

lives of faith by our own strength – in fact, we can't! In this week's "What Now?," I encouraged you to work on memorizing or re-memorizing Martin Luther's explanation to the third article of the Apostles' Creed. In that explanation, he pulled from those Scriptural truths that "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him." Read these couple of Scripture passages that speak to the truth of who we are without the Holy Spirit and without Jesus: 1 Corinthians 2:14; Ephesians 2:1; Romans 8:7. The Spirit, active in creation (Genesis 1:2), active in baptism (Matthew 28:18-20 and John 3:5-6), and active in Jesus' resurrection (1 Peter 3:18), comes into our hearts and lives with power. The Spirit took the apostles, paralyzed by fear when Jesus was crucified, and transformed them into bold witnesses who were willing to die for their faith in Jesus Christ. How has the Holy Spirit empowered you in your life? Have there been "dramatic" times when this has happened? Can you or have you recognized His work in some of the smaller, day-to-day sort of happenings? I'd love to hear some of the work of the Holy Spirit in your life – if you're willing, send me a note or an email to share those times with me ([gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org](mailto:gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org)). Pray that the Spirit will enlighten you, empower you, and pour His power into your life.

#### Saturday – Our Roots

Celebrating Pentecost and the dramatic appearing of the Holy Spirit, it's a great opportunity for us to celebrate the very roots of our Christian and Lutheran heritage. Read through some of the astounding parts of this event again in Acts 2:1-12. What are the major pieces of this story? What does God establish as the very roots of our faith? Look earlier in Acts 1:4-8. What did Jesus tell His disciples to do? Wait! Wait for what? For HIS power to come. That's grace, which forms the basis of our Lutheran faith! We recognize that we can't do anything on our own, apart from the Lord and the working of the Holy Spirit. All that we are, all that we have is given to us by the Lord. And He promises always to provide and to never leave us alone. At Pentecost He sent the promised Holy Spirit to come and it was that Spirit that empowered Peter to preach the sermon of his life and to declare clearly the grace and love of Jesus. It is the Holy Spirit that creates faith and draws us into relationship with the Lord. It is the Holy Spirit who is active in baptism and comes into our hearts and washes us clean. What a blessing to know the solid foundation on which we stand is a firm foundation, grounded in Jesus and His grace, love, and forgiveness! Give thanks to God today in your prayer time, for that firm foundation He has established and provides for us each day.

*If you would like to receive daily Bring It Home devotions by email, please contact the church office: [churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org](mailto:churchoffice@immanuelloveland.org)*

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#### What Now?

1. Consider working on memorizing (or re-memorizing) Luther's explanation to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith. In this Christian church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers. On the Last Day He will raise me and all the dead, and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ. This is most certainly true."
2. If you would like a *Luther's Small Catechism*, they are available on a table in the atrium. You do not need to but if you would like to contribute to the cost of the catechisms, you can leave a donation in the box on the table in the atrium or drop off your gift in the church office.
3. Finish the "Love Assignment" of 1 Corinthians 13:4-8! This is the final week – week 16 of 16 – "love never fails." While our love does fail at times, how can you share and live in the "love that never fails" which flows from Jesus as you practice "Living Love" this week?

## Monday — I Believe

This week begins our new summer series, *I Believe*. We're going to spend the summer months looking more closely at various parts of our core beliefs as Christians, including the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and Confession and Forgiveness. While all of this may sound pretty dry, I think we're all going to be surprised at how rich and relevant some of these "basics" of the faith are for our life today! On Sunday we celebrated Pentecost, a miraculous and amazing event that Jesus had told His disciples was going to happen. The focus of Pentecost is on the Holy Spirit, of whom we profess our belief in the third article of the Apostles' Creed. To begin the week, I'm inviting you to take in the entire Pentecost event and reflect on it, wonder about it, marvel at it, and see what the Lord puts into your mind and heart as you do. So as you read, ask yourself some of these questions: What is God saying to you and the life you are leading right now? How does the Lord encourage you in these verses? What questions does it raise for you? Where are you challenged? What's helpful? What's comforting? What's hard? What insights stand out for you? As always I would love to hear some of those reflections and if you're open to it, please email me at [gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org](mailto:gschlecht@ImmanuelLoveland.org). With that, read and reflect on that first Pentecost, recorded in Acts 2:1-21.

## Tuesday — What Happened?

Have you ever been part of a scene or event and asked yourself, "What's happening? What does it mean?" Our Scripture reading from the book of Acts tells us that many onlookers were bewildered by what they heard and saw. Jesus' followers had gathered at Pentecost, an annual Jewish festival, which would draw thousands to Jerusalem. Suddenly there was a great wind, tongues of fire, amazing utterances, and an outpouring of the Spirit's power. Read Acts 2:1-13 and imagine yourself in that place during this amazing event. What would you feel? What would you think? How do you think you would respond? This wasn't the first time that God made His presence known in powerful or dramatic ways. His presence was seen in fire on several different occasions in the Old Testament – check out Exodus 3:2; 13:21; 19:18, and 2 Kings 2:11. Now, here in Acts, God comes again in power, reverses the curse that came with the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), and people are able to clearly hear the story of the Good News that comes to us in Jesus. The Spirit isn't limited to when or where He comes. He can come to you today, and will! He is here and part of this devotion as you read and reflect on His Word. He is the One who gives you the power to speak clearly when those opportunities arise, to speak of the wonders that He has done and is doing right now in you. He desires to use you to speak, live, and share the love of Jesus with others you know. Pray you will know God's power and presence, and thank God for God's gift of love in Jesus Christ.

## Wednesday — I Believe I Can't...

As we consider the work of the Holy Spirit, one of the big take-aways is how much we can't do without the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts, minds,

and lives. Check out this list and the corresponding Bible verses (that I'd encourage you to look up!). Without the Holy Spirit, I can't: Be holy, justified, or sanctified (1 Corinthians 6:11); Believe or accept the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:14); Be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9); Say that Jesus is my Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3); Enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5-6); Belong to Jesus (Romans 8:9); Live a life pleasing to God (Ephesians 5:18-20); Have hope (Romans 15:13). Pretty amazing, isn't it? Martin Luther, back in the 1500s, wrote in his explanation to the third article of the Apostles' Creed that "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ my Lord or come to Him." What a gift the Holy Spirit is for us, a gift that allows us to be and do everything in this list because WITH the Holy Spirit, I CAN! And because you can (be holy, believe, be saved, be assured of your place in God's kingdom, live for Christ, and have hope), that changes everything. Reflect on that for a bit right now, these amazing gifts God has given to you through the Holy Spirit. What does that mean for you? How can it change the way you approach your job, your family, your recreation, your relationships, your challenges? We know that through faith in Jesus, we are not alone. While there are a lot of things that are impossible for us to do on our own, as we are filled, guided and led by the Holy Spirit, the life we've been given is an amazing life. The Lord knows all that we can't do but has provided a way to bridge that gap and give to us everything we need to be His children. Take some time to pray a prayer of thanks and gratitude for those gifts.

## Thursday — Change the World!

Read the Pentecost event once again in Acts 2:1-21. The story of Pentecost is the story of God's outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the first Christians. The Holy Spirit came to the disciples as an empowering gift for the disciples to "change the world." In the Old Testament, God's Spirit was given in a restricted sense. But now, in this day, God's Spirit is poured out on all believers – sons and daughters, young and old. This event was a significant turning point in the history of the early church. The Spirit comes to us again and again, first through baptism and then through God's Word, to empower us to bring our witness to the world. We are called to change the world through God's Spirit active in our lives and set loose through our witness. How do you see the Spirit active in your life? What is it that is preventing you from being the witness that the Lord wants you to be? Know that you are "Spirit-filled" as a baptized believer! The promise is given that in baptism the Holy Spirit came into your heart. The Spirit may continue to be poured out in a greater way at different times in our lives in order to enable and empower us to do even more for the Kingdom. How are you being led to change the world for Christ and by the Spirit's power? What could that look like, in big and small ways? Pray today for the Spirit's filling and for your Spirit-filled witness to Jesus.

## Friday — Empowered by the Spirit

Have you ever tried to live the Christian life by your own power? It's an exhausting and futile task. The Scriptures tell us we don't have to live our