

Rev. Janet R. Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Day of Pentecost
Sunday, May 24, 2026
Scripture: Acts 2: 1-6
Sermon: Fire and Wind

Close your eyes for a moment. Now imagine you are in a beautiful place. A secluded but safe place. With beautiful green foliage, rocks and flowers, a crystal, clear blue lagoon filled with fresh water, and a waterfall.

In your mind, you can hear that water flowing through the rocks, the rushing sound of the water as it pours down over the edge of the cliff, the white foam, the fresh air and water forming into mist across the flowing, rippling water.

Now in your mind, slip into that serene oasis. Feel the fresh, cool water on your skin, breathe in the scents of nature, allow the sound of the rushing water to soothe your spirit, relax your muscles, refresh your soul like a natural spa.

Put your fingers together and cup some fresh, clean water in your hands. Gulp it down. The water is pure. Refreshing. And cool.

How does that feel? Chances are, just imagining that scenario has relaxed you, released your stress, and brought you to a peaceful place.

Now I want you to imagine that all of that water that you feel surrounding, immersing you, and nourishing you, that soothing rushing sound, that fresh, clean purity, all of it is not mere water but the very Spirit of God!

Let it flow over you, around you. Feel it. Taste it. Let it soothe your soul. The Spirit of God is with you. Receive the Living Water of Christ and his peace. You can open your eyes.

This is the way that Jesus described the Spirit of God to his disciples. It is a feeling of peace in the midst of a storm.

A submarine was being tested and had to remain submerged for many hours. When it returned to the harbor, the captain was asked, "How

did the terrible storm last night affect you?" The officer looked at him in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!" The sub had been so far beneath the surface that it had reached the area known to sailors as "the cushion of the sea." Although the ocean may be whipped into huge waves by high winds, in this area, the waters are never stirred.

This is a perfect picture of the peace that comes from Christ's Spirit. The waves of worry, of fear, of heartbreak, cannot touch those resting in Christ. Sheltered by His grace and encouraged by His Spirit, the believer is given the perfect tranquility that only Christ can provide. (*Adrian Dieleman, Receive the Holy Spirit*)

In the Christian tradition, today is the Day of Pentecost. It is 10 days after the time Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 1:3), and since Jesus commanded them to wait for the coming of the Holy Spirit this was an amazing day for all who witnessed it because it is the beginning of the church.

It is the birthday of the church. It marks another appearance of God's glory in the giving of the Holy Spirit, in which the disciples are filled with God's revelation and inspiration. Their hearts and minds are touched by the life changing calling of God.

For us Pentecost is God's "call to action" in which people from all cultures and places become baptized and disciples become apostles and "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!"

The Day of Pentecost is always a great celebration for the church. Pentecost is known as the "Feast of Weeks" because it was celebrated on the day following the passage of seven sabbaths, a Week of Weeks from Passover. Because it fell on the fiftieth day, it gained the name "Pentecost," from the Greek word for "fiftieth." The Feast of Pentecost celebrated the beginning of the harvest. It was called "the day of first fruits." In a real sense, the Day of Pentecost in the New Testament on which the Holy Spirit came was "a day of first fruits" the beginning of God's harvest in this world, to be completed again when Christ comes again. Pentecost in the New Testament marked the beginning of the Holy Spirit.

We gather together each year on this day, to hear the story of the birth of the Church, told in Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles like the rush of a violent wind, with tongues as of fire dancing on their heads

and people from all nations hearing the apostles speaking in their own language, and more than 3,000 responding by being baptized into Christ.

Where is the Holy Spirit Today? The Holy Spirit is without a doubt here with us today, in some very amazing and powerful ways. The Holy Spirit is at work in our own lives and in the life of our church if we are open to his help and presence in our lives. Believers are under his guidance even as the disciples of Jesus were under Him. From heaven Jesus still exercises lordship over us, but not being physically with us now, but by means of the Holy Spirit working in and through us.

During the period of time covered by the four Gospels, the work of the Holy Spirit centered around the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus was begotten of the Spirit, baptized by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, anointed by the Spirit, and empowered by the Spirit. He offered himself as an atonement by the Spirit, was raised by the Spirit and gave commandments by the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit was also at work among the disciples of Jesus before Pentecost. We know this because Jesus said of them, "He abides with you" from John 14:17. Jesus also said to Nicodemus, "Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" in John 3:5. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was more than they had experienced before.

The Holy Spirit is here, and comes to us today, through the scriptures, the divinely-inspired, faith-producing, life-changing Word of God, which connects us to all Christians going all the way back to that first Pentecost, and connects us to God.

The same Holy Spirit who inspired Peter to preach on that first Pentecost, is here with us today. Those who heard Peter that day heard him speak in their own language. And so do we. Just as many Christians around the world today are hearing this in their own language. It may not seem as miraculous, but I think it is pretty incredible to think of Christians around the world today hearing these words in their own language.

Another way that the Holy Spirit comes to us today is through the gathered congregation. The Holy Spirit is the reason we are here today. The Holy Spirit called and gathered us here, just as it has done for centuries all around the world. The Holy Spirit brings us together and gives us a variety of gifts, all for the common good. "Now there are varieties of gifts," Paul reminds us, "but the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians 12:4). The Spirit

has been poured out upon all flesh, as Peter reminds us in his famous sermon, young and old, men and women, all have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, and we come together to share our gifts and insights and become more than we can possibly be on our own.

There is another way in which the Holy Spirit comes to us and that is through the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism. The Pentecost miracle happened when the apostles were all together in one place. And it happened when devout Jews from every nation under heaven were present. That's not a coincidence. The Holy Spirit likes us to be together. Something important happens when we are together. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is present when we gather in his Name, which we do whenever we worship together. The Holy Spirit can also come to us when we are alone.

If the point of Pentecost is the gift of the Holy Spirit, then the result of Pentecost is sharing the good news of the gospel with all nations. Do you remember what Jesus said right before the day of Pentecost? He said, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and to the ends of the earth."

Believe and know that the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you have received the power needed to be our Lord's witnesses, even to the ends of the earth. That was an incredible life changing day with the disciples, and this is a life changing day today as Jesus' disciples.

We have everything we need to go and share our faith. We have everything we need to be the church, the body of Christ, in the world.

There probably won't be any violent wind or fire today but we're not here for the wind and the fire. We are here to worship God who is behind that wind and fire, to give thanks for the gift of God's only Son, who died to save us and forgive us, and we are here to receive again the promised Holy Spirit, who unites us to our God in ways beyond what we can even imagine.

The Holy Spirit makes everything possible. With the whole Church throughout the ages, may we all pray, "Come, Holy Spirit. Come!"