

Pentecost is Sunday June 12th.

Here are four reasons we should celebrate the Spirit's outpouring.

I've often wondered why we tend to ignore the historic events of Acts 2. We celebrate Christmas for weeks, and we pack as many people as possible into our churches on Easter Sunday. But for some odd reason, Pentecost is just an add-on for many churches, if it's noticed at all. We can take it or leave it.

"Pentecost turned boring religion into an amazing adventure, and it transformed ordinary people into bold missionaries. It can do the same for us today."

Many pastors will make no mention of the Holy Spirit this Pentecost Sunday, June 12th.

It's no surprise that many American churches are not Pentecostal in the biblical sense. If we haven't blatantly denied the supernatural power of God, we've downplayed it, muted it, limited it or downgraded it. It's just a blip on the first century screen that has no meaning for us today. That's tragic because Pentecost is vitally relevant for many reasons, including these four:

Pentecost empowers us. I've often heard ministers say that if the power of the Holy Spirit were removed from the church, most Christians would never know the difference. Would you?

Was there a time in your life when you were supernaturally plugged into God's power? Can you tell the difference now? Or has your Christian life been a tedious journey of self-effort?

Many Christians view Pentecost as just a symbol—or a nice image they've seen in a stained glass window. Don't reduce the Holy Spirit's work to an event in history. The Lord wants to make Pentecost personal in every Christian's life. The early church could not fulfill its mission without the wind and the fire—and neither can you. Every believer needs to be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

In some paintings of Pentecost, the fire resting on the heads of the disciples has been depicted to look like tiny flames from Bic lighters or birthday candles. I doubt the Spirit's power looked so puny. When His anointing flows through us we receive power to share our faith, heal the sick, cast out demons, speak His inspired message and receive

His divine direction. Don't minimize the Spirit's potential in your life. Dare to catch on fire!

Pentecost interrupts us. The Bible tells us that the wind of the Spirit blew into the upper room "suddenly" (Acts 2:2)—and His arrival was not on anyone's timetable. Jesus Himself said the Spirit is unpredictable. Like an invisible wind He blows where He wills (John 3:8). We cannot control Him. Yet Jesus expected His early followers to wait for His interruption.

Waiting for the Spirit is not convenient, and patience runs contrary to human nature. We would rather run our lives and ministries ourselves, using our good ideas and clever church-growth strategies. We'd rather do things on our schedule. Thankfully the early disciples resisted that temptation. They waited for the suddenly—and the result was the most explosive, effective and fruitful ministry strategy the church has ever known. Effective work for God today must follow the same model.

Pentecost unites us. When the Holy Spirit was poured out in the upper room, the New Testament church was born and Jesus redefined who can be anointed for ministry. Under the Old Covenant, only Jewish males from the tribe of Levi could serve around the altar of sacrifice. But when the Spirit came, the oil of His anointing was poured on men and women—and Peter told them that all races and all ages would be empowered to preach the gospel.

The wind of the Spirit always breaks down barriers of race, gender, age and even economic class. He dismantled old traditions and ushered in a revolutionary new day of reconciliation. After Peter was anointed by the Spirit, he found himself in an Italian house, leading dozens of Gentiles to Christ in the house of Cornelius. Wherever the fire of Pentecost spreads, barriers of race, culture, gender, age and class are dismantled.

Is your church truly Pentecostal? It isn't if you aren't crossing barriers and reaching the people who have been sidelined or oppressed in your community.

Pentecost propels us. There is nothing static about Pentecost. Although Jesus told His early followers to "stay in the city until you are clothed with power from high" (Luke 24:49, NASB), He never intended for them to linger there after the fire fell. Once they had been baptized in the Spirit they were energized with hot zeal. They could not sit still or keep their mouths shut.

From that moment the book of Acts becomes a blur of noisy commotion. The newly ignited saints darted back and forth through Jerusalem like spiritual pyromaniacs, spreading the fire of God as they healed lame beggars, baptized new converts and miraculously broke free from prisons. After Philip the evangelist took the gospel to a Samaritan village, he was literally picked up by the Spirit and carried to Azotus in an instant.

Pentecost was an accelerant—it seemed to speed up time, and it gave Jesus' followers an uncanny mobility. Pentecost turned boring religion into an amazing adventure, and it transformed ordinary people into bold missionaries. It can do the same for us today.

The sanctuary color for Pentecost is red and red symbolizes both the fire of Pentecost as well as the apostles and early followers of Jesus who were gathered in the Upper Room for the empowerment from God to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world. So, let's celebrate big this coming Pentecost Sunday, June 12th, and don't forget to **wear red!!**

Pastor Loril

Christian Education

Summer Programs

Sunday School and extended Junior Church stop until September, but Summer Youth programs and Vacation Bible School begin!

Summer Youth Connection = SYC for grades 7 and up — 6 weeks of fellowship, food, and talking about our favorite Old Testament and New Testament Bible Stories--Sunday worship AND fieldtrips, Thursday night activities AND food (7-8:30), PERMISSION NEEDED FOR FIELD TRIPS.

Thursday, June 9	Street Hockey & Ice Cream
Sunday June 12	6 Flags (\$25)
Thursday, June 16	Ultimate Frisbee & Soccer & pizza bagels
Sunday June 19	Laser Tag (\$10)
Thursday, June 23	Service Project...
Sunday June 26	Horseback riding or Kayaking
Thursday, June 30	VBS Helper Party

Vacation Bible School

Register now for RPC's FREE Vacation Bible School. The year's "Inside Out & Upside Down on Main St" theme explores stories Jesus told about everyday people in everyday situations. But His stories were anything but ordinary! Jesus challenged people to look at themselves and others in inside-out and upside-down ways! He changed their lives -- and He'll change yours too! So join the fun on Main Street and discover how Jesus makes a difference . . . every day!

VBS will be held on **June 27 – Jul 1 from 9:30 –NOON**. Children ages 4 to entering grade 6 will make crafts, play games, sing songs, hear Bible stories and meet new and old friends. The program is co-sponsored with Berwyn Presbyterian Church. Volunteer help is welcome and appreciated.

Web online registration: www.vacationbibleschool.com/rpcbpc2011

Several afternoon art and sports camps will continue the fun from noon - 2:30. Please call the RPC office for fee details and to register 301-927-0477.

Also, University Baptist Church is having their VBS "Shake It Up Café & Island Odyssey" the week before, from June 20-24. Call 301-422-1430 for details.

Dr. "C"

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Strawberry Festival

Sunday, June 5th

3:30 - 4:30 P.M.



Sunday Worship Services

Summer - 10:30 a. m.

Sanctuary

All are welcome!



Come & Worship

The Chromatics

Sunday

June 5, 2011,

5 p.m.

Pastor's Ponderings

Dear RPC Family,

This spring we are conducting a daring experiment. Well, it's not really an experiment; it's as old as the Church of Christ itself. Then again, it's pretty daring in this congregation. What are we doing that's so different is that we're celebrating the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper the first Sunday of each and every month, plus on several special worship services per year. Seeing as Riverdale has celebrated Communion once a quarter and on special occasions, I imagine you have some questions. I hope to answer some of them for you here.

Let's begin with the most basic question: Why do we celebrate the Lord's Supper at all? According to John Calvin, "Christ is the only food of our soul, and therefore our Heavenly Father invites us to Christ, that, refreshed by partaking of him, we may repeatedly gather strength until we shall have reached heavenly immortality."

In other words, since we are fed in Christ and the Heavenly Father invites us to feed at the table, we should be fed. This is what makes celebrating the Lord's Supper daring. We believe the Lord feeds us spiritually by the bread and the cup. This is absolutely one of the boldest most daring things we say, but we don't say it. Our Lord says it; we just repeat it.

Because of this, I believe it is better for us to be fed regularly.

Another question is "How often do we *have* to celebrate the Lord's Supper?" Presbyterians have two answers to that question, a minimum number and a maximum number.

The minimum number of times we celebrate the Lord's Supper is once per quarter, four times per year. The maximum number of times is every worship service. This would include services that aren't on Sunday mornings, weddings, ordinations, installations, circle meetings, session meetings, youth retreats, trainings, and every other worship setting as approved by the Session. There's a lot of wiggle room in there between the minimum and the maximum, but that gives each congregation the freedom to consider what is appropriate.

The next question that might come to mind is "Who decided we should have communion more often?" That decision was made by the Session as recommended by the Worship Committee. And yes, it was me that asked the Worship Committee to consider this, but it's because I believe celebrating the sacraments is important to the Body of Christ.

Why should we celebrate this sacrament more frequently? The Session chose to celebrate every month for one specific reason, and that reason is that we are a sacramental people. We believe

these visible signs of God's invisible grace have power in our faith and our lives. Finally, sometimes we just need the reminder of what our Lord commands us to do, and the last thing he told his disciples to do was to take, eat, and do this in remembrance of Him.

There's one final point that deals more with how we have interpreted the Supper over the years. Some say that they don't want to celebrate the Lord's Supper frequently because it makes the sacrament less special. This does make a point, familiarity breeds contempt. Some fear that if we celebrate the supper more often it will mean less. I can't stop people from feeling this way through fancy words and rhetoric. If this is how you feel, lofty arguments won't mean a thing, but I want to offer a different perspective.

Others say that when they celebrate the Lord's Supper frequently, they find it difficult to see a loaf of bread or enjoy a sandwich without thinking about the Lord Jesus and the meal he shared with his disciples. To this, I say amen and so be it.

Let us remember what our Lord has done for us. Let us remember the meal he instituted, the death he suffered, and the resurrected life he leads us to and promises we share. This is the meal we share; his life, his death, and his resurrection. So come, let us share this meal together. Let us come, taste and see, that the Lord is good.

Know you are loved!

Pastor Loril

**Summer Sunday
Worship Schedule**

10:30 a.m.

begins on

Sunday, June 19th

This is a compromise, approved by the Session, between the normal 11:00 a.m. service and the previous 10:00 a.m. summer schedule.