

The Day of Pentecost—May 24, 2026

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Jesus said, “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.”

The work of the Holy Spirit can be described in one word, sanctification. This is both in the broad and narrow senses of the concept. In the broad sense, the Holy Spirit calls you to faith in Christ saving you by the Gospel, gathers you into the church, and he gives you a new life. In the narrow sense you live out that new life in Christ doing good works and living a holy life in new obedience to God all worked by the Holy Spirit. How does he do all of this? Listen to these words from the readings today from Acts and John. First in Acts, St. Luke writes, “And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.” And then Jesus says in John, “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” Listening, then to these words of God today, like the people on the Day of Pentecost we ask, “What does this mean?”

The Holy Spirit is a preacher. That’s incredibly important. This is how he works, it’s how he’s always worked. God, the Holy Spirit, preaches. We have neither a spiritless word nor a wordless Spirit. The Holy Scriptures are his voice for they are his very breath. The Holy Spirit is attached to the word of God and through this word of God he preaches. The content of this preaching is what we’ve been hearing about the past few Sundays in the Gospel readings. He preaches repentance and the forgiveness of sins; law and gospel. Not only that but this is how he works it through this same word. He works repentance. He forgives as he delivers the salvation accomplished by Jesus. The Holy Spirit preaches and you have Christ and his benefits.

It’s really that simple when it comes to knowing and understanding the Holy Spirit and really the whole of the Christian faith. The Holy Spirit preaches, that’s what he does and how he does it is through the word of God. When we forget this or deny this then we run into all kinds of problems in the church and our lives in Christ. The Holy Spirit isn’t some power, force, or motivation. He isn’t arrogant or self-promoting either, rather he is the Paraclete who calls you to himself and gives you Christ. He’s the one who says, don’t look at me look to the one who is crucified and risen for you; look to Jesus and have what he has done for you. He’s no skeptic either as he takes what belongs to Jesus and hands it over to you clearly in the Scriptures and in the sacraments as the very promises of Jesus himself are attached to these visible elements and through them, the sacraments, the Holy Spirit is at work and delivering to you Christ and salvation. The Holy Spirit doesn’t produce doubt, he gives comfort, assurance, and confidence in and through the very means at which he is at work.

Yet we are tempted to be swayed away from Christ. The temptation from the devil, the world, and our own fallen flesh is to look to someone else and reject what our Lord teaches us. It’s to replace the work of the Holy Spirit with the work of sinful men. It’s to replace the certainty of the Holy Spirit’s work with the doubt and speculation of the devil. Let’s go back to that first reading from Genesis. The people all had one language and were gathered together into one group. So, what did they do? They decided to build a city and a tower. That sounds innocent and really it is, but it doesn’t stop at that. The reason isn’t so innocent. Moses records for us what they said among themselves, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

The sin of the people is trying to make a name for themselves. It’s trying to ascend into heaven on their own and approach God on their own terms, with their own name. They built a false church upon this confession of themselves. This was their “spirituality.” It was individualistic and all about themselves. Sinful man likes to assert his will. The sinful man really likes to have things his own way. He likes to think he likes to act he likes to put himself forward in a way which motivates and defines his existence and how he lives.

In the Old Testament reading today, man asserts his will and tries to approach God on his terms. This was sinful and a monument to their own fallen state. God saw this. He knew what was going on in this endeavor. The nature of our sin wants to think that God doesn't know what we do, think, or say. It pushes God aside and out of our lives. Then, when confronted it still tries to hide from God. Adam and Eve hid from God among the trees in the Garden. It's utterly foolish but such is the absurdity of sin. Instead of listening to God and living what he commands we build a life according to our own liking.

God, though, does see what the people did. We heard, "And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the Lord said, 'Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another's speech.'" For the sake of the people, because the Lord knew there was no amount of evil they couldn't accomplish together, he did something. The Lord came down and saw their handiwork as he had done with Adam and Even. God intervened.

"So the Lord dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the Lord confused the language of all the earth. And from there the Lord dispersed them over the face of all the earth." Their attempts at making a name for themselves and using their own language to their great shame and vice was over. Where they were one group they were now many in both location and speech.

When Christ came into the world he knew all of this about us. God was intervening just as he did a Babel, as he did after the Fall in the Garden, Mt. Sinai, the tabernacle, the Temple, and so many other countless times. All of those were pointing to that fullness of time when Christ was born of the Virgin Mary and lived on this earth. Here the Lord whose very name, unlike ours, does save and he did. He lived according to God's law not for his sake but for the sake of those whose name accomplishes all types of evil in their own flesh and the world around them. Jesus built the church upon himself who is the cornerstone the builders rejected. His Kingdom, which is not of this world, had come upon the people and he preached to the people that salvation was at hand. Jesus lived perfectly, he preached perfectly, he died perfectly, he rose perfectly, he ascended perfectly, and now he rules and reigns in perfect glory.

All of this accomplished by Christ God preaches to you and gives to you. The Holy Spirit is at work as you hear his word. You share the faith with the people at Pentecost who spoke all those different languages. The Holy Spirit has called you and gathered you into the Church. Now there is unity found and created by God's word, and you are one body, the church. The apostles preached to the people and Peter, after the reading today preached a sermon to those people gathered. After this we are told by St. Luke, "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Within the church, constituted and known by God's word and sacraments, is the location where all of this happens.

Pentecost is the Holy Spirit doing what he does as he always has, preaching through means of the word. He's doing it still right now in your own tongue, your own language. You have it all, you have peace, which is to say your sin is forgiven and you are righteous before the throne of God. Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid."

The Lord's peace is yours this very day. It's real peace, the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. Not only that but there's confidence and certainty in the peace of Jesus. That's the wonderful thing you see here at Pentecost. God is working in your life when you have his word and sacraments, and this is where you find him for you. You aren't

The Day of Pentecost—May 24, 2026

scattered about tossed back and forth when it comes to the Christian faith. He doesn't leave you wondering whether you are his or if you have Christ. You don't find the gospel apart from the means of grace. The Holy Spirit is a preacher and he sanctifies you; you are a holy one, a saint. The Holy Spirit gathers you together as God's holy people and you have the same language of the Scriptures. You have one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and God and Father of all.

Cling, then, to where the Holy Spirit is working through the means he has taught you. God's word is connect to his very person. God is preaching to you, listen to him. This is why Jesus said, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me." Don't look for him anywhere else because you won't have peace but doubt. Don't try to find the Holy Spirit speaking to you in your mind or heart. Don't think he's found in the wind, some coincidence when you've found your car keys after looking for three hours, or some other thing in creation. Don't go looking for him in rambling speech or in impressive signs and wonders, the devil can do those things.

Christians hear and keep the word of God. Jesus teaches that loving him and keeping his word go together. There's no "I love Jesus, but I just don't agree with everything the Bible says." If that's your theology of who Jesus is, the Jesus you worship is a false god who happens to have the same name as the true God. Christians hear the word of God and keep it. Christians treasure what Jesus teaches in both his law and his gospel.

The old foe wants nothing more than for you to search for and think you find the Holy Spirit apart from the word and sacraments but the devil is liar and the father of lies. The devil wants you first of all not to hear the word of God or when you do hear it for it to go in one ear and out the other, the end of both is same. The Lord calls you to listen to himself. Listen to the Holy Spirit and where he is found. Anything claiming to be of the Holy Spirit apart from the word and sacraments is of the devil himself, the Smalcald Articles in the Lutheran Confession confess this clearly. The devil has been at this trick since he deceived Eve then Adam wanting them to look for God apart from his word in the Garden of Eden. Don't listen to Satan and where he would have you go and have your Christian faith a thing of constantly searching and doubting. Don't build your foundation and in arrogance go running to the church of Babel built with the works and thoughts of men. Repent. Cast aside your sin which wants your own name to be known and wants God to work on your terms. Instead, in humble repentance, go running to find your dwelling in confidence where the Holy Spirit is as he has called, gathered, enlightened, and sanctified you by the Gospel.

Here's the thing in this too. The Holy Spirit at work means the burden is lifted off you and God's peace is yours. He has created you, redeemed you, and he is the one who has sanctified you. All these things are by his grace alone. Pentecost is all about this work of God for you in Christ given freely and fully to you by God himself, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit creates, sustains, and brings you into the true church which is not Babel but Mt. Zion. Though the languages may be different the faith is the same as God's word, the apostles' doctrine is faithful taught, and the sacraments are rightly administered according to the institution of Christ. In God given faith you receive this calling upon the Lord. The Day of Pentecost is the Divine Service where you are right now. The Holy Spirit is just as active and doing miraculous things through very ordinary looking means. The Holy Spirit has worked a miracle in your life; you believe the Gospel. Not only that but he continues to preach to you and keep you in this faith unto life everlasting.

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, your sin is forgiven. This is peace you have with your God as the blood of Christ cleanses you from all sin. Your Savior speaks his kind voice to you and gives you his peace as the Holy Spirit preaches. "These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." God's word is never preached in vain but accomplishes the purposes for which he sends it. That's your salvation given out to you. Thanks be to God who does such wondrous things. Thanks be to the Holy Spirit, your Lord, for his work among you as a preacher sanctifying you in this life in the Church and for the confidence you have in all his work. It's all about Christ and it's all yours. Yours is eternal life even as you are a saint

The Day of Pentecost—May 24, 2026

here in the church on earth and on the day when you rise and go from here into the glory that is the life to come. On that day you will see the life of eternal joy and peace as you will be with Christ all the saints gathered in place joining in one song to the Lamb in his city and to the honor of his saving name.

In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.