

Sunday, May 23, 2021 – Easter Hill United Methodist Church

**Bible Study – Acts 2:1-21
“Spirit Poured Out”**

Open with a word of prayer

Gathering Time (5-10 minutes) In groups of two or three, read Galatians 5:22-23. Share which fruit of Spirit that you'd like to experience more.

Context Acts 2:1-21. In the Jewish calendar, the Feast of Weeks (Shavuot in Hebrew) came fifty days (7 weeks) after the Feast of Passover. This was the second of the three annual pilgrimage feasts that all Jews coming from wherever they lived were expected to celebrate at the Temple in Jerusalem. As the Feast of Passover celebrated God's liberation of the people from bondage in Egypt, so the Feast of Weeks celebrated God's giving the Law to Moses and the people at Mt. Sinai. Today Jews observe the Feast of Weeks with several traditions: reading the Torah and other sacred texts throughout the night of the eve of Pentecost (to make up for the Israelites who reportedly got up late on the day when God gave the Torah); eating only dairy products – blintzes, cheesecake, etc. (when God gave the Torah, they realized that they had no kosher meat or utensils); decorating homes and synagogues with tree branches and flowers (the Israelites had found Mt. Sinai lush with flowers and vegetation). “Pentecost” is the Greek term for ‘50’ and the Greek name for the Feast of Weeks. For Christians, the Feast of Pentecost is the celebration of the giving of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Christian Church.

Read Acts 2:1-21

What touches your heart, what do you hear in the scripture, what questions do you have, or what doesn't make sense to you in the story?

Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

Read Acts 2:1-21 again.

Some reflection questions – Write down your thoughts or share your thoughts with the person or group you are with.

- Have someone re-read the passage as dramatically as possible. What did you notice? What stood out?
- There seems to be two parts to the amazement and astonishment of the crowd – that Galileans were speaking various languages (v. 7) and that they each could hear their own language (v.8). Think about how hard it is to hear when people are speaking at the same time in one language. Now try to imagine being able to pick out your own language and discern what people are saying! If you had been in that crowd, would you have been amazed (v. 12) or skeptical (v. 13)?

- Have you ever experienced what might be described as the Holy Spirit being poured out on you? What was it like? Where were you?
- Why does our culture tend to be skeptical about experiences with God?
- What are some markers or signs of an authentic encounter with the Holy Spirit? [One marker of an authentic encounter with the Holy Spirit is that the experience should result in indications of the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5:22-23**).]
- What are some practices that open us up to experiencing the Holy Spirit?

Closing Reflection Question

How is this scripture calling you to change, to see, to be or what might it be calling you to do?

Prayer (10 minutes). Each person prays sharing their answer the following statements:

I ask God for....

I thank God for.....

Sending Forth (2 minutes). After all, have shared, pray the closing prayer. Ask for a volunteer to lead the group or read the following prayer in unison:

Holy Spirit, pour out on us your love. Renew us in the strength of your might. Embolden us to be witness for your kingdom. Guide our steps so that our actions and words will be a demonstration of your peace and love. **Amen.**

And now we pray The Lord's Prayer....

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 trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.