

LIVING OUR **BAPTISM**...*Five gifts of discipleship*

When a baptized Christian affirms the faith (often called confirmation) the presiding minister addresses those making public affirmation of baptism and asks the question: Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in holy baptism:

**to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?**

RESPONSE: We do, and ask God to help and guide us. (*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 236)

And so begins a daily claiming and re-discovering of the God-given gifts of discipleship. These gifts overlap and are intertwined as one gift flows into another and into faithful living.

FIVE GIFTS OF DISCIPLESHIP ... *during Pentecost*

Pentecost is an ideal season of the church year to emphasize LIVING OUR BAPTISM and discover the five gifts of discipleship.

Background: Each year on Pentecost Sunday, the assigned scripture text for worship is from Acts 2. The story occurs after Jesus had been crucified, risen from death, and ascended to heaven. The disciples were in one place in Galilee as Jesus instructed. Although Jesus had warned them about his death and predicted his resurrection, they were unprepared for all that had transpired. Their hopes were shattered—their future was unclear. What was next?

Jesus had tried to instruct them for when he no longer would be able to be with them on their earthly pilgrimage. Jesus had promised to send the Advocate to be with them. And so they waited. Scared and with no vision of the future, they waited.

“When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.”
(Acts 2:1-4 NRSV)

Today: The Festival of Pentecost comes 50 days after Easter Sunday and typically falls between mid-May or early June. It is the longest season of the church year, extending to the season of Advent. Whereas the other seasons of the church year (Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent and Easter) emphasize some aspect of the life of Jesus, Pentecost emphasizes the life of the Spirit-infused church—disciples in action.

The Festival of Pentecost is a wonderful occasion to incorporate the Affirmation of Baptism into worship—either for confirmands and/or the whole congregation. The Holy Spirit is still at work, calling, gathering, and empowering followers of Jesus to grow in discipleship.



**SEASON OF PENTECOST:
INWARD AND OUTWARD GIFTS**

The five gifts of discipleship can be divided into two categories:

Inward Gifts of Discipleship: MY life is blessed!

Live among God’s faithful people
Hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s supper

Outward Gifts of Discipleship: MY life blesses others!

Proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed
Serve all people, following the example of Jesus
Strive for justice and peace in all the earth

Planning for the Season of Pentecost

Set aside time during the winter or early spring to plan for the Season of Pentecost. It is a six-month long season, lasting through summer and fall.

Perhaps the church council or leadership team could attend a retreat to prayerfully ponder and evaluate activities of the church. How is the Holy Spirit of Pentecost at work in our congregation? Take an honest look at what fills the church calendar. Ask:

- How does each activity inspire discipleship?
- Does this activity nurture the inward gifts of discipleship?
- Does this activity nurture the outward gifts of discipleship?



ACTIVITIES	INWARD GIFT Live among people?	INWARD GIFT Hear word and share the Lord’s Supper?	OUTWARD GIFT: Proclaim Good News Of God in Christ	OUTWARD GIFT: Serve all people	OUTWARD GIFT: Strive for justice and peace
Vacation Bible School					
Summer Worship					
Annual Picnic					
Others.....					

Summary

Complete the chart. Notice patterns. Note empty columns. Celebrate strengths of your congregation. Be open to where the Holy Spirit is breathing new life into your congregation. Pray for the Holy Spirit to inspire your church to nurture both the inward and outward gifts of discipleship.