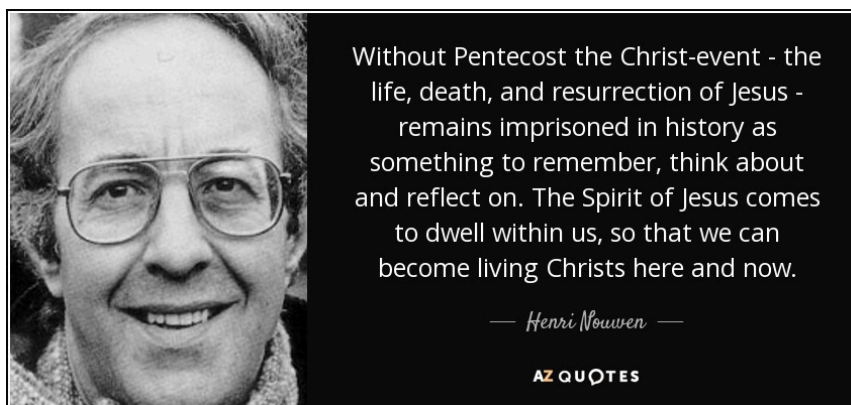


Faith Bible Study Guide
For the Week of May 24, 2026
Pentecost Sunday
“Fresh Fire, Same Flame”



Be still [2 Minutes]: As you hear these Centering Words, let us greet each other, greet the Holy Spirit, and begin with 1 minute of silence, breathing in the breath of God and allow the group to open themselves to the Holy Spirit today:

CENTERING WORDS/ WORDS TO PONDER:



OPENING PRAYER:

Holy Spirit, power of God, come and fill us with your strength. May your Spirit touch each of us. Gather us with our different gifts into one community. Give us eyes to see your work. May the winds of the Spirit blow away our fears, and fill us with power. Open our hearts, that we may welcome everyone. Amen.

Be present: [Being mindful of others and sharing time]

1. Take a breath. Feel your body in the chair. How is it with your soul today?
Feel free to answer several questions (or briefly all)
2. *Have you ever felt the need to retreat and hide from God/the World/Other people? Or did you experience something different after a “retreating experience”?*
 - *Where have you experienced fear or exhaustion lately?*
 - *What feels burned out in your life right now?*
 - *What gives you hope?*
 - *Where do you sense God stirring something new?*
 - *What does your soul need today: comfort, courage, rest, clarity, community, or renewal?*

3. Pentecost for the World was a public display of language and culture.

- Have you ever found yourself in a cultural situation where you needed to explain yourself/culture/traditions. Was that a positive experience or negative one?

4. Pentecost was also a life changing experience for those who were cloistered in the Upper Room.

- When have you felt the Spirit moving most clearly in your life?
- Is there a “locked room” in your life where fear has kept you from stepping forward?
- What might the Spirit be trying to awaken in you now?

Be the Word: Scripture Lesson: Acts 2:1-21

2 When Pentecost Day arrived, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound from heaven like the howling of a fierce wind filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be individual flames of fire alighting on each one of them. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

⁵ There were pious Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd gathered. They were mystified because everyone heard them speaking in their native languages. ⁷ They were surprised and amazed, saying, “Look, aren’t all the people who are speaking Galileans, every one of them?” ⁸ How then can each of us hear them speaking in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes, and Elamites; as well as residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the regions of Libya bordering Cyrene; and visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism), ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the mighty works of God in our own languages!” ¹² They were all surprised and bewildered. Some asked each other, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Others jeered at them, saying, “They’re full of new wine!”

¹⁴ Peter stood with the other eleven apostles. He raised his voice and declared, “Judeans and everyone living in Jerusalem! Know this! Listen carefully to my words! ¹⁵ These people aren’t drunk, as you suspect; after all, it’s only nine o’clock in the morning! ¹⁶ Rather, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ *In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young will see visions.
Your elders will dream dreams.*

¹⁸ *Even upon my servants, men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.*

¹⁹ *I will cause wonders to occur in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and a cloud of smoke.*

²⁰ *The sun will be changed into darkness,
and the moon will be changed into blood,
before the great and spectacular day of the Lord comes.*

²¹ *And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*^[a]

L: The word of God for all People.

P: Thanks be to God.

Be rooted: [Bible Study]

Pentecost is one of the most dramatic moments in scripture: wind rushing through a house, flames appearing over people's heads, languages bursting forth, frightened disciples suddenly transformed into courageous witnesses. But Pentecost is not simply about spectacle. It is about transformation.

In a world filled with destructive fires, toxic air, fear, violence, division, and scarcity, Acts 2 offers another kind of fire and another kind of wind: not forces that destroy life, but forces that awaken it. The Holy Spirit comes not to erase difference, but to create belonging across difference.

This study explores Pentecost as both a historical event and a continuing movement of God's Spirit among ordinary people.

What Is Pentecost?

Pentecost originally began as the Jewish Festival of Weeks (Shavuot), celebrated fifty days after Passover. It was both:

- A harvest festival
- A remembrance of God giving the Law at Sinai

That matters deeply for Acts 2. Jerusalem would have been crowded with Jewish pilgrims from many nations and language groups. Luke intentionally places the coming of the Spirit during a festival that already celebrated God forming a covenant people.

Scholar Willie James Jennings writes: "Pentecost is not the erasure of difference but the joining of difference into a life together." — Willie James Jennings, *Acts*. This becomes the heart of the story.

1. The Disciples Begin in Fear (Acts 2:1)

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place."

The disciples are not triumphant heroes yet. They are waiting, uncertain, grieving, and vulnerable after Jesus' ascension. Pentecost begins not with strength, but dependence. This matters because the Spirit often moves most powerfully in communities aware of their need for God.

Discussion:

- Why do you think God often works through vulnerable people rather than powerful ones?
- Have you experienced moments where uncertainty became the space for spiritual growth?

2. Wind and Fire as Symbols of God's Presence (Acts 2:2–3)

Luke writes: *"And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind..."*

Notice the careful language:

- not a literal hurricane
- not literal flames

Luke says "like" and "as of." These are metaphors reaching beyond ordinary language.

Throughout scripture:

- Wind symbolizes breath, Spirit, life
- Fire symbolizes purification, presence, holiness, transformation

In Hebrew, the word **ruach** means: **BREATH, WIND, SPIRIT** The imagery echoes:

- God breathing life into Adam (Genesis 2)
- The valley of dry bones (Ezekiel 37)
- Sinai wrapped in fire (Exodus 19)

Pentecost is a new creation moment. Scholar Beverly Roberts Gaventa notes: *"The Spirit's arrival signals not private religious emotion but the inauguration of God's new community."* — Beverly

Discussion:

- What kinds of “fires” destroy communities today?
- What might “holy fire” look like instead?
- Where do you see God bringing life rather than destruction?

3. Pentecost Reverses Babel (Acts 2:4–11)

One of the most important themes in Acts 2 is language. At Babel (Genesis 11), human pride led to division and confusion. At Pentecost, many languages remain — but understanding becomes possible. The miracle is not sameness. The miracle is mutual understanding. Every group hears the gospel “in our own native language.” This is profoundly inclusive.

Pentecost says:

- your language matters
- your culture matters
- your humanity matters

The Spirit does not demand uniformity before belonging. New Testament scholar Justo González writes: “*The church was multilingual and multicultural from its very birth.*”— Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit*

Discussion:

- Why is diversity sometimes experienced as threatening?
- How does Pentecost challenge the church’s tendency toward sameness?
- What would it mean for people to hear “good news” in their own language or experience today?

4. Peter Interprets the Moment Through Scripture (Acts 2:14–21)

Peter quotes the prophet Joel: “*I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.*” This is revolutionary.

The Spirit is not limited to:

- Prophets
- Kings
- Priests
- the powerful

The Spirit is poured out on:

- sons and daughters
- young and old
- servants and free people

Pentecost democratizes the Spirit. The church becomes a Spirit-filled community where every person has dignity and calling.

Discussion:

- Why do you think Peter turns to scripture to explain what is happening?
- What does it mean that the Spirit is poured out on “all flesh”?
- Who is often excluded from leadership or spiritual authority today?

Be transformed: [Faith in Action Challenge]

1. Connecting Pentecost to Today

Pentecost is not merely about a past miracle. It asks what kind of people we are becoming now. The early church did not keep the Spirit contained inside a worship service.

The Spirit pushed them:

- into the streets
- across boundaries
- toward mutual care
- toward courage
- toward generosity

The church became known not for fear, but for Spirit-filled compassion.

Discussion:

- Where do you see fear spreading in society today?
- How can the church spread Spirit instead of panic?
- What would it look like for your congregation to become “sanctuary” for others?

2. Choose one practice this week:

Personal

- Spend 5 minutes each day praying:
“Holy Spirit, what are you trying to awaken in me?”

Relational

- Reach out to someone different from you culturally, politically, generationally, or socially.
- Practice listening before speaking.

Community

- Support a ministry helping displaced families, immigrants, refugees, or vulnerable neighbors.
- Ask: “How can our church become sanctuary?”

Congregational

- Identify one area where your church may be clinging to “yesterday’s fire.”
- Dream together about what fresh movement of the Spirit could look like now.

Prayers & Concerns / Announcements:



*We lift up prayers for all of God's
Creation. Lord Hear our Prayers.*

continued prayers for Healing and Wholeness

Rev. Alan Mark	Faith Tanaka	Kay Saxton	Patty Kobayashi
Alice Kajiya	Florence Nakakura	Kian Tehrani	Priscilla Kandel
Ally Kubo	Frank Sato	Kiki Hashimoto	Rachel Delgado
Alvena & Tom Fukuhara	Rev. Gary Williams	Rev. Kim Montenegro	Raquel M. Martinez
Amy Higa	Geri Shiraki	Kelsey DeGracia	Rose Ellison
Anthony Anderson, Sr.	Glenn & Millie	Kenny Medeiros	Ron Hamaguchi
Apolosi Lokotui	Shimizu	Kyle Ichikawa	Rick Katsuki
Austin Maeda	Gordon Mark	Larry Takumi	Ruth Hirata
Barbara Tamura	Grace Tochiara	Layne Nakasone	Ruth Taira
Betty Kobata	Grant Hanada	Linda Jung	Sandra Minjarez-Grange
Bill Morris	Harriet Tateyama	Liz Harner	Stan Miyasato
Brian Okumura	Haru Yasunaga	Lucas Yniguez	Steph Matsunaga
Cami Bruns	Harry Manaka,	Marion Antoku	Sue Hamada
Chic Miyake	Sansei Rocker	Maddie Sakurai-Lopez	Sue Hasegawa
Christine Keim	Harry & Ruth	Mae Nakakihara	Susan Mizuki
Claretta Foster	Takaki	Mary Jung	Susan Slade
Dan Segawa	Hisako Shohara	Mary & Bob Keily	Takai Finau
Dan Yamashita	Ingrid Peterson	(siblings)	Tina Arguello
Darrell Iki	Irene Munesato	Mary Marchand	Tommy Sakaguchi
Deron Tokishi	Jack Honda	Mary Tamura	Tseyli Mantooth
Debbie Uyeshima Dillard	Jan Tanabe	Maxine Butcher	V'hraniku & Shaun
Diane & Destiny	Jayne Watanabe	Rev. Mike Hiranuma	Haynes
Ueda-Banda	Jehiel Vinluan	Miyoko Ahn	Victoria DelaTorre
Dr. DoAnn Tsuneo	Jennie Shitakubo	Mutsuko Nishi	Walker Wilkerson
Kaneko	Joanne Sato	Nancy Matsushima	Wayne Shimizu
Douglas Higa	Joelle Peelgreen	Noah Miyagawa-Sue	Whitney Nakayama
Elaine Yoshida	Jordan Sasaki	Oscar Phillip Bland Jr.	Winnie Osaki
Eleanor Nagai	Joye Barker	Pam Fink	Yukio Inouye
Ernie Santiago	Juliet Koyanagi		
	Kaitlyn Sabedra		
	Karlynn Fernandez		

those in Community Living & Homecare

- Chic Miyake
- Doris Kato
- Emma Horiuchi
- Faith Tanaka
- Rev. Harry Fujimoto
- Irene & Tak Ryono
- Jane Kiyohara
- Marion Antoku
- Mary Jung
- Nobie Shiokari
- Ruth Hirata
- Sets Asano
- Sue Hasegawa
- Jennie Shitakubo
- Fred Oshiro
- Audrey Goto

for our Worldwide Community

for the Leadership of our Country and our Churches

for the immigrants: migrants, refugees, asylees

for our siblings in Christ who struggle and in need of God's care

for those who live in through wars, unrest, and violence

for those suffering and rebuilding after national disasters and man-made catastrophes

for All Our Saints

Dave & Helen Wada and family, on the passing of Helen's mother, Kazuko Maruyama (4/10/26)

UPDATED 5.22.2026

Prayers & Concerns / Announcements:

- Pearl Shoho 5/1), Sally Sasaki (5/25), Richard Uyuenten (5/26), Kira & Kristen Katayama

For healing and recovery

Church Members:

- Jennie Shitakubo
- Darrell Iki
- Ally Kubo (4/17 - surgery)
- Jan Tanabe
- Christine Bone
- Audrey Goto
- Alice Kajiya
- Larry Takumi
- Harriet Tateyama
- Chic Miyake
- Pam Fink (recovery)
- Destiny & Diane Ueda-Banda (4/27- surgery)
- Victoria DelaTorre (4/21 - surgery)
- Alvena Fukuhara & Tom (5/21 -

surgery)

- Harry & Ruth Takaki
- Mae Nakakihara
- Mary Tamura
- Jennie Shitakubo
- Jan Tanabe
- Dan Yamashita
- Kenny Medeiros
- Frank Sato
- The Shimizus
- Winnie Osaki
- Nancy Matsushima
- Mary Tamura
- Ruth Hirata
- Faith Tanaka
- Irene & Tak Ryono
- Nobie Shiokari

Community:

- Hisako Shohara (Jane Matsumoto's mother)
- Patti (spinal cord surgery; Patty's sister-in-law)
- Debbie Uyeshima Dillard (Susan's friend; thyroid cancer)
- Lyle (Alan's friend)
- Beatrix & Daniel (Julie's friend)
- Kaitlyn Sabedra
- First Lady Racelder Grandberry Trimble
- Rev. Gary Bernard Williams
- Jeanette Davis (Rhonda Benware's mother)
- Dave Delgado's family (mom, aunts, sister)
- Andie Montoya's Mom
- Mary & Bob Kiely (siblings of Ann Kiely)
- Tseyli Mantooth
- Kim Foster & Claretta Foster
- V'rhaniku Haynes: high risk pregnancy, 7months, baby girl (due June/July)
- ~~Aidan Uyeunten~~
- Deborah Benjamin - finished her treatment (Kim Foster's friend)
- Walker Wilkerson
- Kiki Hashimoto (Sue Kunisaki -friend)
- Rev's friends: Stan Miyasato, Mari'a Cleverly, (Norma, Ashley)
- ~~Susan Slade's friend, Sherrie - finished tx~~
- Raquel Martinez (Julie's goddaughter)
- Mrs. Davis (friend of Kim Foster)
- ~~Mitchell Okumura (Sandy's brother)~~
- Douglas Higa (Lynne Vinluan's dad)
- Jehiel Vinluan
- Apolosi Lokotui
- Rev. Alan Mark
- Gordon Mark
 - Those who are HOMEBOUND

Traveling Mercies:

- Lynne Vinluan

World Concerns:

- All who struggle, suffer, experience pain and grief...
- US government and leadership (all of them); restoration of benefits, medical, food stamps, social security...
- War-torn countries, THE MIDDLE EAST, PALESTINE, SYRIA, IRAN, UKRAINE, SUDAN, MEXICO, VENEZUELA around the world...
- Natural disasters around the world...
- Immigrants, Refugees, Asylees losing rights and protections...
- Health Care system
- The homeless and impoverished
- Leadership (including clergy)
- Tom Hoang (free! MAY 17th at Faith)
- Mass Shootings (Shreveport)
- The U.S. Military
- All of God's children
- May - Mental Health Month; AANHPI Month
 - Care for families (impact)
 - Food insecurity
- Chemical Leak evacuees (OC/Garden Grove)
- Ebola Virus outbreak (continent of Africa)

Absent from the Body, Present with the Lord

- Harue Yasunaga (5/22)
- Jerry Osaka (4/16)
- Ted Nakano (4/7)
- Kazuko Maruyama (4/10); Kyle Wada's Grandmother, Helen Wada's mother
- Susan Cordova (friend of Julie & Alan)

And Know that He is God: Closing Prayer & Blessing

Today's Takeaways:

- Pentecost begins in fear but ends in courage.
- The Spirit transforms rather than destroys.
- Diversity is not erased; it is embraced.
- The church is called to spread hope, not panic.
- The Spirit still moves through ordinary people today.
- Pentecost is not preservation alone — it is ignition.

Holy Spirit,
Breath of God and Fire of Love,
move among us again.

Where we are fearful, bring courage.
Where we are exhausted, bring renewal.
Where we are divided, bring understanding.
Where we are guarded, open our hearts.

Teach us to become people who carry compassion into the world.
Make us vessels of peace in anxious times,
sanctuary in moments of fear,
and bearers of fresh fire rooted in Your eternal flame.

Ignite in us the courage to love boldly,
serve joyfully,
and follow faithfully wherever You lead.

In the name of Christ, who sends us into the world filled with Spirit and hope, Amen.

Suggested Resources & Commentary

- Willie James Jennings, *Acts* (Belief Commentary Series)
- Beverly Roberts Gaventa, *Acts* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries)
- Justo L. González, *Acts: The Gospel of the Spirit*
- Craig S. Keener, *Acts: An Exegetical Commentary*
- N.T. Wright, *Acts for Everyone*