

Life-giving Spirit

[Acts 2:1-21](#)

Windswept Spirit

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Pentecost Symbols

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Today's Bible Reading

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Additional Bible Readings

[Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b](#)
[1 Corinthians 12:3b-13](#)
[John 20:19-23](#)

Breathe upon us, Holy Spirit of God, with gifts of new life, new inspiration, and fresh energy to witness to your saving love. Breathe upon us, Holy Spirit of God, and fit us for serving in your realm. Amen.

Acts 2:1-21 captures the complexity of the activity of the Spirit in its arrival and commentators continue to discuss what might have happened at Pentecost: did people hear their own language in a society where nearly everyone understood the languages of Aramaic or Greek? Was it the phenomena of glossolalia? Or was it that people came together and understood the good news in a vital and Spirit-inspired way?

This account connects with the Hebrew scriptures and links the events of Pentecost with the Hebrew "Feast of Weeks," 50 days after the Passover that commemorates the giving of the Law to Moses. The Christian church celebrates this day for the giving of the Spirit. Pentecost also came to be linked with the completion of the harvest. The Christian church celebrates the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. There is also a connection with the start of the gospel of Luke, where we read of the overshadowing of Mary by the power of the Spirit, which brought about the birth of Jesus (Luke 1:35). Here in Acts, the Spirit is instrumental in the birth of the church, the continuing Body of Christ on Earth. As well as connecting with the Law and Hebrew practice, Peter quotes from Joel, validating this Pentecost experience by relating it to an event foretold by the prophet, when God's activity in the world would be vindicated (Joel 2:28-32a). Pentecost can also be seen as a reversal of the Tower of Babel story, where people were divided by language differences and the inability to understand each other (Genesis 11:1-9).

How do we interpret the details of this vibrant account of the Spirit's coming? For any new experience, words elude us. How can we describe something new and unexpected yet totally real and life-changing?

On that day of Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, all hear about God's deeds of power. Some wonder what the words of testimony mean. Others wonder if the disciples are drunk. Even the Spirit does not guarantee agreement. In Hebrew, the word for "hear" also means "obey." The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost unleashes the Spirit's power in the disciples, power that strengthens faithful living and witness. The conclusion to the story of Pentecost is yet to be written.