



Pentecost

Pentecost is the fiftieth day after Easter and is the day that Christians celebrate as the birth of the Church and the coming of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, God's Spirit, God's Breath, the Holy Wind, Ruach, the third person of the Trinity, has been present since the beginning. She is found throughout scripture, including Genesis 1:2, Genesis 2, Ezekiel and John 20. The story of Pentecost found in Acts 2 is not the first that we hear about the Holy Spirit in scripture. But in scripture, we read that on this day the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to go into the streets telling of Jesus to all those they met. Following Peter's sermon, many were baptized; and the church began to grow.

Questions for Reflection:

- So, what is it about Pentecost that makes the coming of the Holy Spirit unique? We even claim this event as the birth of the Church. Why? What sets it apart?
- Hebrews uses the word ruach for wind, breath and spirit. How are these related?
- What do you think the Day of Pentecost felt like to the people who were there? Do you think they felt different when they left that day?
- In what ways did Pentecost bring about unity in diversity? Why is unity in diversity essential for the mission of the Church today?
- When are you most aware of the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit?" How does it happen?
- How do you think the Holy Spirit might visit you today?

Spiritual Practice: Writing your Elevator Speech Faith Story

An elevator speech is simply a talk that you could share in the length of time you might be in an elevator. Because sharing our faith with others can seem like a challenge for many of us, it is helpful to prepare by writing your thoughts. Write down your responses to the following questions to help you prepare for writing your elevator speech, or brief summary, of the Christian faith.

- Begin with prayer.
- How would you summarize the Christian faith in seven words or less?
- How did you first learn about God? Why did that make a difference in your life?
- What do you believe about God and Jesus Christ? What are three or four beliefs that are most important to you?
- How does faith in Christ make a difference in your life?
- Why are you a Christian?
- Who is Jesus to you?
- How does being connected to a church community make a difference in your life?

Use your responses to help you organize your faith story. Practice telling your faith story by sharing with a close friend or family member, pastor, or church staff or leader. Look for opportunities during your week to share your faith story with someone who may be blessed by your encouraging words.

