

**This renewal and growth couldn't happen without those disciples coming together to worship and pray. It only happened when people gathered together and saw and shared the love of God together. And so, it is time for us to begin the process of coming together in person so we can powerfully know and claim God's life and presence fueling the mission we share at The Falls Church Episcopal.**

The good news of the pandemic getting under control as more and more people are vaccinated and the guidelines by the CDC, the state, and our Bishop loosen points to a return to what we will call a "new normal." It is time for us all to start the process of moving beyond quarantine and isolation to coming together in the church so that we may "continue in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread (Eucharist) and the prayers (from the Baptismal Covenant in the BCP)." This will be different for each of us and so we must respect each other's movements towards regathering. But our spiritual health and the vibrant life of the church are calling us to return. We need to be together!

Our Christian Feast of Pentecost gives the ancient Jewish Feast of Pentecost new meaning through the community of the Church. The Jewish Feast of Pentecost celebrates God's giving the Law to the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai 50 days after their deliverance from slavery in Egypt in the Passover event. God just didn't want the children of Israel freed from slavery. God wanted them alive to God's holy purposes as they formed a nation of people committed to living God's ways in the world.

Resurrection finds its meaning as we allow God's Spirit to renew us so that we can share the power of Easter life and love with others: God just didn't defeat death on that first Easter morning so we could join Jesus in heaven one day. God defeated death so we can share in the power of resurrection in our lives and in our world today. And we do that together as Christ's body, the church.

On the brink of welcoming your new Rector in July, Pentecost gives the opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit to renew us and create more life and love in the world through our participation in the ministry of The Falls Church Episcopal. We will renew our Baptismal Covenant committing to being the church together as we share the Eucharist and pray, enjoy fellowship with each other (yes, coffee hour will soon return in person!), and share in the work of loving our neighbors as ourselves in love, dignity and service.

It is time for our lives to be ablaze with the Holy Spirit's love and power. And may the world around you be transformed as you commit anew to God's purposes in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit!

**Pentecost celebrates the birthday of the Church. This Pentecost, let us celebrate the birthing of our coming together again to be the Church in this unfolding and faithful future before us!**