



ABOUT THE PROPER

An Explanation of the Variable Parts of the Divine Service



Day of Pentecost

May 24, 2026



Easter: What Difference Does It Make?
He Lives to Give Me Eager Expectation of Glory

Fifty days after the Passover, God's Old Testament people celebrated the festival of Pentecost (Greek for "fifty"). Pentecost commemorated the gathering of the harvest and was also used to remember the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai, the start of the Church of Israel. Christ chose the Day of Pentecost to be the birthday of his New Testament Church too. On that day, fifty days after he rose from the dead, Jesus kept his promise to send his disciples another "Counselor" by pouring out his Holy Spirit upon them. In doing so, he enabled them to go forth and make disciples of all nations so he could eventually gather all believers in that great harvest of souls.

Prayer of the Day

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gift of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may tell abroad the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Lesson ¹

Acts 2:1-21

The Church follows in the footsteps of Christ who was prepared for his ministry by a dramatic, visible outpouring of the Spirit at his baptism. Jesus kept his promise to baptize them with the Holy Spirit and with fire. The real miracle of Pentecost is the transformative gift of the Holy Spirit, taking timid followers of Jesus and making them bold witnesses who carried the Gospel to the world. The sound of the violent wind served as a sign, but was not the gift. The tongues of fire marked its arrival, but they were not the gift. Miraculously speaking in foreign languages was a result, but it was not the gift. "All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit." Moses wished it; Joel foretold it; the disciples lived it. The sin that had scattered mankind at Babel had been atoned. The last age of the earth (vv 19-21) wouldn't be marked by the dividing of the peoples, but by their uniting into the Church of Christ where there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female.

Second Reading

1 Corinthians 12:3-11

When God pours out his Spirit it is not only for the benefit of the individual believer. God gives his Spirit to us so that we might be of benefit to the entire Church.

Gospel ¹

John 7:37-39

Jesus promised that those who were spiritually thirsty would be filled with living water. Jesus kept this promise when he poured out his Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Psalm of the Day ⁴

Psalm 104 A

"LORD, Send Out Your Spirit"

The Church sings Psalm 104 in services that emphasize the work of the Holy Spirit. It focuses especially on the work of creation. Martin Luther said, "Psalm 104 is a psalm of thanksgiving for things besides human beings that God has created in the heavens and on the earth. The psalmist recounts how delightful and orderly all of God's creation is, evoking pleasure and joy. But who pays attention or even notices? Only faith and the spirit."

Gospel Acclamation

Antiphon for Pentecost

"Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in them the fire of your love."

Hymn of the Day 585 “Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” (German hymn, 15th cent; Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

The hymn is a prayer inviting the Holy Spirit, as God and Lord, to come and fulfill his role as sanctifier. It was originally a Latin chant from the 11th century used at the Vespers of the Vigil of Pentecost. Martin Luther was familiar with a German version of the chant and was so moved by its content and tune that he remarked that the hymn must have been written by the Spirit Himself. Luther added two stanzas to the one of the chant to give us what we have today.

Church Year Season ¹ Easter

After forty days of repentance and prayer, the Church bursts forth in jubilant praise at the Resurrection of our Lord. The alleluias and glorias which were muted for Lent ring out again as the Bride of Christ welcomes her Bridegroom back from the dead. Easter is as the pinnacle of the Church Year, the oldest festival and season celebrated by the worshipping Church. For a full week-of-weeks (49 days) the Church celebrates the resurrection of Christ on the Sundays of Easter which culminate on the 50th day, Pentecost.

Minor Festivals The Visitation (May 31)

After the Angel Gabriel announced to the Virgin Mary that she would give birth to the Son of God, Mary traveled to the hill country of Judea to visit her relative Elizabeth, the wife of the priest Zechariah. When Mary greeted Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb – John the Baptist – leaped for joy. In her own joy, Elizabeth blessed Mary and Jesus, the child in her womb (Luke 1:39-45). In her joy, Mary burst forth in the song we know as, “The Magnificat,” or “Song of Mary” (Luke 1:46-56).

Traditions & Customs The Paschal Candle

Paschal, meaning “having to do with the Passover,” is a word associated with Easter. It was at the conclusion of the Jewish Passover Festival (the “Pasch”) that Jesus rose from the dead and proved himself to be the true Passover Lamb whose blood removes sin and death (Ex 12; 1 Cor 6:6-8). The candle is lit for services during Easter to symbolize that Christ is alive and lives among us. The candle is also lit for Baptisms and funerals, reminding us of our resurrection to eternal life.

Colors & Symbolism Red

Red, the color of fire, is the color for the Festival of Pentecost. It signifies the appearance of what looked like tongues of fire over them when the Holy Spirit descended at the first Pentecost. The color red is also used for festivals of renewal in the Holy Spirit, such as Reformation, missions, and ordination. The color also reminds us of the blood of the martyrs – the believers of every generation who by the power of the Holy Spirit hold firm to the true faith even at the cost of their lives.

Nain Paraments Day of Pentecost

Superfrontal: The Holy Spirit is often represented as a dove, recalling Jesus’ baptism when the Spirit descended from heaven “like a dove” (Matthew 3:16). The dove also reminds us of the Coming of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, when the apostles were baptized with the Spirit and with fire. The flames represent the tongues of fire that rested on the Apostles on Pentecost Sunday as they were “filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:4). To the left and right are the letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. These two letters symbolize Jesus Christ, our eternal Lord and Savior, who is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).

Lectern antependium: The shell with drops of water represents Holy Baptism. Ancient pictures of Jesus’ baptism show John the Baptist pouring water from a shell upon Jesus’ head as he stood in the waters of the Jordan River. Nothing in the Bible is said about John using a shell to apply water on Jesus, but the picture of a shell has long since been used in the Church to symbolize this sacrament of initiation into God’s Church. In some churches today baptisms are performed by pouring water from a shell.

Pulpit antependium: The book in front of the cross represents God’s Word in the Holy Bible. The main content of Holy Scripture is the good news of forgiveness of sins through the death of Jesus Christ, our Savior (John 20:31; 1 Corinthians 1:23). The significance of the Greek letters *Alpha* (Α) and *Omega* (Ω) is explained above in the description of the superfrontal.

¹ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year A”. Jonathan E. Schroeder, Author.

² Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year B”. Daniel M. Deutschlander, Author.

³ Courtesy of “Planning Christian Worship: Year C”. Joel J. Gawrisch, Author.

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