



# The Bridge

MAY 2023



## From the Pastor

*Rev. Julie Sterling*

### Everyday Gifts of Pentecost

What would you say if I asked you to describe the Holy Spirit? What images come to mind? Could you describe from personal experience who or what it is? Is there a verse of scripture that molds your thoughts on what the Spirit is? I remember during Seminary struggling over these very questions during a Systematic Theology class. We were asked to consider the structure of the Holy Trinity and what part each person played. It was easy enough to put pen to paper when it came to God and Jesus, but the Holy Spirit was another matter. Scripture gives us images of flaming tongues, heavenly doves, and breaths of life, and these are well and good. But what does the Spirit look like to you and me? How does it work? Above all, what can we take from the story of Pentecost to enrich our faith journey in the coming months?

Our story of Pentecost takes off at the end of the Easter season. In many ways Pentecost is the completion of the Easter story. It takes the good news of resurrection and gives the children of God the tools, guidance, and support to witness. The first Pentecost took place during the Feast of Weeks, which commemorated the 7 weeks beginning with barley harvest and ending of the wheat harvest. It also celebrated the giving of the Laws by Moses to the people of God. In the Pentecost story people are gathered in Jerusalem celebrating the many blessings of

God. Acts chapter 2 describes how the disciples were gathered together for this holy feast and the Spirit of God appeared to them and touched them. In verse 2 we hear:

***"...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."***

The same Spirit, or Ruach that was the "breath" with God at creation, with Isaiah and the "seraphim" in his call story, with Jesus in his baptism, is with Christ's disciples at that moment, giving life to Jesus's ministry and understanding and hope to his people. God met them where they were and gave them understanding.

The Holy Spirit is a special gift given by God. In Joel 2:28-29 we are told that the Holy Spirit opens us up to God's future. According to the Companion to the Common Book of Worship "The Holy Spirit breaks us out of our preoccupation with ourselves and frees us to serve neighbors, loosens our grasp on possessions, and sets us to loving people. New creation is what Joel is talking about. Pentecost is new creation." It goes on to say that "Without the gift of the Spirit, Christ's church dries up and withers away, and we are left with only our broken selves. With the gift of the Spirit, all

*(Continued on page 6)*

Our Mission — To be a bridge to Christ through faith and service • Our Vision — When SPC is faithful in accomplishing its mission, people will know that Christ is at work in their lives and follow Him. • We Value — Being accepting, caring, outreaching, Spirit-led, and willing to serve

★HAPPY★  
BIRTHDAY!



5/12 Lisa Lindsey  
5/22 Jerolene Crusenberry  
5/25 Calvin Piland  
5/30 Skip Irby  
5/30 Don White

† Betsy Butler  
† Calvin Piland  
† Ron Sobel  
† Clifford Stewart  
† Gary Williams  
† Rita Drier  
† Ann Felton  
† Nancy Forrester  
† Richard Alan Goforth, Sr.  
† Corey Graves  
† Jimmy Hope  
† Lisa Lindsey  
† Diane Stewart MacKenzie  
† Roy Malonson  
† Joyce Milteer  
† Roger Piland  
† Shirley Ries  
† Jeff Snow

*Happy Anniversary*

5/12 Chris & Skip Irby

The *Suffolk Presbyterian Bridge* is a publication of Suffolk Presbyterian Church in Suffolk, VA.

The *Bridge* is published 12 times a year under the direction of the Administration/Communication Ministry Team of the SPC Session.

News items should be submitted to the newsletter editor in one of the following ways:

- email at [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org)
- mail to the church address
- Laura Farmer's office mailbox

Editor: Laura Farmer,  
Administrative Assistant

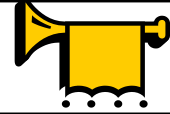
**PRAY FOR OUR**  
★ ★ ★ ★ ★  
**MILITARY**

*Thank you for  
your service!*

† Laura Dawson (relative of Maryanne Persons)  
† Jarrett Hagwood  
† Nick Meadors (US Navy deployment)  
† JB Persons (Reserves)  
† Glenn Smith (Betty Chapman's grandson)  
† Hayden Spalding  
† Greg Vernon (Joyce Jordan's grandson)



## News Briefs



SPC is collecting food pantry donations for the **Suffolk Christian Fellowship Center**. The greatest needs are canned veggies/fruits/tuna/chicken, cold cereal, peanut butter, and jelly. Donations accepted via church website.

The Deacons have a **Gift Card Ministry**. \$25 restaurant gift cards will be collected during the offering to help congregation members in times of need. These will be used to assist with meals.

PDA's Susan Krehbiel discusses partnerships the PC(USA) is employing during the early days of the Ukraine crisis

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/refugees-just-want-to-go-home/>

Disaster Relief-International Refugee Programs (DR000156)

<https://pma.pcusa.org/donate/make-a-gift/gift-info/DR000156/?appeal=PDA&package=UK22-ABB>

### *Information from Breena:*

Below is a link to the list of needs for the ODU English students from Congo and Tanzania. The list should be updated occasionally as the needs are met. If you are trying to downsize and would like to donate items no longer on the list, the English Language Center will send them on to Catholic Charities to be given to other refugee individuals and/or families. Thank you so much for your love, compassion and generosity.

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RZz9G6o9ungSfVmPb\\_Z4uTfQGcBRvIrljM6bHu71IeFE/htmlview](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1RZz9G6o9ungSfVmPb_Z4uTfQGcBRvIrljM6bHu71IeFE/htmlview)

Because of the uncertain climate, activities may be adjusted as we go. Be sure to read the weekly church announcements for any changes. If you attend an in-person event and later develop COVID-19 symptoms or test positive, please contact **Nancy Cisco** so that she can notify attendees in a confidential manner. **In response to the new CDC guidelines, mask use at SPC is optional for all activities.**



### **Administrative Office Hours**

Laura Farmer's regular office hours are Wednesdays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, Thursdays from 9:30 am to 1:30 pm, and Fridays from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. If you would like to contact her directly, please email [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org) or call 757-539-3213.

### **Directory Updates**

If you have a new address, phone number, or email, please contact **Laura Farmer**, Administrative Assistant, at [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org) or 539-3213. If you are not in the directory, and would like to be added, please email your information. Thank you!

## Day of Pentecost Presbyterian Mission Agency

On the Day of Pentecost we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit descending in a mighty rush of wind and flame to inspire the church's proclamation of Christ's rising and to empower its mission and ministry to the world. (See Acts 2:1-13; see also Joel 2:28-32.)

The notion of Easter as a season of 50 days ending at Pentecost is patterned after the ancient Jewish festival of seven weeks that extended from the beginning of the barley harvest (on the second day after the beginning of Passover) to the end of the wheat harvest at the Festival of Weeks or Shavuot (see Deuteronomy 16:9-12). The Festival of Weeks later came to be called Pentecost ("50th day") by Greek speaking Jews. In Jewish tradition, Shavuot also marks the giving of the law to Moses at Sinai; this liturgical link may inform Paul's discussions of the law and the Spirit (see Romans 8, 2 Corinthians 3 and Galatians 3).

According to the Day of Pentecost story in Acts 2:1-13, God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to empower witnesses to the resurrection. Sounds from heaven, cosmic language, the rush of a mighty ruach (wind, spirit, breath) invaded the house in which the apostles gathered, and appeared to them as a burning fire. Tongues of fire touched their nerve centers. A power — the unseen power of God — moved among them and gripped them. The Holy Spirit is unseen, like the wind, which is why the Old Testament calls it ruach YHWH, "the wind, or breath, of God" (cf. John 3:8). The Spirit is the "unseenness of God" working among us.

According to Joel (2:28-29) the ruach is to open everybody to God's future. People young and old will dream and will have visions of hope; they will be able to loose themselves from the way things are now, because God is establishing a whole new economy of creation. The Holy Spirit breaks us out of our preoccupation with ourselves and frees us to serve neighbors, loosens our grasp on possessions, and sets us to loving people. New creation is what Joel is talking about. Pentecost is new creation.

The book of Acts tells the story of the outcome of Pentecost's new creation: people witness in word and in deed to the risen Christ. At the outset, the newborn church immediately tumbled out into the streets to witness to God's mighty works in the languages of people all over the world. By the end of the story, a tiny, Spirit-filled community of faith that broke from its present order has spread across the continents with incredible power to bring new things into being. With the gift of the Spirit, all things are possible. ...

Therefore, on the Day of Pentecost, we celebrate God's gift of Holy Spirit which draws us together as one people, helps us to comprehend what God is doing in the world, and empowers us to proclaim, in word and in deed, God's plan of reconciling all people in the name of Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

Without the gift of the Spirit, Christ's church dries up and withers away, and we are left with only our broken selves. With the gift of the Spirit, all things are possible. A spirit-filled community of faith opens eyes to needs in the world and sees its missing as God's new people. The Day of Pentecost is the climax of the Great Fifty Days of Easter, celebrating as it does the gift of the Spirit to the body of Christ — the church.

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/christianyear/pentecost/>

## Presbyterian Women



Have you wondered about the relationship between Sabbath and justice? How does Sabbath fuel our passion to help others and participate in change? Come join us on Monday, May 8th at 7pm for our discussion on Chapter 7, "Sabbath and Justice". Our study will focus on scripture from Isaiah 58 and will consider the following key ideas:

***Sabbath and justice go hand in hand. Celebrating Sabbath means living lives of justice all week long.***

Our meeting will include a DVD led discussion by author Carol M. Bechtel followed by our monthly business meeting. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to join. Please contact **Rev. Julie Sterling** or **Lisa Morrison** with any questions.



## Deacons will host an ice cream social May 21

You're invited for fun and fellowship!

The deacons are sponsoring an ice cream social after worship on Sun., May 21. Stay for a time of fellowship and enjoy a bowl of your favorite flavor ice cream - chocolate, vanilla or strawberry, or maybe a little of each! There will be toppings galore, so be creative!

We'll set up, weather permitting, along the covered sidewalk at the narthex entrance.

You're also invited to bring a few cookies to share. Sign up sheets will be available in the narthex.

Questions? See any of the deacons - **Alison Super, Betsy Butler, Cheryl Morrow, Nancy Sharp** or **Susie Stoughton**.

Warm weather is on its way, so mark your calendars for a cool treat with your church family.

## Successful Spring Living Water Plant Sale

A big shout out to all our faithful clients who chose to beautify gardens with gorgeous summer annual plants in support of our Living Waters for the World Mission. On Friday, April 28, volunteers offloaded 431 plants from our local nursery and sorted the geraniums, impatiens, petunias, marigolds and begonias into "fields" of color. Volunteers collected the plants for each order and then passed them onto the delivery team. Our work was done by 11. Our efforts netted \$1,125 for our LWW mission.

Special thanks to **Don and Nancy White, Bruce and Nancy Sharp, Geoff and Stella Pane, Ken Duggan,** and **Jack and Susie Stoughton** who stepped up to make this all possible.

Keep the water flowing and Thank You!



## Community Youth Group

All youth 5th grade and up are invited to attend the next community youth group event on Sunday, May 7 at Main Street United Methodist Church, 5:30 to 7 pm. The church's address is 202 N. Main Street, Suffolk, VA 23434. Please contact **Rev. Julie Sterling** with any questions.

## Children's Worship Bulletins

To be added to the **Children's Activities** email list, please email Laura Farmer at: [office@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:office@suffolkpresbyterian.org)

Children's Worship Bulletins for ages 3+ and 7+ are sent to the email list each week prior to the Sunday worship service.

Each bulletin includes a code to unlock games at: [games.childrensbulletins.com](http://games.childrensbulletins.com)

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*(Continued from page 1)*

things are possible. A spirit-filled community of faith opens eyes to needs in the world and sees its missing as God's new people."

So, what do we do with such a special gift? As I was writing this article I thought about my own experience opening presents as a child on Christmas day. Thinking back, some presents had a specific purpose and were only taken out during certain times. Other presents were educational, and though they were good for me, I wasn't always excited to play with them. Then there were the practical gifts, like socks...I used them every day but didn't really think of them as gifts.

So, how do we keep the Holy Spirit as a special gift in our lives and remember its importance and its function as an everyday part of who we are as Christians? I think it starts with us. Take the time each day to acknowledge the living breath of God working through you. You may not know what it looks like or all that it can do, but you do know it's a gift of love from God and without it we would be lost.





# May 2023

## Suffolk Presbyterian Church

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i> 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Practice	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>7</i> <i>Communion Sun.</i> 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship 5:30 PM Comm. Youth Group (Main St. UMC)	<i>8</i> 7 PM Presbyterian Women	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i> 7 pm Diaconate Meeting	<i>11</i> 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Practice	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>14</i> 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i> 3 pm Session Meeting	<i>18</i> 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Practice	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>  
<i>21</i> 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship 12 PM Ice Cream Social	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>25</i> 6 PM Spiritual Fellowship 7 PM Choir Practice	<i>26</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>28</i> 9:45 AM Adult Sunday School 10:30 AM Choir Practice 11 AM Worship	<i>29</i> <b>Memorial Day</b> <i>Office Closed</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>31</i>			



Suffolk Presbyterian Church  
410 North Broad Street  
Suffolk, Virginia 23434



Visit our website!  
[suffolkpresbyterian.org](http://suffolkpresbyterian.org)

## Suffolk Presbyterian Church

**Reverend Julie Sterling**  
Pastor

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**Pastor E-Mail:**  
[pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org](mailto:pastor@suffolkpresbyterian.org)

### ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:45 AM

### CHOIR PRACTICE

10:30 AM

### WORSHIP

11 AM

## Upcoming Events:

May 7—Community Youth Group (Main St. UMC)

May 8—Presbyterian Women

May 10—Diaconate Meeting

May 17—Session Meeting

May 21—Ice Cream Social

Thursdays—Spiritual Fellowship & Choir Practice



Find us on Facebook  
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Church*