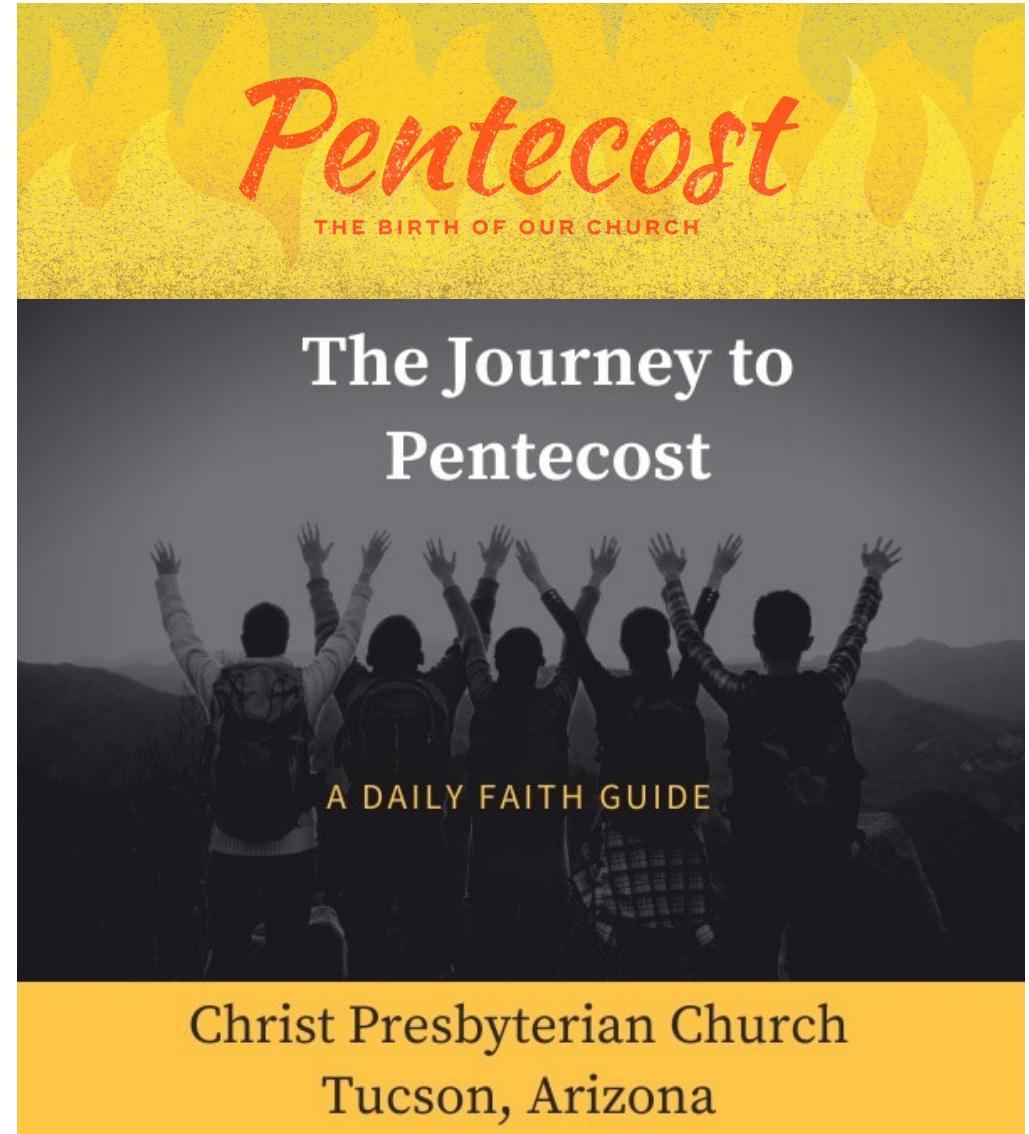


2020



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Fellow Journeyers,

Despite not being able to gather on our beautiful church campus because of the CoronaVirus Pandemic, we have continued to worship and grow in our faith together over the internet. And yet, I continue to hear from our church family that many don't have that ability and still desire to stay connected somehow. So, I've created this daily devotional for the month of May to guide us on our Journey to Pentecost, what is known as the Birthday of the Christian Church. We will celebrate Pentecost on Sunday, May 31st. Wouldn't it be nice if that were our first day back together! We shall see as time progresses.

Until then, I invite you to take some time from wherever you are, each day, to grow your faith as we Journey to Pentecost. We will post this guide on our website (www.cpctucsonaz.org) so that those who are able can connect from wherever they are, and so that you can refer your family and friends to this resource. If you need more printed copies, just let us know through the church office, and we will get them mailed out to you or to those who you know want to have it, also. What a great way to not only become a more faithful disciple (a follower of the faith), but also an apostle (one who shares the Good News with others). Yes, you can be an evangelist for God in Christ.

Peace in our Journey to Pentecost,

Pastor Steve Melde

Thank you for making this Journey to Pentecost with me. I pray that these smatterings of thoughts have challenged you to see how God has been weaving a plan and including us in the story from the beginning. None of us are qualified to be God's mouthpiece, to be a representative of God's grace in Jesus Christ. But we are all invited to be and do so.

I challenge you to go back through it again in June, and perhaps a little each month. There were days I encouraged you to make note, to pray, to make a commitment. Check in on yourself and see how you're doing. Go back and challenge yourself, encourage yourself, to stay in this journey. Keep going deeper in your faith and the sharing of your faith.

You and I have the story in our hearts, minds, souls, now we have to have the strength to share it and let the Holy Spirit work through us to bring others into the story so that everyone would have the opportunity to have a forever relationship with God in Jesus as the Christ, their Savior, the Messiah.

As I write this, I'm still not sure when we can be together in the same worship space, but I trust that day will come. Until then, we stay connected in prayer. I pray for you each day, and I hope you do the same for me and for your church family.

Shalom and
Peace in our Journeys,
Pastor Steve Melde



May 31

It's Pentecost Sunday. Wear red/orange/yellow today to signify the flames of the Spirit. And worship online with us.



Acts 2:1-13

This is an incredible day. It's what Christians call the birthday of the Church. This is the day that the disciples did what they were not prepared to do: They shared the Gospel in a way that brought thousands of people into faith in Jesus as the Messiah and a journey that would lead them all into the heart of God, forever.

Notice that as the Spirit of God filled them, they were able to speak in languages they had never studied. When God moves in, all things are possible.

Today is the beginning of your newest commitment: to let God work through you in ways in which you could never prepare. Who could really prepare to tell the story of God in Jesus the Christ in a way that makes total sense and would be convincing to people around the world? And yet, God used those very kind of people that day. And God can and will use you. Just let God work through you. Fill the Holy Spirit with you today and every day/night. And let the glory of God in Christ work through you. Don't worry about being prepared. God's Holy Spirit can do anything in and through YOU!

If you do have internet connection through your computer, tablet, or mobile device, be sure to follow/friend us on all of our sites:

www.cpctucsonaz.org

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YouTube: CPCTucsonAZ

Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter: CPCTucsonAZ

Also, for those who do have use of electronic devices, and are a regular part of our church family, it's time to get connected to our congregational membership program online: ShelbyNext.

If you have not connected, please let us know through the church office. We will talk you through it over the phone and get you working with our system. Through it you will have access to the directory of members and regular participants, as well as our church calendar, and to your giving record.

It's important to make sure that we have entered all of your vital information correctly. We use this data for our own records; not all of it is shared publicly (ie. Your birth year is not publicly shared, but necessary for office use). We need you to make sure that we have your updated best contact information: phone, addresses, email, and life data.

So, please take this time to make sure you are connected.

Call us in the church office if you haven't as yet.

Thank you!

May 1

Where else would we start, but at the very beginning: Genesis.

"In the beginning, God created..." The first five words of the entire Biblical text set the main theme: God created, this is God's world, we are God's creations. So, to whom else would we cry out, "Mayday, mayday!"

One of the parts of the creation story that I love the most is the image of God walking and talking with Eve and Adam in the Garden. The relationship was so close that the humans were naked before God and not embarrassed or afraid. When I think metaphorically, I realize that what the writers were trying to say was that the humans could and did bare it all before God, and there was no shame, no embarrassment, no distance. There was nothing to hide. God came so close to them that they could walk and talk with God, the great Creator of the Universe.

How much God must love those God made in God's image. How much God must still love us, and all. How amazing that God would be willing to come so close to us.

As you take your first step in this Journey to Pentecost, I invite you to bare it all before God (though the rest of us don't need to see everything), and know that God is willing to walk and talk with you every step of the way. (Something they learned on the Way to Emmaus).

Perhaps you could use the open space on this page to write down keywords or phrases of things you need to talk with God about, to give to God, to experience God's response.

May 30

Spirit of the Living God

Spirit of the living God,

Fall afresh on me;

Spirit of the living God,

Fall afresh on me.

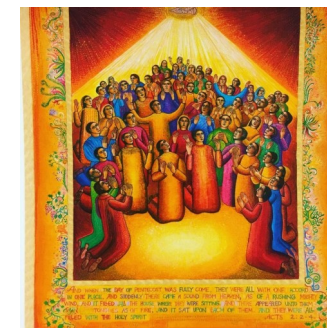
Melt me, mold me,

Fill me, use me.



Spirit of the living God,

Fall afresh on me.



May 29

This is My Father's World

This is my Father's World:

Oh, let me ne'er forget

That though the wrong seems oft so strong,

God is the Ruler yet.

This is my Father's World:

The battle is not done;

Jesus who died shall be satisfied,

and earth and heaven be one.



May 2

During the Exodus, the people wandered through the desert of the Sinai Peninsula for 40 years. But they were never lost, not for one day, not in any direction.

God was in their midst in the form of a pillar of cloud by day, fire by night. When the pillar moved, so did the people. Where the pillar moved, the people followed. God was always leading them, always in their presence. And yet, they still kept asking for a sign that God was with them.

Oh how we still do the same!

Take some time today to recall the signs of God's presence that have been in your life. Write them here:



Now, take time to pray to God. Apologize for forgetting, for always asking for more, for not following, and give God thanks for the ways God has always been with you in your life.

May 3

Today is the first Sunday of the month, a day our congregation always gathers to celebrate the Sacrament of Communion. And we will, online! Make sure to have your elements ready if you are able to worship with us online.

A Sacrament is an act in which we participate to celebrate the Grace of God that is directly conveyed in that act. We experience God's grace as Jesus' life was broken and spilled out on our behalf.

Jesus had gathered with his disciples in what we call the Last Supper (which we know of as the First Communion) to honor the Passover meal, the time when God freed the Israelites from enslavement in Egypt. Grace frees us... from the bondage of sin and opens us into a deeper relationship with God. As Jesus gathered for the meal that they all had been a part of their whole lives, Jesus took the bread and the wine and symbolically made their meaning even deeper than before. That's what Jesus always did. He took things that the people were used to and gave them deeper meaning.

Every table, every meal, is to be a reminder of the Communion Table, where God brings us all together and unites us as God's children, welcome at the Table of Christ.

Allow every table (even if it's a TV tray or sidearm of the couch) to be sacred space. Imagine sitting with God at the Lord's Table, and let the act of eating feed not just your body, but your soul. Let every meal take you deeper into your faith that teaches you that God is always with us, always providing what we need for life, both here and forever in heaven.

May 28

Today begins the Jewish festival of Shavuot. It commemorates the time when the Israelites were given the Torah, the Ten Commandments in the Exodus Experience.

The Commandments, not suggestions, were a way not so much for God to control the people, but more for the people to orient their lives together to honor God by having a very specific way of living.

Later in the story of God, Jesus was asked which was the greatest? Surprisingly, he didn't quote any of the ten. Instead he dug into Deuteronomy 6 and expanded it:

You shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself.

The Christian faith demands our whole being. It means worshiping, growing in faith, and living the faith not just on Sundays in our worship space but every day/night in our homes, wherever we are.

Take a moment and note what you have learned in this time of "quarantine." How has your faith grown? How does it still need to grow? How will you help make that happen?



May 27

Go back and re-read your notes from May 19th.

Who have you helped come to the Christian Faith? How have you been an influence to that person (those persons)? (write their names here...)

What did you say to that person? Do? Share with them? ...that caused that person to see Jesus as their Savior, the Messiah? (write some key words)

What parts of your faith are still in them? How has their faith changed from your faith? (write some key words)

Take time to pray, thanking God for being able to share your faith with this person.

May 4



Today, a prayer:

God my Creator,

I need your help. We all need your help. This CoronaVirus is bugging all of us, and in so many ways. Have you led us here? Have you sent this plague? Have you left us here to fend for ourselves? So many sick, so many deaths, so many surviving. It's such a strange mix of reactions. Please Lord, send your Spirit to heal our world.

Thank you for those among us who are caring for us, for our medical personnel of all kinds of jobs. May they have the strength to do not only their job, but the ability to be present with our loved ones when they are sick... giving them comfort not only in body, but also in spirit.

Guide our leaders as they guide us. May they have wisdom beyond their training, insight beyond their vision, and find moments of rest, too.

Thank you for calling us your children. Thank you for calling me your own. Thank you for coming so fully in Jesus that we would know that you do walk this life with us, that you don't just sit on high, that you create life when we encounter death.

Lord, here we are on the Journey to Pentecost, and we need your help to make it there.

Please, Help us.

In the name of Jesus our Savior, AMEN.

May 5

Ezekiel saw some interesting things. You'll find his story in the Old Testament. (Chapter 37) He was led to a valley, overlooked the valley, and discovered the area covered in dry bones. Ezekiel was told to prophesy to the dry bones that they may hear the Word of God. And he did; and they did and the bones stood up filled with the breath of God.

"These bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.'" (37:11)

Feel like that lately?

"I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live." (37:14)

And God did; and they did.

When we turn to God, life comes anew. It's not always in the way we expect. It's not always at the time we demand. But it always comes. This is a good time for you to make a commitment to read some Scripture at home, again, or for the first time. I encourage you to read the four Gospels, and to spend some time in the Psalms. See how your faith is like that of those who've gone before us. See how when they turned to God, they found life, and God in it.

See how it led them on a Journey to Pentecost, and join that journey in the Word today. Let God put some flesh onto your dry bones and bring new life to you today as you read the story of God in the Bible.

P.S. Today is Cinco de Mayo and Taco Tuesday...

... Celebrate appropriately...

May 26

Peter was forgiven.

It's interesting to read the Gospel of Mark and see that the women were told by the angels to go tell the disciples, and (especially) Peter that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

I'm sure Peter felt he had no place among the disciples after denying he even knew Jesus, three times in one night. But Peter, especially, needed to know the Good News.

The Resurrection occurred not just for those who were already believers, but for everyone. And it occurred not just for those who had been faithful, but for those who weren't.

The Resurrection occurred for you!

There is no sin too great that you have committed that would exclude you from the grace that God gives us all from the Resurrection.

Peter was forgiven. So are you.



May 25

It's Memorial Day 2020. Give thanks!

Today we honor all those who have given their lives in our country's military service that all may be free.

We can be so humbled knowing that those who have served came from all sorts of backgrounds, faith traditions, orientations, understandings, standards of living, abilities... And yet, they were all united in the hope that there would be "liberty and justice for all."

All, not some.

All in our country especially, but also throughout the world. They are folks who opened their lives on behalf of people they didn't know, wouldn't meet, may not have understood the sacrifice they were offering. But they did it anyway.

How blessed we are!

Let us pray:

God of all people, today we thank you especially for those who have served our country so faithfully in the military whose lives were sacrificed in that service. Help us not take our freedom for granted.

And, God, thank you this year for those in the medical and emergency fields who have caught the CoronaVirus from us and have given their lives that we might be well. Help us not take our health for granted.

AMEN



May 6

Micah 6:6-8

***With what shall I come before the Lord,
And bow myself before God on high?***

...

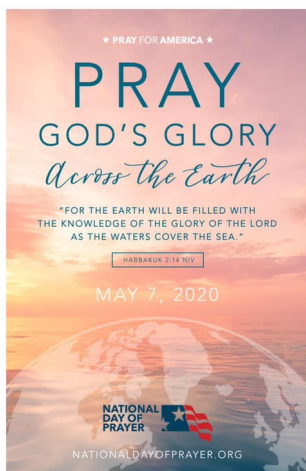
***He has told you, O mortal, what is good;
And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God...***

There's action in the Word of God. It requires a response from us that is active, too. We are not just supposed to think about these things, wish for them, pray for them; we are to be living in a way that brings them into reality... not just for some, but for all.

This faith journey isn't just a ride through "It's a small world." It's a step we take each day headed toward a place, a space, a way of living and being. It's not something we think about and live out just while we are on the church campus, but everywhere that we are.

Take some time and make a note here as to how you are going to commit to these requirements. (ya, they're not suggestions)





May 7

Today is National Day of Prayer. And this day, it's your turn to pray. Write your prayer in the space below, discover what's not just in your heart and mind, but see your own prayer, and speak it to God.

May 24

It's Sunday, of Memorial Day weekend. Today in worship we honor the saints of CPCTucsonAZ who have passed away since last Memorial Day. Join us online for worship, if possible.

Looking for another piece of scripture to read or study? The New Testament book of Hebrews is a great spot to jump to today. Focus especially on the saints of faith who are mentioned in chapter 11.

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings to us closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith..."

Hebrews 12:1

Today, I invite you to give thanks for all the people of faith, who have not only gone before you in your general life, but especially in your Christ Presbyterian Church family. And I invite you to give God thanks for those who are with you even now, over the internet, and when we are able to worship again on the CPC campus. Are you realizing in this time of needing to be physically distant just how much you appreciate these people of faith? I hope so. I miss you.



May 23

May 23, 2020, is the end of the month of Ramadan in the Islam tradition. They are called to focus, for a month, on their relationship with God, reflect on their lives, and spend quality time with friends and family.

May May be that month for you, too, in our tradition of faith. Be humbly proud of yourself for taking time each day to focus on your relationship with God through Christ.

How have you come closer to God in this time? (jot a note)

Muslims are called to pray five times throughout the day. Here's your challenge. In this final week before Pentecost, take on the discipline of praying five times in the day. Set a schedule, don't just "let it happen." Be intentional about it. And here's your deeper challenge: in at least two of them, sit silently, and "listen" for God. Remember, God doesn't always speak. God communicates through all of our senses. So, in the space below, write down your schedule to pray five times throughout the day, starting.... Today! Why wait till tomorrow?

May 8

Psalm 139 challenges us to experience God all around us:

"O Lord, you have searched me and known me,
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;
you discern my thoughts from far away.
You search out my path and my lying down,
And are acquainted with all my ways.

Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord,
You know it completely.

You hem me in, behind and before,
and lay your hand upon me."

Thank you God, for surrounding me completely. I'm sorry that often I don't feel you near, often I complain that you must be far away from me. But you're not. You're in the very air I breathe. Fill each breath with the presence of your Spirit. Let my body take you into me, absorb your Presence fully, so that all I breathe out is about you and the glory of your Presence around and within me.

Nothing separates me from your love in Christ Jesus my Lord and Savior. I need your help remembering and experiencing that more fully, each day, each night, each breath.

Thank you God, for surrounding me completely.

In the name of Jesus my Savior.

AMEN



May 9



Isaiah 43:1-3a

*“But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who forms you, O Israel:*

*Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name,
you are mine.*

*When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
When you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.*

For I am the Lord your God.

Don't test the Lord. People drown; People burn. But Isaiah knows something deeper: God is with us in the storm, our lives belong to God who knows us by name, and God has redeemed us so that we can be with God forever.

When you know that deep down in your heart, mind, and soul, you will find strength to move through every storm in your life with the confidence of God's presence with you. God doesn't always calm the storm, but God always gets you through the storm, faithfully.

May 22

John 14:25-27

Jesus reassures his disciples that somehow God is going to keep them connected even after Jesus is gone, “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.”

I often think that it must have been so much easier for those original disciples. They had Jesus right in front of them. They saw and experienced so much with him. And then I laugh a bit. They were just as confused. They didn't understand anymore than we do.

So, that's part of why I'm so grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It's that presence of God that's all around and within us. It's a presence that may not always be visible, but can surely be felt.

In Genesis God walked and talked with those in the Garden. In Jesus God walked and talked with us again. With the Holy Spirit, we are completely surround in God's presence. How blessed we are!

Pray:

You truly are amazing, God. You are the One who knows everything, the One who is beyond our understanding, the One beyond us. And yet, you come so close to us over and over again. Thank you. Please help me be more aware of you in my life every day, every night.

AMEN

May 21

Acts 1:1-11 This is the day of Ascension. It's traditionally celebrated on the 40th day after Easter. As the Resurrected Jesus was gathered with his followers, they hoped this was the day Jesus would restore the Kingdom to Israel. Instead, this is the day Jesus left them, physically. How sad the followers must have been. Standing and looking up into the sky where Jesus had risen and disappeared, they are scolded by a couple of guys in white robes (angels?) telling them to stop standing there looking up ... waiting for him to return.

I've always thought of this as one of those moments when God says, "Why are you waiting for me to do everything? Get busy and put what I've taught you into practice."

So, today, give yourself some credit and list in the space below some ways you have lived out your faith.

Oh, but get honest now. We don't always do that. We fall far short of the glory set before us. Take a moment now and list some ways you haven't lived your faith but could (and will) ...



May 10

It's Sunday, Mothers' Day. Happy Mom's Day. If you're able, be sure to worship with us online.

Wasn't Jesus' mom, Mary, amazing! I think of how she was told that she would be pregnant, not with Joseph, but that the Holy Spirit would create a miracle within her. I think of how she was told that he would be destined for greatness, and I think of the greatness she must have seen as he performed miracles, rode into Jerusalem with a great parade, became known as the Anointed One. How exciting!

And I think of how devastated she must have been as she watched him be unjustly tried, beaten, crucified, and buried. How horrible!

Mary's faith is humbling. What she was willing to do for God, what she was willing to give for God, how she was willing to be an instrument of God's plan.... Is nothing short of inspiring.

Pray that your faith is as strong, as humbled, as deep, as willing.



P.S.

Most of us had (have) moms who were really wonderful; some of us had (have) moms who are (were) something completely other. We can learn from both kinds of moms. Your life is yours to live. So choose today, to live yours more like Mary, and whatever example of a mom you have had (have), give thanks for Mary's example.

May 11

Isaiah 53

... he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity... he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases.... But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, by his bruises we are healed.



This is one of the prophecies we Christians look back to in order to see Jesus as the Messiah, the anointed one. He didn't win a beauty contest; he won the love contest. Despite human rejection, he continued to love. In the face of his death, he put himself in God's hand and gave us life. He was hurt; we are healed.

Let us pray:

God, how could you still love us, when we cannot fully love you? How could you forgive us when we turned against you?

How could you still be doing that in our lives today? Don't you get tired of our sin? Thank you for being so gracious as to forgive our wrongdoings through the sacrifice of your only begotten— Jesus. In his life, death, and resurrection, we know your love most clearly. We love you, too. And today, we recommit ourselves to following Jesus as he leads us to you. AMEN



May 20

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it."

John 1:1-5

God was in the beginning, God began all things, all life, and brought light to all life. We're all drawn to the light; people of faith are drawn to the Light. There have been all sorts of Lights of God. They all dim in comparison to the Light that shined in Jesus. But that Light is in all of us, with all of us. The Journey to Pentecost is one of looking deep into our own faith so that we can find ways to shine the Light of that faith into others' lives, so that they can discover the Light within and around them, and then shine as well.



"And the Word became flesh and lived among us..."

John 1:14

In Jesus God took on our own humanity, not only telling us how to be faithful, but showing us how. It's not enough for us to just know the faith, we must live the faith so that others see the Light of God in Christ in us, are drawn to it, and then discover how to shine that Light in their lives. This isn't an easy journey, and it doesn't lead to easy street. Welcome to the journey.

May 19

How did you come into the Christian faith? Who influenced you?
Who can you thank for sharing the Good News of God's grace through
Jesus the Christ with you? Write the name(s) here:

What did that person say? Do? Share with you? ...that caused you to
see Jesus as your Savior, the Messiah? (write some key words)

What parts of that person's faith are still in you? How has your faith
changed from that person's faith? (write some key words)

Take time to pray, thanking God for this person (these persons) in
your life.

May 12

"Do not be afraid; for see— I am bringing you good news of a great
joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a
Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign for you:
you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a man-
ger." (Luke 2)

And they did. His name was Jesus, the Messiah, and they knew
him as: (Isaiah 9)

Wonderful Counselor

Mighty God

Prince of Peace



He is the One. Jesus is the Savior. Jesus is the one in whom we
can put our trust to lead us fully into God's presence. Our faith in
him as Savior teaches us that nothing can separate us from God's
love because of who this Jesus is and what he has done for us. He
is the clearest part of God's story for us to understand that God
will redeem the whole creation, fill us with God's Spirit so that we
have the power to live our lives faithfully for God, and trust that
God will gather us to be with God, forever.

Hallelujah. Immanuel, God is with us.

May 13



Happy 64th Birthday, Christ Presbyterian Church, Tucson, Arizona.

On May 13, 1956, seventy-five Charter Members signed our congregation into life.

What a gift to us today. As I write this, we still have two Charter Members who are living and active in our congregation: Bob and Frances Sundt. Sundt construction built much of our campus. Imagine their hopes and dreams to have a place where they could come together to worship God, to grow in their faith, and to serve as disciples and apostles for the Lord Jesus. What a legacy they have left us.

And what an honor it is to continue in that legacy, to have a place where we can worship God together (even if for now it's only online), where we can grow in our faith (even online), and from where we can serve as disciples and apostles (not only online, but in our lives, every part of lives).

Will you still need me? Will you still feed me? ... when I'm 64?

Yes, the Christ Presbyterian Church family continues the challenge and tradition of the Charter Members.

You are invited to pray for your church family today, give thanks for CPC, and ask God what ministries and missions we need to be a part of as we move forward. Let us know what you hear!



May 18

In Chapters 5, 6, and 7 of Matthew's Gospel is the famous Sermon on the Mount. In it Jesus really changes the way people think. He talks about those who are blessed being those who are poor in spirit, meek, merciful. He starts a whole bunch of teachings saying, "You have heard it said, but I say to you...." Love your enemy. Oy Vey!

Being a follower of Jesus is certainly challenging. I think it's probably the hardest thing any of us could ever do. It requires everything from us; it changes our thinking and living and being and doing.

Let's pray: God, you gave us your whole self; help me to give you my whole self in return. Look deep within me and help me see where I need to change so that I am faithful to you in everything I think and do. I want my whole to reflect my love and gratitude for you and what you've done for me, for us all, in Jesus. And though I live a pretty good life, I know there are parts of me that still need reshaping. And I can't do that on my own. I need your help to make those changes. So, here I am, opening myself to you. Take my life and let it be ... ever only all for thee. AMEN

P.S. God, thanks for being so patient with me. AMEN.



May 17

Luke 24:13-35 tells us of a time following the Resurrection when Jesus appeared to two who were walking to Emmaus. Jesus joins them on their journey, and listens as they recount the story of Jesus' death and reported resurrection. The Scripture tells us that the two didn't know it was Jesus they were talking not just about, but to! As they reached Emmaus, they invited Jesus to stay with them. And in the meal they shared, they recognized that it was Jesus who had been walking and talking with them when he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

No one really knows why they didn't recognize him. But don't lose the connection to Jesus' repeated action of the communion which led to them recognizing him. It was in his action that their eyes were opened. It was in his action of loving grace that they recognized him.

In just a few days we will celebrate the Ascension of Jesus, the last time people saw him on Earth. But Jesus is made visible in his followers.... In their loving actions of grace.

How have you blocked others from seeing him in you?

What's one way you could help someone else recognize Jesus in you, today! Don't wait till tomorrow. Today! Write it below:

May 14

Jesus and some of his followers were in a boat together. Jesus fell asleep. Suddenly there was a huge storm. The disciples feared for their lives. Jesus was asleep. The boat was being swamped by water from the sea, and Jesus was still sleeping. Wow. That alone is amazing. They wake Jesus up, and he scolds them for having only a little bit of faith. Then, he commands the storm to calm. And it did. Wow!

One of things I love in this story is that according to the order of the story, Jesus didn't get woken up and immediately calm the storm that was capsizing their boat. He took the time to scold the disciples... right in the midst of the storm. Then, he calmed the sea.

It's a reminder to me that God doesn't always act in ways that make sense to me, nor in the timing I would expect, nor... a lot of things.

It reminds me that storms do come, and they do swamp the boat, and God stands in the boat with us while it's sinking, and then saves us.

Because he was able to calm the sea the disciples asked, "What sort of man is this...?"

Because he was in the storm with them and not afraid, I ask, "How can I be more like him?"

And you ask...???



May 15

Just think of the people Jesus called as his disciples, his followers, those he would spend the most time with to teach them and shape them into his proclaimers, apostles, who would tell the rest of the world how to come to God through him. They weren't of any real importance, fishermen mostly, and though it was a good job, it didn't really afford them the wonders of life. One was a tax collector. We still know how we feel about them! And it's not favorable. One was a zealot, an over anxious, rebellious, get-behind-whatever-cause-he-finds kind of guy. And yes, some were women, though they don't get the title of disciple so readily. One had survived severe mental-emotional challenges. One was his mom.

None of them were extraordinary. And God worked through them all to show the world who God is in Jesus the Christ and to invite the whole world into a deeper relationship with God through Jesus as the Christ.

Which, of course, means, God can and does use all of us.

When you don't feel like you know enough about the faith, the Bible, or even yourself, know that God uses people like all of us to call the whole world into faithfulness. When you feel like you just don't know what to say or how to be, know that God will guide you.

Just be you; God can and does use us all, anyone.

Just wait and see what God did with them on Pentecost.



May 16

Several Gospels remind us that Jesus said,
Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.

I'm sure the original hearers understood that meant that Jesus was the One, the representative who would bring God's Kingdom of Heaven to Earth. That's what the people wanted, God to be in charge, God making everything right for them.

But knowing Jesus, there are probably some deeper meanings. I also think Jesus meant to raise their consciousness that they were already surrounded by God's heavenly kingdom, even here on earth. Heaven isn't just a place somewhere out in space. It's not just a place we'll get to, someday. Rob Bell has a new book out, Everything's Spiritual. I suspect he will also remind us that since nothing can separate us from God's love, and that God's Spirit is everywhere, therefore, somehow, we are already in the Kingdom of Heaven. We're just not aware of it. And what if we all were, aware of being in Heaven. Maybe then we'd all help to make it on earth as it is in heaven. Oh what a glorious awakening that would be.



The challenge for you today is to imagine you are helping to show others the very presence of heaven, right here in your life. May it be so.

On earth as it is in Heaven...

Come, Holy Spirit, Come.