

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church 🕊️ The Day of Pentecost 🕊️ May 24th 2026
Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Gracious LORD, Your Spirit fills the world and gladdens Your Church with the remembrance of all Christ Jesus has spoken. Comfort us with divine peace, and do not let our hearts be troubled or afraid. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

LORD God, bless the preaching of Your Word throughout the world. May Your Spirit create faith in the hearts of the nations, that on the great and magnificent day of the Lord they may call on the name of Your Son and be saved. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Loving Father, come with Your Son and make Your home among us. Let Your Word bind families together, guide our life and conversation, and continue among us in each coming generation. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

O God, we thank You for the many blessings You have bestowed upon this nation. Grant us a long memory to recall those who gave the full measure of devotion to our country's peace and security. Bring to mind the sacrifices of those who served faithfully until death in the protection of our freedom and in the defense of our land. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

LORD God, give Your Son's peace to all who suffer in body and mind in our midst [*especially Faith & Our Savior Prayers*] ... *and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal prayer.* Do not let their hearts be troubled or afraid. Grant them health and healing in accord with Your will. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Merciful LORD, by Your Holy Spirit, convict us of sin, of righteousness in Christ and of the judgments of Your Holy Word. Sanctify our hearts by the forgiveness of sins, and make us fit partakers of Christ's holy body and precious blood. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Advocate and Defender whose light never wanes, we bless You that on the great and magnificent day, You will raise all of the dead and give unto those who believe in Jesus eternal life. We remember with thanksgiving those who have gone before us and are at rest. Comfort those who mourn, and bring us all with them into the light that knows no darkness. *LORD, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.***

Almighty Father, with Your Son, Jesus Christ, send Your Holy Spirit into our hearts through Your Word to rule and govern us according to Your will. Comfort us in every temptation and misfortune and defend us against every error, that we may continue steadfast in the faith, increase in love and good works, and - trusting firmly in Your grace - obtain eternal salvation; through the same Jesus Christ, Your Son, our LORD, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

PENTECOST Acts 2 [& John 16:5-11 GRAND REOPENINGS 5.24.26 F.OS.L

FIREWORKS

Grand openings are always big events – fireworks, balloons, searchlights – all ways to grab attention. Come, look here. Something new is happening! So it is with Pentecost, the grand opening of the Church as it moves from 12 fearful disciples locked up in a room to a Gospel movement that in one day and in one breath embraced the Mediterranean world and parts beyond. Today we look back on the Church's grand opening nearly 2000 years ago, and we reflect also on the continuation of that same Church today 2000 years later.

PENTE- = FIFTY

Timing is everything when it comes to grand openings. You need to kick things off when there are people around. And so God chooses the festival of **Pentecost, one of the big feasts on the Old Testament calendar.** It was part **harvest** festival, part **religious** festival. The harvest festival was for the harvesting of the winter wheat 50 days after Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. "Pentecost" is the Greek word for Fifty. Fifty days after the unleavened bread comes the harvest of new winter wheat. At Jesus' time, Pentecost was also a celebration of the **giving of the Torah to Moses** on Mt. Sinai.

GOD'S PERFECT TIMING

Pilgrims packed Jerusalem from all over the Mediterranean, from northern Africa as well as Asia. Estimates have as many as 150,000 coming together. As I said, timing is everything and **God's timing is perfect.** Fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus comes the first harvest of believers, men and women who heard the preaching of Jesus and were baptized. 3000 were baptized by the end of that day. Now that's quite a grand opening.

9 AM

It happened around **nine o'clock on a Sunday**, coincidentally, the same time we gather [here] at **Our Savior Lutheran of Grants Pass.** The believers, all 120 of them, were gathered in a single room. There was the sound of great wind and tongues of fire rested on each of them. Jesus was blowing His Spirited-breath over His little Church. He had already done this with His Apostles on that first Easter evening when He breathed on them and said **"Receive the Holy Spirit."** Now, seated at the Right Hand of God, the ascended and glorified Lord Jesus breathes out on His Church, and with His breath comes the fire of the Holy Spirit.

NAMES OF THE H.S.

This is what Jesus promised when He said He would send another **Paraclete, a Helper, a Counsellor, Guide, Comforter** who would bring glory to Jesus by declaring His gifts, by convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, by bringing to mind all that Jesus had said and done. The Spirit is the breath of Jesus and the breath of the Church, breathing life into dry, dusty bones, raising up from sin and death, enlivening, enlightening and gathering. As God breathed into Adam and he became a living being, so **Christ breathes life into His Church, and His Church comes alive.**

BREATHE LIFE

The Spirit gives breath to the Church's preaching. In order to speak, there has to be breath. Jesus breathes into His

Church, not for the Church's sake, but for the world. As He died for the world and lives for the world, so His Spirit is a gift to the world through the Church. Filled with the Spirit, the Church cannot be silent – she becomes a speaking, preaching, proclaiming Church.

GOSPEL U.N. The preaching of the Church is custom fit to the ears of the hearers. They had come from all over the known world, each with their own language, dialect, and culture. Walk through a/ny **major international airport** and you will get some idea of what that crowd might have looked and sounded like: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judean, Asians, Cappadocians, Phrygians, Pamphylans, Egyptians, Libyans, Cyrenians, Romans, Cretans, and Arabs. **Talk about diversity!** And they all hear the same Good News of Jesus **in their own tongue**. It's as though someone had strapped on a set of headphones, as they do in the United Nations, and everyone heard Peter and the other apostles speaking in their own native tongues. These were Galileans. Fishermen. **Marginally educated men** who normally spoke Aramaic and maybe a smattering of Greek along with some synagogue Hebrew.

NOT DRUNK Naturally, **some were skeptical**. Some thought they were **drunk**, which, when you think about it, is a pretty goofy explanation considering: **A) it was nine o'clock** in the morning and, **B) language skills** generally don't improve with drinking. No, this wasn't the result of "alcoholic spirits" but the Holy Spirit, the creative Breath of God blowing through His Church and into the world making all things new in the death and life of Jesus.

BABEL ?UN/DONE? What a day that must have been! Imagine being in that crowd, hearing the death and Resurrection of Jesus preached in your very own language, your nouns and verbs, your dialect and accent. For a brief moment, **the curse of Babel was not lifted but accommodated**; the **separated world was brought together as one around Jesus**; the wall of division that keep humanity apart were lifted just enough. And at the close of the day, 3000 people from all over the known world were Baptized into the Name of Jesus. Many of them returned to their homes, **scattered like salt sprinkled on the whole world** or seed scattered on a field. You can imagine a whole bunch of little congregations springing up all at the same time, like spring flowers blooming in the desert.

DEAD CHURCH?! Let's be honest. There are times when the **Church today would appear about as lifeless as the valley of dry, dead bones the prophet Ezekiel saw**. Or maybe that describes your own spiritual life. And the question on our lips may be the same question posed to Ezekiel: **Can these bones live?** Can these dry, dead bones take on flesh and breath again? Can the Church continue to live and move and breath and proclaim in this current generation?

YES! To ask "*Can these bones live?*" is to ask "*Can God raise the dead?*" Can He breathe life into the lifeless? Can He revive and renew and recreate His Church? And, of course, the answer was and still remains a resounding "**YES.**" Of course He **can**, and He **does**, and He **will** by His Spirit, His Breath and His Words.

CAN'T RE-CREATE The danger is that we try to recreate Pentecost **for ourselves, to duplicate the grand opening event in our time** complete with wind and fire and speaking in tongues. But you know what would happen in the matter of a month or two of all that. It would become ordinary, mundane, boring even. Same old wind, same old fire, same old speaking in tongues. And we'd be looking for something new all over again. **You can't recreate that first Pentecost Sunday**, no matter how hard you try. (Iglesias)

PASSING SHOWER But Christ IS living and breathing over all creation from the Right Hand of God. His Spirit blows like a fresh breeze across the face of the earth all the time, igniting Pentecost fire all over the place. Today as we speak, Christianity is **booming in Africa and Asia**, much to the amazement of those who would declare it **dead in America and Europe**. Luther wisely noted that the work of the **Spirit is like a local rain that blows here for a while and then moves on** only to return another day.

EYES ON THE PRIZE The **danger is that we take our eyes off of Jesus**, which is where the Spirit wants them, and put them instead on all the **Pentecost pyrotechnics** or on the Spirit Himself, who vastly prefers to bring glory to Jesus and stay out of the limelight. Our confidence in the Spirit's presence and working is not in wind or fire or tongues, but in the preaching of Jesus, in the hearing of His forgiveness, of Holy Baptism, of the Body and the Blood, of the Word. That's where the Spirit is active, that's where Pentecost is happening today, here and now, for you.

PP=PERSONAL PENTECOST **Your Baptism is your Pentecost Day**. Every time you hear the Word of Christ addressing you in your own language is your Pentecost. Whenever you eat of the bread that is Christ's Body and drink of the cup that is His Blood and proclaim the Lord's death, that is Pentecost for you. The ongoing work and life of Pentecost is not in the wind and the fire and the tongues, but **in the Word that brings repentance and faith in Jesus**. And there hasn't been a day in the history of the world where that hasn't been going on since that first Pentecost 2000 years ago.

SURVIVE/THRIVE **The real miracle, far greater** than anything that happened that day, is that the Church has survived all these years since. She has survived divisions, heresies, persecutions, threats, hardships, doubts, fears, corrupt clergy, false believers, and what could best be described as gross mismanagement. If the church were any other organization or human institution, it would have died its own death long ago.

H.S. LIFE-BREATH But the **Spirit of Christ breathes life into His Body the Church**. The Spirit of Christ puts breath into our lungs and **words into our mouths and ears**. The Spirit of Christ **opens our lips** that our mouths may declare the praise of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. The Spirit of Christ continues to call, gather, enlighten, sanctify, and keep the Church, the Body of Christ, in the one, true faith. And you are part of that **great breathing Pentecost Church bearing witness** to the world that these dead, dry bones of ours will live just as surely as Jesus is risen and lives. **His death is yours**, His **life** is yours, His **Spirit** is yours. Blesséd be the Holy Trinity and blesséd be God's Holy Spirit. **IJ'N, Amen. SDG**