

WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH



SERMON

One Service Sunday, June 8, 2025

Enacted Reading and Meditation

Laura Bentley

Enacted Reading and Meditation

Dr. Jo Forrest

© 2025 by Laura Bentley and Westminster Presbyterian Church.

All rights reserved.

No part of this sermon may be reproduced in any form or by any electronic or mechanical means including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the author.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing: June 8, 2025

**Enacted Reading based on Acts 2 and related stories
throughout Scripture**

Read in worship by Claire Thornburgh, Madeleine Thomas,
and Harrison Christian

This morning's scripture is an enacted reading that weaves scripture from the Old and New Testament to tell the story of the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Friends, hear what the Spirit is saying to the church...

The liberation of God's people began with the burning of a flame.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

Moses led his flock beyond the wilderness and came to the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush.

Is not my word like fire, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

He looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.

The liberation of God's people continued with fire and with wind.

On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God. They took their stand at the foot of the mountain.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak, and God would answer him in thunder.

God's people remembered their liberation out of Egypt in the celebration of three festivals:

Passover, or the Feast of Unleavened Bread;

Shavuot, or Pentecost;

and the Feast of Tabernacles.

For God had said: Three times in the year you shall hold a festival for me.

You shall observe the feast of Passover, which marks the first spring harvest.

You shall observe Pentecost, the thanksgiving festival of the harvest of wheat, and remember the giving of the Law.

You shall observe the Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the harvest, when you gather in from the field the fruit of your labor.

These are the three times in the year when all shall appear before the Lord God.

The fire, the wind.

The water.

After his suffering, Jesus presented himself alive to the apostles by many convincing proofs, appearing to them for forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. While staying with them, he ordered them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait there for the promise of God. “This is what you have heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind,

God makes winds into messengers, and flames of fire into servants.

and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

And anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean.

Flames appeared among them, and a flame rested on each of them.

Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have, and lived?

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them the ability.

The fire, the wind, the water.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as they migrated from the east, they came upon a plain and settled there.

And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in their native language.

And they said to one another, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for

ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”

Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Germans, Swedes, Palestinians, and residents of Moscow, Geneva and Beijing, Pretoria and Cairo, France and Indonesia, Egypt and Libya, visitors from ...

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which humans had built. And the Lord said, “Let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another’s speech.”

In our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city.

Is not my word like fire, and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?”

But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them,

“People of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning.

The fire, the wind, the water.

This is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: “In the last days it will be,” God declares, “that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I give will become a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.

And they shall prophesy. And I will show signs in the heavens above and signs on the earth below; blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

"You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you—this man, handed over to you according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of those outside the law.

So that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and cry bitterly over him, as one cries over a firstborn.

This Jesus God raised up, and of that, all of us are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God and having received from God the promise of the Holy Spirit, the Lord has poured out this that you both see and hear.

On that day a fountain shall be opened for the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

Therefore let the entire house of Israel know with certainty that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.”

The fire, the wind, the water.

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Each man will be like a shelter from the wind and a refuge from the storm.

Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.

And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

2040 Washington Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15241
412-835-6630
www.westminster-church.org