



PENTECOST

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit spread and moved among and within the people. But Pentecost is not just an ancient story, it is about us, here and now. It is about the ongoing life of the followers of Jesus.

The Holy Spirit, one part of the Trinity, is offered in Scripture as a life-sustaining, energizing force, which not only guides us, but pushes us into all we are meant to be as people of God. The many symbols of Pentecost remind us that the Holy Spirit takes many forms, speaks many languages, moves in many ways, and offers unexpected gifts.

Symbols of the Holy Spirit and Pentecost include:

- **Dove:** The Holy Spirit descended "like a dove" at Jesus' baptism.
- **Wind:** Representing God's breath, which is the core of our Great Story from the very beginning, when God blew into the darkness, shaping the chaos and breathing all creation into life. It is God's breath that is our life force.
- **Fire:** Representing the all-consuming presence the Holy Spirit offers, filling our ancestors then, and us today, with passion and verve, power, strength, and beauty.
- **Wild Goose:** The Holy Spirit cannot be contained or controlled, it is free and wild.
- **Female ethos:** The Holy Spirit is often referred to as "she"; sometimes "Lady Wisdom".
- **Red:** The color red represents the zest and life of the Holy Spirit and the fire that burns in our hearts when we open ourselves to all the Spirit offers.

The people present at the original Pentecost felt a holy sense of unity, despite the differences between them. They came from different geographical areas and spoke different languages, yet they all experienced the same powerful presence of God and all could understand the message of the Spirit as it blew and danced among them.



READ:

Acts 2:1-21 (NRSV, adapted): When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout people from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? All in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" Others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter raised his voice and addressed them, "Listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: `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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

WONDER:

Wear red on Pentecost Day! If able, stand outside and feel the wind on your face. Imagine that wind as the Holy Spirit. How does it feel? Choose your favorite symbols of Pentecost to share among the people of your neighborhood. Create a representation of that symbol with supplies you have at home like markers, sidewalk chalk, old magazines, or leaves and flowers from your yard. Share that image by posting it on your door, in your yard, on your sidewalk, and/or social media. How does it feel to share Spirit with others?

PRAY:

God of power, may the boldness of your Spirit transform us, may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us, may the gifts of your Spirit be our goal and our strength, now and always.

Amen.

(Book of Common Worship (1993), p. 340)

Created by The Rev. Jennifer McNally, priest at Saint Anne's Episcopal Church and convener of dinner church Table 229, St. Paul, Minnesota, and The Rev. Anna V. Ostenso Moore, Associate for Family Ministry at St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral, Minneapolis, and author of the picture books "Today Is a Baptism Day" and "We Gather at This Table." Please share freely!