forces and their families

Prayers for our Covenant Mission Partners:

Crossroads, Mission Milby, Technology For All, Southeast Area Ministries, and Justice For Our Neighbors

Regular Sunday Schedule

—9:00 a.m. Sunday School & Small Groups

—10:30 a.m. Celebration Worship Sanctuary