

Reclaiming the Holy Spirit

- Today we celebrate Pentecost and Trinity Sunday—the birthday of the church, and the day we celebrate that God reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- As Presbyterians, we're comfortable with God the Father:
 - > “Our Father, who art in heaven...”
 - > “Gloria Patri” means “Glory be to the Father”
 - > The authority and power of God resonate in us.
- As Christians, not only do we embrace God the Son, but our faith is centered on the Lordship of Jesus Christ!
 - > We revel in the intimate love of Christ!
 - > We thrill to his miracles and cling to his words!
 - > We suffer his crucifixion and rejoice in his resurrection!
 - > We're thankful for salvation purchased by his sacrifice in body and blood!
- The Holy Spirit is different. Presbyterians have been ambivalent about the place of the Holy Spirit within the church for reasons Biblical, historical, and practical.
- Biblically:
 - > The Holy Spirit is the one person of the Trinity rarely given a voice.
 - > We get confused! In the OT, the Holy Spirit is called "Wisdom," Wind, or Breath. In the New Testament, we hear Spirit, Holy Spirit, Spirit of Truth, Paraclete, Counselor, or Comforter
 - > References to the Spirit can be impersonal or somewhat generic. Is the "Spirit of truth" referring to the Holy Spirit or to our spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ? Are "fruits of the Spirit," the same as “spiritual gifts?” It's not always clear!
- Historically:
 - > Look at our traditional documents: The Apostles' Creed gives only six words to the Holy Spirit.
 - > Even from the time of Paul, churches have struggled with how to balance
 - + Spirit and church authority;
 - + Wisdom of the Spirit with education.
 - + Revelations of the Spirit with Biblical and traditional doctrines.
- Practically:
 - > The charismatic and Pentecostal churches have staked their claim to the Holy Spirit, linking the work and movement of the Holy Spirit to speaking in tongues and emotionalism; which has made mainline churches wary.
 - > Too often, when churches begin to focus on the Holy Spirit, the congregation devolves into a caste system based on the perceived authenticity or sincerity of spiritual experiences.
- Today we have a special opportunity to reclaim the Holy Spirit. Pentecost offers a road map for Christians to follow if we want to understand Christ's gift to us of the Holy Spirit!
- Pentecost was the promised coming of the Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, it filled the believers with power, courage, and a sense of purpose.
 - > The disciples were filled with passion, but they were not shouting, wailing, or sobbing.
 - > There was no speaking in tongues. Quite the contrary! Those filled with the spirit spoke so that EVERYONE could understand clearly.
 - > Those filled with the spirit did not just stay within their spiritual experience—in fact, there's no evidence that they expected it to ever happen again! Instead, they exploded out into the world to witness and serve those of all nationalities and stations of life.
- Reclaim the Holy Spirit with the lessons of Pentecost!
 - > Pentecost: the Holy Spirit is real and available.
 - > Pentecost: the HS leads us to a closer relationship with Jesus Christ.
 - > Pentecost: the HS brings clarity and a passionate sense of purpose.
 - > Pentecost: the HS is a tool for teaching and witness.
 - > Pentecost: the HS rallies believers to new hope, and new strength—and away from despair or apathy!
 - > Pentecost: the most obvious and tangible evidence of the presence of the Holy Spirit is in the actions, the witness, and the service of believing Christians!
- May we be blessed by the lessons of Pentecost!
- May we celebrate the Trinity: the full revelation of God to his children.
- May we reclaim and embrace the Holy Spirit!

Acts 2 (selected)

- 1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.
- 2 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.
- 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them.
- 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.
- 5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.
- 14 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.
- 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16 No, 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.
- 18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.



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4220 Mahan Drive,

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