

**Worship Service from First Presbyterian Church of Magnolia**  
**Sunday, May 15th, 2016**

**PRELUDE**

**Ms. Sharon Ard**

*After the Organ Prelude, the liturgist should step to the lectern and say,*

“Would you join me in reading the responsive call to worship adapted from Joel 2 and printed in our bulletins?”

**CALL TO WORSHIP**

(adapted from Joel 2)

The Lord is in our midst;

**He is our God and there is no other.**

He has promised that we shall never again be put to shame.

**He will pour out His spirit on all flesh;**

Our sons and daughters shall prophesy;

**Our old men shall dream dreams,**

Our young men shall see visions.

**He will pour out His spirit even upon those of low estate.**

He will show portents in the heavens and on the earth.

**The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood.**

We will see blood and fire and columns of smoke before the great and terrible day of the Lord comes.

**Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

Let us worship God beginning with prayer...

**PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Let us pray... O God, you have created us, you have called us, and you chosen us to be your people. You have promised to make Your dwelling place within the hearts of all who hear Your words and put them into practice. Send Your Spirit to bring to our mind all that Your Son, Christ Jesus our Lord, did and taught, and empower us to bear witness to Him in our own words and deeds. Grace this time of worship and lift up our hearts and minds in your holy peace. Amen.

Would all of you who are able please stand with me and join in singing our opening hymn, “Spirit”, #319 in our hymnals.

*The liturgist should step back from the microphone for the hymn.*

**\*HYMN OF PRAISE**

“Spirit”

*The Hymnal #319*

*After the hymn, the preacher will step into the pulpit and say...*

**\*CALL TO CONFESSION**

Pentecost was and is a time of sudden & dramatic change. People and churches are still being transformed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. But are we open to God's surprises and willing to risk our security to live as followers of Christ? Let us confess our sins before God and one another as we pray together the prayer of confession printed in our bulletins. Let us pray...

**\*PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

God of power and glory, we confess that all too often we live out our lives as tired and discouraged people. Too often it is all we can do to take care of our daily tasks, and sometimes we do not even get to church, much less be the Church. Forgive us for living such small and self-centered lives. Breathe your Holy Spirit into us, we pray, and empower us so that we may become a Church after your own heart. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**\*SILENT CONFESSION** *(Pause for about 30 seconds of silence.)*

**\*THE ASSURANCE OF PARDON**

The Lord, our God, is in our midst and we shall never again be put to shame. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved! Friends, believe the Good News!

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

**\*GLORIA PATRI**

*The Hymnal #579*

*Glory be to the Father, & to the Son, & to the Holy Ghost;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, World without end. Amen, Amen.*

**\*PASSING OF THE PEACE**

Having been reconciled to God through the grace of His Son, let us also be reconciled to one another and share Christ's peace. The peace of Christ be with you.

**And also with you.**

*Share the peace of Christ with others as you will.*

*After a few moments, liturgist will step into the lectern and say...*

*"At this time I want to invite all of our younger friends to come forward for a Word from the Lord brought to them by Ms. Karen."*

*The preacher will take a seat.*

**CHILDREN'S SERMON**

*(All Singing)*

**Jesus friend so kind and gentle, little ones we bring to thee;  
Grant to them thy dearest blessing. Let thine arms around them be;  
Now enfold them in thy goodness, from all danger keep them free.**

*As the children leave the front, the preacher will enter the pulpit and say...*

*"Let all of us who are able stand together and sing with one voice, our hymn, "Let Every Christian Pray", hymn #130 in our Hymnals.*

**\*HYMN OF PREPARATION**

*"Let Every Christian Pray"*

*The Hymnal #130*

*As the end of the hymn, the liturgist will step to the pulpit and say,*

**THE INVITATION TO THE OFFERING**

As God has filled our lives with good things, so let us open our hands to help others. Our gifts may provide basic physical necessities for some; and they may lead others into a loving, trusting relationship with God. Even more, we will know the joy of giving. Let us continue our worship with the presentation of our tithes and offerings...

*The liturgist will sit down until the Doxology begins to play.*

**THE OFFERTORY**

**Ms. Sharon Ard**

**\*DOXOLOGY (In Unison)**

***The Hymnal #592***

***Praise God from whom all blessings flow; Praise Him all creatures here below;  
Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.***

*After the Doxology, the liturgist will return to the lectern and say...*

**\*OFFERTORY PRAYER**

Let us pray... We bring gifts to this church, so that our lives and our gifts may be a blessing to others. Dear God, we ask that you consecrate our gifts and our lives, so that we, together through your church, may make a difference in the world. May our lives and our church reflect your presence in the world through your holy and ever-present Spirit. Amen.

*The liturgist will take a seat until after the Anthem.*

**THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH**

**"Brief Statement of Faith"**

Let us remain standing and reaffirm our Christian faith using a portion of the Brief Statement of Faith printed in our bulletins. Let us say what we believe...

We trust in God the Holy Spirit,

everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,

sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,

and binds us together with all believers

in the one body of Christ, the church.

The same Spirit who inspired the prophets and apostles

rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,

engages us through the Word proclaimed,

claims us in the waters of baptism,  
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,  
and calls women and men to all ministries of the church.  
In a broken and fearful world the Spirit gives us courage  
to pray without ceasing,  
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,  
to unmask idolatries in church and culture,  
to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,  
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.  
In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,  
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks  
and to live holy and joyful lives,  
even as we watch for God's new heaven and new earth,  
praying, Come, Lord Jesus!  
With believers in every time and place,  
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death  
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*Invite the congregation to... "Be seated," and take a seat.*

**SPECIAL MUSIC** "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" **Joanna Smith, Soprano**

*After the soloist finishes, the Liturgist will return to the lectern & say....*

#### SCRIPTURE READINGS

Our first lesson for this morning is taken from the Book of Genesis, the second chapter, beginning with the fourth verse. You are encouraged to follow along and you can find the passage on page #2 in your pew bibles. Listen now for the word of God...

"These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up -- for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground -- then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

*The liturgist will take his seat.*

*The preacher will then return to the pulpit and say...*

Our Sermon text for this morning is taken from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, beginning at the first verse. You can find the passage on page 948 in your pew bibles. Listen once more for the Word of God. . . .

"When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

Leader: ...This is the Word of the Lord.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

#### THE SERMON

"The Quickening"

In the beginning, when all the rest of creation was finished, God created his greatest work. From the dust of the earth, God formed and shaped a figure in His own likeness, it was almost a self-portrait, as much like Him as a created thing can ever be like his Creator. But then came the miracle, God leaned down and blew his own breath into this creation. Because it was breath the creature received the gift of life. Because it was **God's** breath, it also received a soul, a special gift, a miracle, that set it apart from

all other creatures.

Eons later, a confused and disorganized group of disciples were still hidden in the dark of an upstairs room, afraid of being found by either the Temple guards or the Roman patrols. The sound of every approaching footstep made their hearts race with fear. The windows and doors were bolted, and they sat there in the dark, half-heartedly praying for the delivery of the gifts that had been promised by their now ascended Savior, but simply the deliverance of themselves from the danger that surrounded them. Their fear had rendered them useless to serve the Master that they had loved. They were more dead than alive.

But then God gathered these particles of humanity together, and gave them shape and form! And then God blew his breath upon them. A mighty rush of Divine Wind rushed into the room through barred windows and bolted doors. In the darkness they saw tongues of fire descending on each of them and filling them with a new sense of purpose, new talents, **new life!** And as the first man had been quickened so long ago, so the body of Christ was given life, and became living and active.

What's amazing about the rest of the story is that when they left their self-imposed prison of that upper room, and gave voice to this new life within each of them, each in a different language, many people missed it. They thought these men were drunk or crazy or worse.

But let's go easy on them, because we in the modern church do the same thing. We miss the gifts. And we think those that have them and use them aren't playing with a full deck.

In my first pastorate in Port Neches, Texas, I had a lot of engineers-- chemical engineers, mechanical engineers, electrical civil, petroleum, and process engineers. Having worked in construction for a number of years, I was aware to some degree that engineers look at the world a little differently from most folks. This understanding was really brought home by a new mom in our church, who told me of her new baby's first night at home.

The baby had come a little early, and her husband had been involved with a shut down at work, where everybody works, almost non-stop for two or three weeks, to shut down the plant and all its processes, perform any needed maintenance, and get it all back up and running. Her husband, the new dad, had just finished working one of these turn arounds, and had not finished his list of "honey do's" for the nursery. His last work item was to go pick up and assemble the crib that his wife had selected weeks before. When he had finished that task, he drove to the hospital and picked up his wife and child right on time and brought them home,

That night, the wife noticed her husband wasn't in bed, so she got up to look for him and found him next door in the babies room. There he was, this new dad, she said, standing wide eyed over the infant's crib,... As she silently watched him ...looking down at their very first child, ..... she saw on his face a mixture of emotions: .... disbelief, ... delight, ... amazement, skepticism, ... enchantment, ... and awe.

Touched by this unusual display... and the deep emotions it aroused, .... with eyes glistening .... she slipped her arm ... around her husband.

"A penny for your thoughts," ... she said.

"It's amazing!" he replied.... It is just amazing.

"I just don't see how anybody ..... could make a crib like that ...for only \$66.95."

Here lay one of the greatest miracles in God's creation and all this father saw was a crib.

He did not see what lay within.

But he is not unique.

Last weekend, over a few hours on Saturday and two or three more on Sunday, a divine wind blew through our church again. It whispered to each of us a reminder of what we were supposed to be. We heard words from a Georgia boy who came to us by way of Japan and Austin, TX, and spoke in a language we recognized-- a language of Spirit and Truth. From what I have heard this week, most who were there of heard it and recognized it, were refreshed by it.

Thomas spoke of digging wells rather than building fences. Let me suggest that we also be

W.E.L.L. WELL-- is an acronym, a mnemonic device to help direct us on the path to wholeness. The early church was a worshipping, evangelizing, learning and loving bunch of believers.

The early church was built on prayer and worship. When we read the book of Acts- the record of the early church's history-- one can't help but conclude that the believers had miracles happen every single day! And mind you, they didn't follow signs & wonders-- signs & wonders followed them!

To become a worshipping church means we must shift our focus. Our natural inclination is to worship other "gods"-- often ourselves--, to demonstrate by our actions that we call the shots, make the decisions, choose what we will or will not do on Sunday mornings and the rest of our week. To worship God, means above all other things that you acknowledge him as Lord. He calls the shots. He is the Master, you are the servant. And if he says we are to remember the Sabbath and keep it holy, we will do our best to honor his wishes.

Worshipping in "Spirit and in Truth" means worshipping with the mind and heart. You worship in Truth when you know who you are worshipping & why. This is why Bible study and worship go hand in hand. Worship is going to be more effective when it is based on an accurate understanding of who God is.

While our worship of God must engage the mind, it must also engage the affections, the heart, our emotions, and our spirit. That does not mean that worship has to necessarily be emotional or involve an outward emotional display to be "in the spirit," but it does mean the heart must be engaged. We show outward excitement and worship to sports, musicians, and celebrities. It would seem only right that God would deserve more.

Second, we must be an evangelizing church. As we read the accounts of the first church, it becomes clear that literally everything they did culminated in evangelism. Proclaiming Christ was never seen as optional. It was never a job handed out to a special committee. It was a basic task performed by every member of the community in their own special way.

True believers will reproduce themselves. **WE TALK ABOUT WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO US!!!** The early believers had been touched by Jesus; He had forever changed their lives, so much so that they were willing to give their lives for Him. And when one has good news, one's first impulse is to share it.

After Pentecost, a third characteristic of the early church that manifested itself was that they became a **learning** church.

Today, most of the larger church's problems can be traced back to a diet woefully short on the Word. We are to be guided by the Word of God and fed continually upon it.

For instance, right now we are woefully short on teachers. We need teachers for our children, a team of teachers or sponsors for youth, teachers of adults-- teachers who are willing to spend time away from the church to learn and fully understand what is to be taught. Over the next year, we will be spending time as a congregation learning how to be a stronger, more effective, more soul satisfying church. Who will teach us?

If we are to be a strong church, it will include **you**-- NOT JUST ME. You must do it so that those around you can learn from your example. If you want to say you don't have the gifts let me remind you that God equips those he calls, rather than just calling the equipped. How many of the disciples were biblical scholars? They were relatively ignorant fishermen, tax collectors, tradesmen-- not teachers. But when the time came, God equipped them.

And if I ever hear one of you attempt to excuse yourself from leading a bible study because you "aren't a "biblical scholar"", I am liable to ask you, "And whose fault is that?"

Everyone here is intelligent enough. You have ready and easy access to my library, the church library, an excellent public library, and even a university library that will have every thing you need to prepare yourself to teach. All it takes is the hunger and a willingness to give God back a little bit of the time he has given you. And since we are worshipping in Truth here, let us be honest with ourselves. The reason we don't study and learn more about the God who loves us and what he wants from each of us, **is not because we don't have the gift to teach, it is because we won't make the time!**

Finally, we are to be a loving church. The best description I ever heard of what a church should look like came not from scripture, but from the theme song of a popular TV show of a few years back:

*Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got.*

*Taking a break from all your worries, sure would help a lot. wouldn't you like to get away?*

*Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name, and they're always glad you came.*

*You wanna be where you can see, our troubles are all the same*

*You wanna be where everybody knows your name.*

We are to be a caring community. Where we recognize that everyone has troubles, and here is where they come to find strength to deal with them, wisdom and strength to overcome them. Where people care about you, where they take the trouble to learn your name and help lift your burdens & cares.

Early scholars, in the days before we had clocks or even hourglasses, argued about how to tell when a new day had begun. One would argue that it was officially dawn when it was light enough to tell the difference between a black thread and a white thread held at arms length near a window. Another suggested that a new day had begun when there was sufficient light to distinguish between a fig tree and a grapevine from 100 paces. But the wisest of them, maintained that a new day had begun for the church when there was light enough to look upon the face of a stranger and recognize a brother or sister in Christ, worthy of showing love and giving aid.

Worshipping. Evangelizing. Learning. Loving. W...E...L...L. .. That is what we must work on in earnest over the next year. It is not so much a duty as an opportunity. A chance to discover that we have in fact been quickened, given new life.

Pentecost did not just occur once 2000 years ago. Churches have been constantly born, and reborn. Refreshed and renewed by fresh outpourings of the Spirit.

What will we do with the new life we have been given? What will we do?

THE PASTORAL PRAYER & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Would you pray with me?...

Awesome God, as we celebrate the the birthday of the church, may we celebrate no less a rebirth of THIS church. We give thanks for the gifts that you have given us - the gift of life itself, the gift of love, and the gift of freedom from the burden of sin and guilt, sorrow and fear. Continue to equip us with what we need to do the tasks to which you clearly call us-- to worship, evangelism, learning and loving. Grant that we may recognize the opportunities you give us to witness to your goodness and to your power to change individuals and communities for the better. Enable our ministry in Jesus' name so that we may honor you with every thing we do. Direct our daily walk today, that we may preach, not only with our lips, but with our very lives. Father help us, to yield all of who we are-- Body, Soul and Spirit to your transforming love. Break us when we need to be broken and strengthen us when we need strength. May we empty ourselves so that you may fill us with living water and refresh us with your Holy Spirit. Fill us to the Brim ..... with the Miracle ..... that lays Within, through Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray saying....

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Let all of us who are able stand and join in one voice to sing our hymn of dedication, "The Church's One Foundation", hymn #422 in our hymnals.

\*HYMN OF DEDICATION

"The Church's One Foundation"

*The Hymnal #442*

\*THE BENEDICTION

\*THE CHORAL RESPONSE

"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.

\*POSTLUDE

Ms. Sharon Ard