



# The Steeple

June 2023

A Weekly Newsletter from First United Presbyterian Church

## Pentecost Sunday — May 28

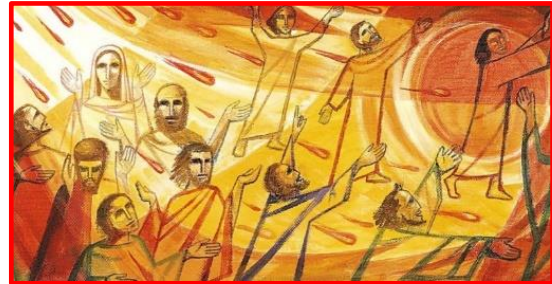
*For Pentecost Sunday, editor Teri McDowell Ott wonders what we would venture to do if we trusted the Holy Spirit to use us.*

### Year A

#### Acts 2:1-21

“Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me/  
melt me; mold me; fill me; use me.”

The words of this simple hymn (*Glory to God*, #288) are often my prayer before I step into the pulpit to preach a prophetic word, or step into action that requires more talent than I feel like I possess. I pray this prayer like the athlete’s pre-game hype speech, sometimes even dancing around like a boxer before the fight. I need this prayer. I need this reminder that God’s got me, and the Holy Spirit can make good use of me — even though my anxiety is spiking and my self-doubt is threatening a takeover.



Like those first disciples on the day of Pentecost, God is constantly calling us to new and uncharted territory. Fifty days after Passover, Jews from every nation gathered in Jerusalem for the Feast of Weeks, commemorating the harvest and “the first fruits of your labor” (Exodus 23:16). This festival scene in Acts 2 is transformed by the dramatic arrival of the Holy Spirit, with the sound of a violent, rushing wind and tongues of fire lapping the air. Jesus told them this would happen saying, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8). But who could really be prepared for such a miracle? Such a transformation?



The miracle of Pentecost includes the Holy Spirit giving people from “every nation under heaven” the ability to speak new languages, to hear and understand each other. Unity amidst diversity was discovered — a transformation so profound, some cast it as unbelievable, dismissing those blessed as a bunch of crazy drunks. When Peter (now there’s a transformation story) stands up to recite the words of Joel, he emphasizes how the Spirit gives ordinary people (“all flesh”) extraordinary abilities: prophesy, visions, divine dreams (Acts 2:17-21).

Fear and self-doubt too often hold us back from all God’s Spirit can accomplish through us.

I wonder what would change if we trusted the Spirit’s power to transform? Disillusionment is easy — mourning the church’s decline, growing frustrated over our failure to create positive change, losing hope in the face of overwhelming problems.

But what would you try if you believed the Spirit would fill you, giving you the ability you’d need for the work to which God calls? Would you speak against the harassment you’ve witnessed at work, but been too afraid to say anything about? Would you write an op-ed for your local newspaper on behalf of the poor or marginalized? Would you run for office? Volunteer at the prison? Organize and advocate for common sense gun laws?



What would we do as the church if we trusted the Spirit to fill us, use us, and give us abilities that rise to the call of God’s work? Would we demolish that old, unused educational building to see what rises from its ashes? Would we knock on the doors of our neighbors, listen to their needs, then build community coalitions to strategically and collectively meet those needs? Would we worry less about our financial safety net, and risk investing our mission money in new ventures to solve big problems?



We think too small when we measure God’s call by our human capacity. We can do more and be more through the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecost passage is all-inclusive. The Spirit is poured out on “all flesh” and “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” God’s Spirit can transform ordinary people, like you and me and that guy who quietly sits in the back pew, into extraordinary servants of Christ.

*Teri McDowell Ott is the editor and publisher of Presbyterian Outlook.  
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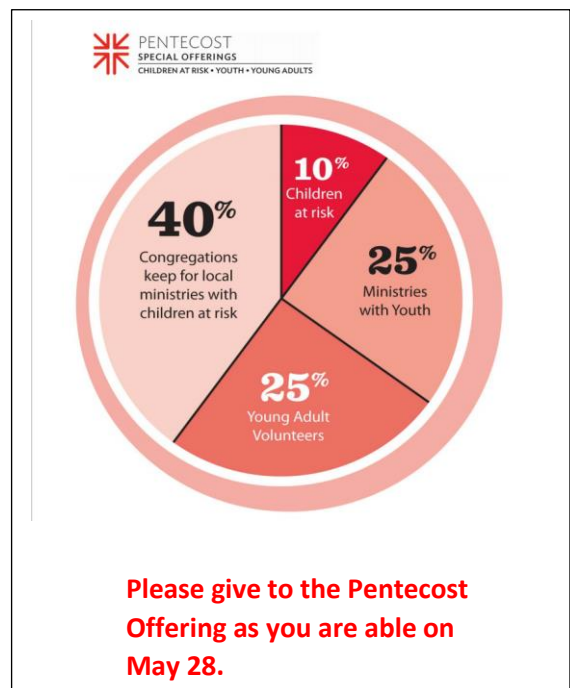


The celebration of Pentecost Sunday is May 28 this year. (9:00 worship) To remind us of the significance of the arrival of the Holy Spirit, we all wear red to worship on that Sunday. So pick out all of the red that you want and come ready to celebrate the arrival of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church. Then stay after worship for a piece of cake celebrating the Church’s birthday!

“Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us. Melt us. Mold us. Fill us. Use us.” With the ability given to us by the Holy Spirit, let’s dream big dreams — and step into action, trusting God for the tools.

### Questions for reflection:

1. What thoughts, ideas, dreams, memories does this Pentecost story stir in you?
2. Where has God called you but you have been hesitant to follow? Why were you hesitant?
3. If you knew for certain the Holy Spirit would fill you with all the ability you’d need, what would you venture to do?



## Coming up...

**Sunday, May 28 - Pentecost - Wear Red!**

**9:00 am - Worship, Pentecost Offering Received**

**10:00 am - Fellowship with cake for the Church's birthday!**

**Monday, May 29 - Memorial Day - Church office closed**

**Wednesday & Thursday, May 31 & June 1 - Dalene out of office**

**Friday, June 2 - Dalene in office**

**Saturday, June 3 - Quilt Festival, 11-1 Luncheon**

**Sunday, June 4 - Trinity Sunday**

**9:00 am - Worship**

**10:00 am - Fellowship**

**Monday, June 5 - Dalene out of office**



We pray for...

Nolan Collins

Hal Jackson

Sally Leeper

Tish McKee

Darla Millhollin

Maize Thompson

Those known only to God



### BIRTHDAYS IN JUNE

Tish McKee June 12

Randy Lubbers June 14

Dan Ryner June 20

Ilene Holmes June 25

### ANNIVERSARIES IN JUNE



Bob & Pat Kuhns June 6



*Connor Pashek at his graduation celebration following church on May 21.*

*Thanks to the Evening Guild for planning and implementing such a nice reception for our graduate!*

## JUNETEENTH

Celebrate Freedom

JUNE 19<sup>th</sup>

**Juneteenth** (June 19) is a federal holiday in the United States commemorating the emancipation of enslaved African Americans. We acknowledge this day in history and honor the long struggle of African-Americans for freedom. The day was first recognized as a federal holiday in 2021, when President Joe Biden signed the Juneteenth National Independence Day Act into law.





Summer is just around the corner! Make plans now to attend Synod School July 23-28 at Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa. Synod School is a learning and personal enrichment experience for people of all ages. We seek to create an environment of hospitality, healing, and hope. This week is designed for laity and clergy as well as individuals and families with classes and activities for adults, youth, and children. (We also offer high-quality childcare.)

2023 is the 69<sup>th</sup> year of Synod School in Iowa. Our 2023 theme is: *Our Family Story*, where we will gather and study familiar stories in new ways in hopes of gaining a new closeness with God, and each other. Check out <https://lakesandprairies.org> where you can register and download the catalog with course descriptions, schedules, and more! Scholarships are available, including a \$50 scholarship to the first 69 first-time registrants in celebration of our 69<sup>th</sup> annual Synod School. (The office at First United Presbyterian Church has a couple of catalogs for anyone interested.)

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The history of Father's Day goes back to 1908, when a church in West Virginia held a

sermon to honor 362 men who had been killed the previous year in a coal mining explosion. This was the country's first-ever event to strictly honor fathers, but it was just a one-and-done thing, at least in that community.

The following year, however, a woman named Sonora Smart Dodd started her quest to establish Father's Day as a national holiday. Dodd was one of six children raised by their single father, and she thought fathers should be honored in the same way as mothers.

After she'd petitioned her local community and government for a year, Dodd's home state of Washington

celebrated its first official Father's Day on June 19, 1910. Over the years, the celebration of Father's Day spread from state to state, and after a long fight, it was finally declared a national holiday in 1972, when President Richard Nixon signed it into law.

Father's Day is a holiday that celebrates and honors fathers and their influence in our lives. So no matter whether you celebrate your biological dad, adoptive dad, step-dad, grandpa, or someone who's been like a father to you, the key is to spend time together and participate in activities that show love and appreciation. Start the day off right by bringing Dad to church on June 18!

*"A good father is one of the most unsung, unpraised, unnoticed, and yet one of the most valuable assets in our society."* – Billy Graham



O beautiful for spacious skies...the  
heavenly illumination of the faces of those  
who gave all for love of country.

For purple mountain majesties...the  
reflecting brilliance of the land of the free.

O beautiful for heroes proved...who more than self their country loved, and whose  
legacy will forever be a testament to the manifestation of national pride and honor.

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years...so that future generations  
of past brothers and sisters in arms may continue upholding peace, prosperity, and  
justice for our sovereign land.

America! America! God shed His grace on thee...abiding strength for those who  
descend from those we honor today. Thank you for heroes past, whose patriotism,  
service, loyalty and pride resonate through the courageous deeds of those serving  
this great country today.

Though the cause of evil prosper, and behind the dim unknown, stands our God  
within the shadow, keeping watch above God's own...we ask that you comfort  
those who mourn today, be with all those who have trials and tribulation, protect  
those here and abroad making us safe, and hold each of us in the palm of your hand.  
To God be the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

*- A Memorial Day Prayer, written in 2016 by Dalene*



## BOARD OF ELDERS



### Class of 2023

Paul Millhollin

Ruth Reed

### Class of 2024

Kevin de Regnier

Joe Ekdahl

Tish McKee

### Class of 2025

Pam Deichmann

Lori Ryner

## CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

9-1 Mon – Thurs

Closed Friday

Church phone: 515-462-3261

Church email:

churchsecretary3261@gmail.com

Dalene phone: 319-530-8373

(text preferred)

Dalene email: dds5160@gmail.com

Dalene Davies-Smoot – Admin. Assistant

Steve Walker - Custodian



Flag Day, also called National Flag Day, in the United States, a day honoring the national flag, observed on June 14. The holiday commemorates the date in 1777 when the United States approved the design for its first national flag.



# JUNE 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 7 PM – Property & Finance <b>Dalene off</b>	2 <b>Dalene in 9-1</b>	3 QUILT FESTIVAL 11-1 LUNCH
TRINITY SUNDAY 4  9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:00 AM FELLOWSHIP	5  <b>Dalene off</b> 7 PM – Madonna Circle	6	7 4 PM – Evening Guild	8	9  <b>Dalene in 9-1</b>	10
11 2 <sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:00 AM FELLOWSHIP	12	13	14 <b>FLAG DAY</b> 	15	16	17
3 <sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 18  9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:00 AM FELLOWSHIP	19 	20	21	22  ARTICLES FOR JULY STEEPLE DUE	23	24
4 <sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST 25  9:00 AM WORSHIP 10:00 AM FELLOWSHIP	26	27 <b>Dalene gone</b> 6:30 PM – SESSION MEETING 	28	29 <b>June 27 – July 4</b>	30	 <span style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; color: blue;">JUNE</span>