## TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

*Welcome by: Don Taylor / Opening Prayer by: Robert Ward*
*Morning Assembly Song Leader: bobby Rader*

#2 We Praise Thee, O God
#144 O Worship the King

*Scripture Reading by: Matthew Girard*
*Communion Devotional by: Daniel Balch*

#366 By Christ Redeemed
***Lord's Supper and Contribution***

#480 Blessed Assurance
***Sermon "Living with Christ's Mind"***
***Philippians 2:5-11***

#924 Just As I Am
#957 This World Is Not My Home
*Closing Prayer by: River Lucy*

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Robert Ward's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m.

***Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth***

**Sunday**: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
**Wednesday**: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Feb. 25, 2024

# *"Stand Firm in…Liberty"*

Galatians 5:1

### The Church's Birthday

Between the time of my writing this toward the end of the week and your reading this on Sunday morning, I will have celebrated a birthday. It got me to thinking about what is sometimes referred to as the birthday of the church: Pentecost.

We read the story in **Acts 2.** The Holy Spirit descended and filled the disciples who were gathered together, empowering them to speak in languages they had never learned. This caused a great crowd to gather in amazement, wondering what was going on. Peter took advantage of the opportunity to proclaim to them the good news about Jesus: he was the long-awaited Messiah foretold by the prophets, whom his audience had rejected; but God raised him up, and now offered forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Spirit to those who would repent and be baptized in his name. In response, about 3,000 were immersed and added to the church.

According to **Acts 11:15**, the events of Acts 2 mark *the beginning.* And, indeed, several things occur for the first time in this account which, together, mark the occasion as the beginning of a new age, the gathering of a new community.

It is the beginning of the public proclamation of Jesus as Christ. The climax of Peter's sermon is the declaration, *Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified* **(v. 36).** After the resurrection, Jesus had explained that, according to the scriptures, *the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.* **(Luke 2:46-48)** He later said that when the Spirit came on them, they were to give their witness **(Acts 1:8).** Thus Peter confirmed the message of the disciples to the crowd on Pentecost: *This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses.* **(v. 32)** They were witnesses already in the sense that they had seen the Lord, before and after his resurrection; but this is the first time they are witnesses in the sense of giving testimony, telling those things that they had seen. During his ministry, Jesus would not allow his followers to proclaim he was the Christ publicly, likely due to a misunderstanding of what it meant to be Messiah; he had to perform the work involved in his death and resurrection before the truth was proclaimed. But now, the wraps were taken off.

This is the beginning of the preaching of the gospel. The gospel had been preached beforehand in promise to Abraham **(Gal 3:8).** Jesus had preached the gospel of the kingdom in preparation (**Mk 1:14-15**) But this is the first time it was preached in fullness as accomplished fact. Paul outlines the essential facts of the gospel as the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ **(1 Cor 15:1-5).** This is Peter's message on Pentecost; only after those events could the good news of God's act through Jesus be announced.

This is the beginning of the offer of forgiveness in Jesus' name. We noted above Luke's account of the Great Commission: Jesus told the apostles that *repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.* The call to repentance and forgiveness was included in Peter's sermon, in the name of Jesus Christ.

# Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

## Our Sick

**Gayle Coleman** will be having a procedure on April.

## Continued Prayers
## (Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Jo Ella McKewen, Kelly McCain, Wayne Noonkester, Rickey Lucas, Jennifer Stelly

## Shut Ins
## (Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

## Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

## Upcoming Activities

**Elders, Minister** meeting Monday, Feb. 26th at 5:30 p.m..

**Youth Night,** Thursday, Feb. 29th from 6-8 p.m. in the family life center. We will have food , games, and a Bible Lesson. For more information, see River Lucy or Brooks McKelroy.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, March 5th at 8:00 a.m.

## Thank You

Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for the prayers, phone calls, plant and food. We appreciate the love and concern during our time of sorrow. We have truly been blessed with our church family.
The Family of Jeraldine Frazier

| Elders | Deacons | Minister |
|---|---|---|
| Ken Coleman | Zach Arthur | Bryant Perkins |
| Bobby Rader | Daniel Balch | |
| Don Taylor | Danny Balch | |
| Robert Ward | Walden David | |
| | Gus Tristan | |

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This is the beginning of the age of the Holy Spirit. That is particularly what Peter had in mind in **Acts 11:15** when he designated this as beginning: *The Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning,* speaking of the house of Cornelius. This is what Jesus had promised, telling them they needed to wait for it. And Peter's sermon refers to the Spirit at the beginning, middle, and end. He quotes Joel in his introduction regarding God pouring out his Spirit as fulfilled in what happened: the promise had been kept, and the age of the Spirit begun. Peter declared in the middle of his sermon that his was the action of the resurrected Christ: *he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing* **(v. 33).** And the promise made at the end, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.* **(v. 38-39).** The Spirit is promised to those who put on Christ in baptism.

This is the beginning of the gathering of a church. In Matthew's account of the Great Commission, Jesus commanded the eleven to *Go, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you* **(Mt 28:19-20.** At Pentecost, there is this same sequence: making disciples, baptizing, and continued instruction. Those who were baptized continued in the apostles teaching (**Acts 2:42**)

It is the beginning of corporate worship and life of that church. Their devotion to the apostles teaching is elaborated in the following verses in that they had all things in common, selling their possession to provide for those in need **(v. 44-45).** *And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people* **(v. 46-47).**

There is good reason, then, to think of this as the birthday of the church. But there never would have been a church—there never would have been a Pentecost, never would have been an outpouring of the Holy Spirit—if the disciples had not gathered together in prayer and faith for God to do his work. That was what Jesus told them to do: remain in Jerusalem and *wait for the promise of the Father… you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth* **(Acts 1:4, 8).** And so they all got together stuck to praying, united in their purpose and utterly depending on God.

There is, I think, an important reminder for us here. Perhaps there is even a rebuke. What if the habits of all those in that upper room had been like so many in our day and time? Consider this imaginative retelling, written by some anonymous individual years ago:

*The meeting was called for the first day of the week; but so many things interfered, that of the company of 120, only 40 were able to be in attendance. Peter and his wife had bought a cottage on Lake Galilee and were away from the hot city over the weekend. Bartholomew had guests and, of course, could not come. Philip and his family had been up late the night before and overslept. Andrew had a business conference about a new fishing boat. And James had to stay home and cut the grass.*

If the church would never have been born under those circumstances, then how can it possibly thrive under them?

How can it even survive?

***Bryant Perkins***