

**Prayer of the Week:**

*Almighty God, on this day, through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, you revealed the way of eternal life to every race and nation: Pour out this gift anew, that by the preaching of the Gospel your salvation may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*  
(Source: Book of Common Prayer 2019, Collects of the Christian Year, Pentecost Sunday)

**Prayer of Thanksgiving:**

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all whom you have made.*

*We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.*

*And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to your service, and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.*



**Pentecost Sunday**  
Acts 2:1-8 (NRSV)  
May 31, 2020

**Pentecost**

We have a lot in common with the first disciples despite the centuries that separate us.

-We must seek to properly understand the implications of Jesus' teaching for our lives and culture, just as they did.

-We gather around a table in unity with God and one another, just as they did.

-In many ways, the challenges and joys of following Christ are the same as our brothers and sisters in the faith from so long ago.

There is, however, one primary difference; they could see Jesus' physical body and we cannot. What's interesting is that the Apostle John records Jesus as saying that actually gives us an advantage.

*John 16:7, "It is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you."*

Today is Pentecost Sunday which celebrates the outpouring of the Spirit of Christ on the world.

## **Babel In Reverse**

With this miracle of language the Spirit of God reverses the sin of Babel.

In the story of the Tower of Babel (recorded in Genesis 11), ancient Babylonians tried to grasp godlike powers by building a tower to the heavens using bricks. It's the first example in history of an empire trying to bring unity through uniformity. Empires have always understood unity as everyone looking the same and doing what you are supposed to do to embody the cultural norms of that empire. This all began at ancient Babel - one language, one culture and look what we can accomplish!

But, God opposes these imperial ideals at Babel by multiplying their language and scattering their people.

Pentecost reverses Babel!

This time the Spirit of God brings incredible unity through the miracle of languages. The invigorating Spirit of God shows us at Pentecost that it's not unity without diversity or diversity without unity; there is a powerful third option: unity and diversity in harmony! There is incredible unity in the Spirit of God, but not at the cost of diversity!

## **We Need The Spirit**

We need to consistent, unifying, work of the Spirit in us to help us live this out.

The Apostle Paul talks about three primary identifications with Christ that represent our life of being led by the Spirit. (from Romans 6) We share in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.

First, as we commit to following the ways of Jesus and trusting in him, we turn from our old habits and patterns. Our "old self" with its pride, anger, prejudice, greed, etc. dies with Christ.

Then, we join Jesus in his burial. For us, this is symbolized by baptism. Burial is a place of silence and rest. When we are baptized, we join the new creation community of God that is committed to not be driven by fear. Instead, we enter into the confident rest of God who is making all things new.

Finally, we join Christ in his resurrection life! This is both a future hope and a current reality. Having let go of our old life and entered into the rest of Christ, we are open to the new life he brings.

*"At the core of Jesus' life and message was this good news: the Spirit of God, the Spirit of aliveness, the Wind-breath-fire-cloud-water-wine-dove Spirit who filled Jesus is on the move in our world. And that leaves us with a choice: do we dig in our heels, clench our fists, and live for our own agenda, or do we let go, let be, and let come....and so be taken up into the Spirit's movement?" -Brian McLaren (We Make the Road By Walking, pg. 205)*