

MISSION LETTER

Dear Siblings in Christ,

What does Pentecost mean to you? To me, Pentecost reminds me of my origins in the Christian faith as a young Pentecostal. Before my baptism at age 15 on Sunday, April 3, 2011 at Heritage Presbyterian Church in Amherst, Ohio—I would spend a lot of my time at a local Pentecostal church where my grandmother worshiped.

My grandmother, Primitiva Rodriguez, was very adamant that I be brought up in the faith. Well, she kept that promise and sought me through in my faith formation. Growing up as a Pentecostal, there was a big emphasis on the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit — in my experience.

Depending on the theology of every Pentecostal congregation (of which the vast majority functioned autonomously “congregationally”), some were expressive in their emotion by gestures of raising hands, shouting “amen!,” running or dancing on the aisles of the sanctuary, falling of the spirit — by way of falling on the floor, and speaking in tongues. Whilst others, like myself, would worship in a more stoic or settled manner. Either way was not a wrong way.

Friends, to you this may be an aspect of Christian worship that is not particularly common — especially for us, Presbyterians. But this was my reality, each and every Sunday and throughout the week — until my adolescent years.

At that time, my understanding of Pentecost was a *real* experience — perhaps similar to that of what the apostles experienced in Acts 2. Sometimes, I actually did think that some of my Pentecostal siblings were drunk...if anything, “drunk in the spirit,” I hope! Yet, this reminds me of the inclusive blessing of worship diversity in God’s children.

Speaking of children, our PC(USA) Special Offering for Pentecost is focused on supporting wider ministries with children, youth, and young adults. Even though we are beyond the Day of Pentecost, we are journeying through the season of Pentecost.

That said, **donations are still being accepted!** Our congregation keeps 40% of contributions to our children & youth/young adult programming, which is the cool part! Some of the 40% has already been put to work by sponsoring participants for summer camp at the Geneva Center.

So, whatever Pentecost means to you — I pray you may be filled with God’s spirit — to be open to being called where the spirit is guiding you in 2023 and beyond.

Let’s invest in the future of our church, together; as a collective and individual act of mission!

Here are a few ways to give:

1. Offering Plate (Red envelopes among the pews)
2. Check (Memo: “Pentecost Offering 2023”)
3. PayPal (QR code in the bulletin)

Together in mission,
Jose Soto
Mission Chair