

# THE GOOD NEWS

The Official Newsletter of All Saints Episcopal Church



**When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.**

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Acts 2:1-4 MSG





# Why Red for Pentecost?

*When I realized my grandchild would be just a few days old this Pentecost Sunday, June 8, I immediately went to my favorite online children's clothing store (Primary.com) and ordered a red onesie, red baby socks, a red-striped cap, and a red-striped receiving blanket. When I explained to my daughter that a package would be arriving with red clothes for the child's first Pentecost, she responded, "We can also count on you to ensure we are all dressed liturgically correct." It was all I could do not to go online and order red shirts for the new parents, too.*

*So, why red for Pentecost?*

*Fifty days after Easter Sunday, we tell the story of how, after the resurrected Jesus spent 40 days appearing to his beloved community, he ascended to the right hand of the Creator and promised to send the Paraclete—the Holy Spirit—to guide the community back to God. For the final 10 days of the Great Fifty Days of Easter, we contemplate that in-between time: the "already, but not yet."*

*It's not like Holy Saturday, when we feel the deep absence of God—for we've experienced resurrection. But there's still a sense of "Now what?" Will the Sacred be present in our lives? What will be the signs? The experience? The new way of being?*

*And we worry. We fret. The world is vast and convoluted. Those who spew toxicity are powerfully good at their spewing. And we are but a small band of siblings in this small room, looking for the new way to follow the Christ—even as we know he has returned to his Father.*

*This was the experience of those first followers, the People of the Way, as they were first called. And it is often our experience today. "Where is God in all of this?" is one of the most asked questions I hear these days.*

*And so, as did those first followers, we gather. We come to church to hear what happens next.*



*The story is powerful, rich, and deeply relevant to our days. They were gathered in a locked room, windows shut and curtains drawn, for fear of those who would do them harm. And right on cue, there came a rush of sacred wind and dancing flames of red, orange, and yellow fire. The fire alighted on each of the apostles' heads—hence the pointy hat, called a mitre, that our bishops (who are in apostolic succession) wear to this day.*

*The red flames danced on the apostles' heads, giving them the ability to lead and teach, forgive, bless, inspire, and understand—giving those who were gathered the ability to celebrate the presence of the Holy and to comprehend, beyond linguistic barriers, the Good News preached by the apostles.*

*Fire danced, and we became the Beloved Community: faithful people who follow Jesus in many creative and enduring ways. We feed those who hunger. We provide resources for clean clothing. We strive to harness, use, and share clean, renewable energy from the sun. We hold blood drives and celebrate births, baptisms, marriages, lives, and people. We practice receiving and giving forgiveness. We vow to use words and actions that are merciful and compassionate—regardless of political agenda or social positioning. We share gifts of music, education, and space. We gather, scatter, and gather again as we gain the courage and strength to be all God would have us be.*

*All the while, we let the Holy Spirit dance on our heads, sing in our hearts, and lead us to grace and glory.*

*This is why we wear red on Pentecost Sunday: to remind us that the Holy Spirit dances in our lives. We have hope and courage because God sent the Paraclete, the Holy Sustainer, to companion us. We can walk in love because God first loved us.*

*So while you are wearing your red, barbecuing, dancing under the new solar pavilion, and rejoicing in the power of the Spirit, I'll be holding my new grandchild—dressed in liturgically correct red. I'll whisper in their ear a call to come dance with the beloved People of God. I will tell them they will never walk alone. And I will give prayers of thanksgiving—for their birth, for my precious family, and for my beloved faith community of All Saints.*

*May the flames of the Holy Spirit dance in your heart and sing in your soul all your days and nights. Let us rejoice in the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*Thanks be to God,  
KGK+*

# THIS GRACE THAT SCORCHES US A BLESSING FOR PENTECOST DAY

Here's one thing  
you must understand  
about this blessing:  
it is not  
for you alone.  
It is stubborn  
about this.  
Do not even try  
to lay hold of it  
if you are by yourself,  
thinking you can carry it  
on your own.  
To bear this blessing,  
you must first take yourself  
to a place where everyone  
does not look like you  
or think like you,  
a place where they do not  
believe precisely as you believe,  
where their thoughts  
and ideas and gestures  
are not exact echoes  
of your own.  
Bring your sorrow.  
Bring your grief.  
Bring your fear.  
Bring your weariness,  
your pain,  
your disgust at how broken  
the world is,  
how fractured,  
how fragmented  
by its fighting,  
its wars,  
its hungers,  
its penchant for power,  
its ceaseless repetition  
of the history it refuses  
to rise above.

I will not tell you  
this blessing will fix all that.  
But in the place  
where you have gathered,  
wait.  
Watch.  
Listen.  
Lay aside your inability  
to be surprised,  
your resistance to what you  
do not understand.  
See then whether this blessing  
turns to flame on your tongue,  
sets you to speaking  
what you cannot fathom  
or opens your ear  
to a language  
beyond your imagining  
that comes as a knowing  
in your bones,  
a clarity  
in your heart  
that tells you  
this is the reason  
we were made:  
for this ache  
that finally opens us,  
for this struggle,  
this grace  
that scorches us  
toward one another  
and into  
the blazing day.

**Jan Richardson**

Circle of Grace:

A Book of Blessings for the Seasons