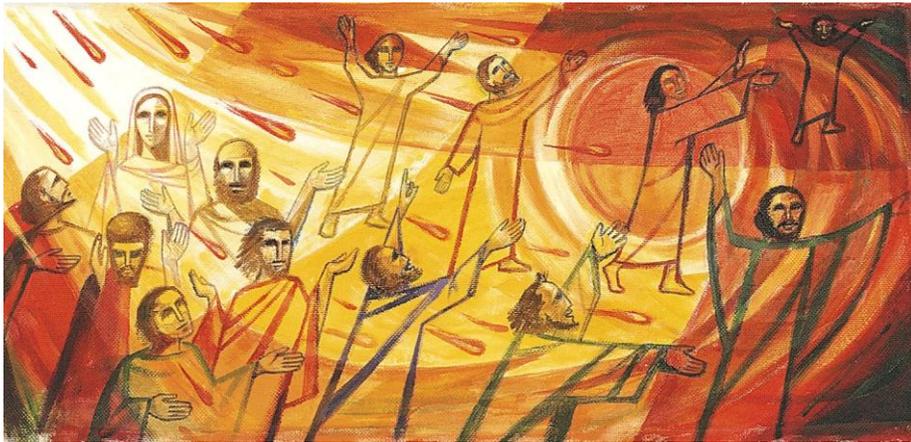




May 31, 2020
PENTECOST

ST. JOHN UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
Fairview Heights, IL 62208
618-397-6323

ANNOUNCEMENTS: See the last page.



*Scripture texts: Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, Acts 2:1-21,
1 Corinthians 12:3b-13, John 7:37-39*

CALL TO WORSHIP: Based on John 7:37-39

Let anyone who thirsts come to Christ.
Let all who dare to believe drink deeply.
The Spirit comes like a flowing stream.
We receive living water that quenches our thirst.
God's Spirit is for young and old, rich and poor.
Men and woman, slave and free, receive God's gift.
Our sons and daughters shall prophesy.
We will see visions and dream dreams.

This is the day for a new Pentecost.
We hear the message all can understand.
How amazing are all the works of God!
May our meditations please our Creator!



PRAYER OF INVOCATION:

As Christ ascended to heaven, our spirits are lifted to you this day, O God. Your Spirit fills all the universe. We dwell within your embrace and cannot escape from your watchful care. You are with us here, choosing us as apostles and instructing us in the way we should go. Focus our limited understanding on the person of Jesus, that all he did and taught might come alive in us during this time of worship. Grant to us convincing proof of your promises as we welcome your winds of change in our lives. Amen.

CALL TO CONFESSION: Pentecost, in the book of Acts, was a time of sudden, dramatic surprises and change. People were transformed and empowered. They took great risks for their faith and suffered for it. Are we today open to God's surprises and willing to risk our security to live as followers of Christ?

Let us begin with a time for silent personal confession.

PRAYER OF CONFESSION: Let us pray together.

Eternal God, we admit that we are seldom amazed and astonished. We take for granted much that was once thought to be impossible. We are confident consumers of human ingenuity. Sometimes we think we have no need of you. Matters of the spirit are far down on our list of concerns. We are even suspicious of those who claim to see visions and skeptical of those who seem carried away in their devotion to the faith. Yet we long for something **more**

than our daily routines. O Spirit, come to save us from ourselves. Amen.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON: Would that all God's people were prophets, welcoming the Holy Spirit's gifts! It is God who fills our life with good things, and renews us day after day. Accept the promise that everyone who calls on God's name will be saved. Dare to believe that God has a mission for you and will supply all that you need. You are forgiven!

SCRIPTURE TEXT: Acts 2:1-8, 14-21 (CEB) When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. ²Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. ⁴They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

⁵There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. ⁷They were surprised and amazed, saying, "Look, aren't all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them?" ⁸How then can each of us hear them speaking in our native language? ¹⁴Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, "Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! ¹⁵These people aren't drunk, as you suspect; after all, it's only nine o'clock in the morning! ¹⁶Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷*In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.*

Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your young will see visions.

Your elders will dream dreams.

¹⁸*Even upon my servants, men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.*

¹⁹*I will cause wonders to occur in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.*

²⁰*The sun will be changed into darkness,
and the moon will be changed into blood,
before the great and spectacular day of the Lord comes.*

²¹*And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. (Joel 2:28-32)*



MESSAGE: The greatly anticipated Holy Spirit has arrived! The disciples had been told by Jesus numerous times that "his Father" would send a counselor, an advocate, a helper, a power, a companion. I can imagine that the Disciples did not know how this would happen. I bet they were really surprised with how it did.

Looking back at the previous three years before this event, the Disciples spent their time watching and listening to the Rabbi with the best credentials, Jesus the son of God. **Secondly** Jesus opened their minds to the scriptures in Luke 24:45, "thus Jesus opened their (the Disciples) minds to understand the scriptures." **Thirdly** Jesus told them exactly what they are to do, as written in Luke 24:46-48, "Jesus said to them, "This is what is written; the Christ will suffer and

rise from the dead on the third day, and a change of heart and life for the forgiveness of sins **must be preached** in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.”

The **fourth** “gift” Jesus gave them was the Holy Spirit from God, which gave them the ability to preach in the native language of all who need to hear the good news of the Gospel. And **lastly**, the Holy Spirit also gave them confidence and the energy to do all that Jesus requested.

That’s what happened over 2000 years ago. What else do we know about the Holy Spirit? The Apostle Paul wrote about the Spirit in the Epistles of Romans and 2 Corinthians. In Romans 8:11 Paul wrote, “the Spirit is the source of the community’s love, freedom, and hope for renewal.” In 2 Corinthians Paul talks about the way in which the Holy Spirit creates, upholds, and enlivens the community of Believers. To him the Spirit gives life and freedom to the people of God, calling them toward ever-intensifying transformation together. Paul did not understand the Spirit simply as an abstract power, but as a personal presence intimately connected to God’s redemptive work in Christ. Paul often attributed the hope of the community to the comforting and assuring presence of the Spirit who is a “seal”, a “first installment” and a “guaranty” of future resurrection glory for all those who are in Christ.

Since the writings of Paul, there have been thousands of theologians who have written their interpretations of what they think is the Holy Spirit. I think the most helpful discussion concerning the Holy Spirit is yours. Perhaps the words of Paul resonate with you. Perhaps you have

experienced the Holy Spirit in your life. I hope so. When we share in Holy Communion, we ask the Holy Spirit to bless our elements. In Baptism, we ask the Holy Spirit to bless the water. During the invocations we pray, we ask the Holy Spirit to be with us in our gathering.

The Holy Spirit can bring clarity during a time of clamoring voices. Just as Paul wrote about the influence of the Holy Spirit on his communities, the Spirit can bring us all together in inclusion and diversity. In the midst of confusion, the Spirit speaks to all of us. We are scattered right now, yet we are not beyond the reach of the Holy Spirit. Look for it. Listen for it. Notice it and thank God for the Spirit that is with us. Amen.

HYMN 288 New Century Hymnal

Let it breathe on me, let it breathe on me,
Let the breath of the Spirit breathe on me.
Let it breathe on me, let it breathe on me,
Let the breath of God now breathe on me.



OFFERING: Thank you for continuing your gifts to the church. The doors may be closed, but the work of the church continues.

COMMISSION AND BLESSING: This is the great and glorious day of God’s coming. Every day the Spirit waits to bless us. Be open to God’s gifts and eager to share them. Join the company of Christ’s living disciples. Take time for meditation and prayer. Notice all around you the signs of God’s care. Let them amaze and astonish you.

May God’s glory endure forever! Sing praise to God as long as you live!! Amen.

(Liturgy by Rev. Lavon Bayler)



ST. JOHN PRAYER LIST: Dave Seneczyn, Eric White, Lori Riess, Charles Chamberlin, Donna Isselhard, Mitch Nallie, Candy Pearce, Greg Talley, Carol Meyer, Leah Williams, Pat

Holtgrave, Jane Riess, Rich Schmitt, Sherie Klostermann, Shari Hamilton, Charlotte Watson, Becky Ballard, Hanna Mosco, Bill Underwood, Luke Doctolero, Robert Iverson

**We isolate now so,
when we gather again,
no one is missing.**

Peace and Blessings, Pastor Rosemary
618-660-8894 gcaptain@charter.net

BE THE CHURCH
Protect the environment. Care for the poor.
Forgive often. Reject racism.
Fight for the powerless.
Share earthly and spiritual resources.
Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life.

STOCK THE PANTRY!

The Fairview Heights Food Pantry is reopening on June 1. St. John is having a socially distant "Stock the Pantry" event on Saturday, June 6, from 10:00 to noon at St. John UCC, 10207 Lincoln Trail, Fairview Heights.



Here is how it will work: put your donations into the trunk or back of your vehicle. (1) Pull into the St. John parking lot and follow the directions of the workers. Stay in your vehicle! (2) Raise or unlock your trunk/hatchback and your donations will be unloaded for you. (3) There will be a box for cash or check donations.

Flash your headlights if you want us to

bring the box to you for your deposit. Your help is much appreciated. This has been a difficult time for so many, and the pantry is very happy to be able to step in once again to provide nutrition to hungry families. Anyone is welcome to donate to help the Fairview Heights Food Pantry, so please tell friends, neighbors and family who may want to donate.

Many thanks and God bless you!

Items of great need:

Pancake mix and syrup

Spaghetti and sauce

Cereal -- especially sugar coated

Rice

Toilet paper – 4 to a package. Please don't bring canned green beans or corn.