

# A Few Short Words...

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The *Day of Pentecost* was celebrated on Sunday, May 31st. This article is actually advertising The *Day of Pentecost* for 2010. I am announcing it almost a year early because I want it to serve as a goal. I would like the Stuart First United Methodist Church to be ready to appreciate all for which Pentecost stands.

So the first question you may have is: "What is *The Day of Pentecost*?" Pentecost is a festival day for the Jews. The Jews referred to it as *Shavuot*. *Shavuot* was when the Jews celebrated the wheat harvest.

Why should we be interested in an ancient agricultural holiday? What does that have to do with us? Something happened to the apostles on the day of Pentecost. They received the Holy Spirit. Luke tells us this story in the book of *Acts*. In the first chapter, Jesus tells His disciples to wait in Jerusalem for the gift from the Father. Jesus really wants them to receive this gift. Like a good Gift-Giver, Jesus does not tell the disciples what the gift is going to be. It was to be a surprise. And like a good Gift-Giver, Jesus does not tell them when the gift will arrive. But He wants His followers to receive the gift from the Father and tells them not to leave Jerusalem until they've received it.

The Gift from the Father arrived by surprise delivery on the day of Pentecost. Luke tells us about this story in the second chapter of the books of *Acts*. The Holy Spirit came into the room where the disciples were gathered. Even though they were in an enclosed room, a mighty wind blew through the room. Tongues of fire

came and lighted on the apostles. When the Holy Spirit came to live within them, they discovered that they had power that they had never had before.

Jesus promised us the very same Gift of the Father that He promised to the earliest disciples. Think about that! The very Holy Spirit that fell on the disciples is available to us! The very Holy Spirit that was active in creation is available to us! This should tell us a lot about Jesus! It should tell us that He loves us. It should tell us that He makes good on His promises. It should tell us that He wants to live within us. It should tell us that He is available and that He wants to empower.

Let's think about it this way ... Christianity has some very important holidays. We have Christmas where we celebrate the birth of Christ. We have Good Friday where we commemorate the crucifixion of Christ. We have Resurrection Sunday (Easter) where we celebrate the return of Jesus from the grave. But the Day of Pentecost should be every bit as important to us as the other holidays. Ever since the day of Pentecost, God's presence has been with us in the form of the Holy Spirit! - I hope that the church will grow in its' understanding of the Holy Spirit and I hope that the day of Pentecost will grow in importance to us as a result of this. This is why I call the church into preparation for Pentecost 2010.

How can we prepare for the Day of Pentecost and for the Holy Spirit that manifested in such a wonderful way? I have some suggestions ...

- **Read the Bible**, especially the Gospel according to *Luke* and then the book of *Acts*. You will find that Jesus spent a great deal of time preparing the people for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. (This thoroughly eluded me until I received an experience with the Holy Spirit a number of years ago.)
- **Pray** that the Holy Spirit will help you to understand the Scriptures. Remember, the orthodox faith has long taught that the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- **Come together in unity**. Remember that the Holy Spirit is attracted to unity. Also remember that the Holy Spirit is grieved with disunity. Forgive people when you are wronged. Divest yourself of grudges and grievances. Seek out forgiveness from those you have wronged (unless to do so would only irritate the conflict). Be willing to rebuild relationships that have broken and resolve to keep them healthy.
- **Get over phobias**. Why do I say this? Many people are afraid of how the Holy Spirit might manifest within them. Get over this! The Father would not give you a bad Gift! He knows you and loves you too much to give you something bad or something that you wouldn't like!
- **Make your heart available**. Always keep your heart open to Jesus and what He promised you!