



THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER

First Christian Church, Maryville, MO

fccmaryvillemo.com

May 14, 2025



What is Pentecost?

On Pentecost Sunday, we remember the day the disciples received the Holy Spirit in a special way. The story in Acts 2 describes a powerful wind and tongues of fire as the Holy Spirit was poured out on people from all over the world who came to Jerusalem to celebrate a Jewish feast. At the first Pentecost over 3000 people were baptized, creating the first church. This is why Pentecost is known as the birthday of the Christian church.

Pentecost for Christians culminates the celebration and work of the church begun on Easter Day. In much of early Christianity, Easter Day (not Pentecost) became the primary day for baptisms. After their baptism, the newly baptized were then trained in basic Christian doctrine, including the meaning of the sacraments they had now experienced, as they prepared to take up their ministries in the life of the church. On Pentecost, Christians primarily celebrate the commissioning of new members into ministry. Some do this through services of confirmation on Pentecost. And still others have also, historically, offered baptism on Pentecost as well.

Two colors are historically associated with Pentecost. Red is a visual reminder of the "tongues of fire" that empowered the apostles and others to proclaim the good news of Christ's resurrection in many languages to the crowds of pilgrims from many lands (Acts 2:3). White was used in some places, including England, where Pentecost had also become a day for baptisms by the Middle Ages. Whether it happened at Easter or Pentecost or at some other time, those being baptized were given new white robes to wear as a sign they had taken off the world, died to sin, and were raised with the risen Christ to new life. This is why Pentecost may also be referred to in English as "Whitsunday" or "White Sunday."

The Season after Pentecost is the time of the church year to support new disciples and the whole congregation in living out the gifts we have been given in the name of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit.

Did you know...



In Italy it was customary to scatter rose petals from the ceiling of the churches to recall the miracle of the fiery tongues; hence in Sicily and elsewhere in Italy, the feast is called Pasqua rosatum.



In France it was customary to blow trumpets during Mass, to recall the sound of the mighty wind which accompanied the Descent of the Holy Spirit.



In the northwest of England, church and chapel parades called Whit Walks take place at Whitsun (sometimes on Whit Friday, the Friday after Whitsun). Typically, the parades contain brass bands and choirs; girls attending are dressed in white. Other customs such as morris dancing and cheese rolling are also associated with Whitsun.



In Hungary the girls dressed in festive costumes choose a Little Queen, who is raised high. Then a figure dressed as an animal appears and dies, and is brought back to life by his attendant chanting a joke incantation.



In Ukraine the springtime feast day of Zeleni Sviata became associated with the Pentecost. The customs for the festival were performed in the following order: first, home and hearth would be cleaned; second, foods were prepared for the festival; finally, homes and churches were decorated with wildflowers and various types of green herbs and plants. A seven course meal may have been served as the Pentecost feast which may have included traditional dishes such as cereal with honey, rice or millet grains with milk, sauerkraut soup, chicken broth with handmade noodles, cheese turnovers, roast pork, buckwheat pancakes served with eggs and cheese, and baked kasha.



Have you ever had those moments where you pause and recognize that something was missing? Not something like, "Oh, where are my keys? I'm in a rush and can't find them," or,

"What did I do with my glasses?" when they're sitting on top of your head. I'm talking about that moment where, all of a sudden, you can feel that something's missing. Maybe it's something you saw or something someone said that triggered a particular memory in your life, and suddenly you're wondering, "What happened to that?" "I want to find that again." "That meant a lot to me." Or maybe you see something, hear something, or experience something, and it causes you to think, "Man... I remember that connection. I remember that feeling. I remember that part of me. Where did it go?"

There have been multiple times in my life where something has come along, or rather, where Spirit has come along and thrown an ice-cold bucket of water on me. Every time this has happened in my life, it's been significant. It doesn't matter what triggered it. I remember once giving a message at a Martin Luther King Jr. service, and the comment I received afterward felt like a slap in the face in the best possible way. It was as though something deep within me said, "Hey, whatever happened to that girl? Where did that confidence go? Where did that truth go? Where did that beauty and creativity go?" Those moments are far more valuable than we realize. Life is a journey of returning to self, of finding self. And the truth of the matter is, when you're finding self, you're finding God. We are God incarnated. We are His children, the emanation of Christ's light living and breathing within this human experience.

You know, I told myself I wasn't going to make every message and every newsletter article about this transition that's coming up. And yet, at the same time, I recognize that perhaps I should simply trust whatever rises to the surface and allow it to be what Spirit is revealing in the moment. Last Sunday, I gave a message about holding what matters most. We talked about Joshua leading the Levites and the Israelites across the flooded Jordan River while carrying the Ark of the Covenant. It was a story about remembering who they were and recognizing that they were carrying the presence of God with them. It felt like the perfect reminder for all of us. How many times in your life, whether as a congregation or as an individual, have you forgotten your strength? Forgotten your courage? Forgotten your passion? How many times have you forgotten the truth of who you are because outside noise, outside experiences, or the weight of life itself slowly covered it up? It's amazing what happens when we sit still long enough to remember. There are times in my life when something goes missing, and I will search for it like a madwoman. I will check the dark spaces under the stairs. I will open the same drawer twenty times. I will look in places where there is absolutely no way that item could possibly be, and yet I'll check anyway because it means that much to me to find it. Maybe it's because of who gave it to me or what it represents. Maybe it's simply because, in some strange way, it feels like a part of me. But the moment I determine something is truly missing, then I become ten times more determined to find it. And I guess that's what I'm really asking in this newsletter article...Where did you put it?

What part of yourself have you allowed to slip quietly into the background? What part of your courage, your joy, your passion, your truth, your divinity, have you misplaced beneath the busyness of life? Because the truth is, when we seek, we find. When we knock, doors open. When we are willing to search honestly for the missing pieces of ourselves, we often discover something surprising...they were never truly gone!!! Sometimes those sacred parts of ourselves were simply tucked away for safekeeping while we navigated through the experience of life, healing, growing, wandering, and unfolding. And then one day, something awakens us. Something reminds us. Something calls us back. And suddenly, we remember where to look, and wow... there it is.

Blessed To Never Forget You,

Gina ♥

The Bulletin Board

Following the Progress of FCC's Leaders

The following is a brief recap of the Board meeting May 11, 2026.

Board Moderator Bob Ferguson welcomed Habitat for Humanity Representative Nancy Hardee and opened the floor for her presentation, which was to inform the Board and the congregation of what Habitat for Humanity is, is doing, the process, and invite individuals to participate. She also requested contact information to continue keeping First Christian Church informed of the organization's ongoing efforts.

Finance Report: Finance Chair Coby Lamb reported line items on the actual versus budget report were in line with expectations. Coby mentioned that the line item for Christian Education: Youth was incorrect because the funds actually came from Special Funds, which makes the report look out of balance. Coby went on to discuss the updated 2026 budget which has been adjusted to account for no longer paying minister's salary and benefits, as well as having a single A/V tech on payroll instead of two. One other change in the budget is an increase in the guest speaker line item for the upcoming rotation of Sunday morning guest speakers.

Trustees Report: Trustee Chair Linda Baker reported that there were no transfers needed for operational expenses in April. Finance Chair Coby Lamb noted that Proctor & Associates reported the possibility of needing to transfer \$1,300 for operational expenses in May. Office/Finance Administrator Virginia Ripple responded that this will depend on the Church Mutual Insurance payment, which will not be known until the May bill arrives.

Property Reports: Property Team Member Marcia Jordan reported that according to Deena, Tim Janousek from The Plant House, checked on the plants from the Green Chalice planting and, due to the numerous freeze-thaw cycles by the middle of April, some plants had died. Tim is reordering replacement plants and Deena has several people who have volunteered to replant them. Deena will also continue to schedule groups to care for the plants for the foreseeable future.

Worship/Elders: Worship Chair Guy Ebersole reported that the Elders are thinking about how to handle our ministry at Oak Pointe. Each Elder will also be taking one week per month and any fifth weeks to be figured out as they occur for "on call" duties. The Elders have given potential speaking date availabilities to Pastor Gina to be added to the upcoming speaker rotation.

Outreach/Evangelism: Pastor Gina reported when the closing of The Giving Tree was posted to social media, a couple of people in the community, not members of First Christian, inquired about volunteering to keep it open. Pastor Gina is in the process of discussing the option with them. The Giving Tree is not accepting further donations. Its three-year anniversary would be June 26. She also reported that we have had no Caring & Sharing requests for May. Guy Ebersole will work with Office Administrator Virginia Ripple to continue offering the Caring & Sharing ministry to the community. Pastor Gina noted that other churches often rely on the Administrative Assistant to decide how vouchers are disbursed without required consent of the Senior Minister and that the updated voucher amounts simplified our process to make that a possibility. Guy Ebersole will be taking on Christmas in the Summer. Sue Schenkel will continue to organize the Carnival Workers' Lunch ministry.

Christian Life: Christian Life Chair Marsha Meyers reported they will have a potluck on June 14.

Personnel: Personnel Chair Pam Dougan reported they had a meeting for an exit interview with Kendric Santos-Briggs and Chloe Petersen who stated that their experience at First Christian had been very positive and

Continued on next page

they believed they had left us in very good shape for incoming A/V Tech Manager John Morrison who will be our primary for both sound and livestream. Jay Ripple will be doing the livestream under John's supervision and will be given a \$25 weekly love offering from the Special Fund. John is doing the volunteer schedule to fill any Sunday either he or Jay will be absent. John Morrison will be paid \$20 per hour for three to five hours weekly.

Transitions: Board Moderator Bob Ferguson recommended sending a letter to the congregation explaining what the upcoming process of transitions will be over the next few months. The letter included church office hours, regularly scheduled Board meetings, normal staff duties and schedules, Elders "on call" scheduling for emergencies and pastoral care, minor Sunday worship service and duty changes, and plans to utilize Elders and guest speakers to bring the Sunday message from June 21 through the month of September. The letter also noted plans for a congregational meeting in late July or early August to discuss the direction of filling the pulpit either through speaker rotation or forming a search committee in hopes of securing a Sunday's only or bi-vocational pastor. Our financial situation precludes us from seeking another full-time minister at this time. Bob stated that currently, the best plan for our financial situation is to utilize guest speakers, reminding them that hiring a any kind of minister would require a search committee, updating the church profile, and going through the search and call process. The letter was emailed to the congregation the following day.

Pastor Gina reported that the Roles and Procedures for Routine Church Work had been updated with Elder "On Call" and Pulpit Supply Rotation sections. A list of speakers may be published, but dates for speakers will not. It was also suggested that a "hymn sing Sunday" be scheduled for dates we are unable to fill with a guest speaker. Pastor Gina stated she is willing to perform funerals upon request.

A full, unedited AI transcription is available should questions arise regarding this meeting.

FCC Leadership

Board Moderator: Bob Ferguson

Stewardship/Finance: Coby Lamb

Worship/Elders: Guy Ebersole

Christian Life: Marsha Meyers

Treasurer: Donna Rickman

Trustee Chair: Linda Baker

We're closing



The Giving Tree

From Our to Yours

Thank you for
3 impactful years
of service and serving.

It is with both sadness and gratitude that we announce the closing of The Giving Tree.

In this current season, our congregation does not have the volunteer capacity needed to continue meeting the demands of this outreach. Because of this, we have made the difficult but necessary decision to bring this chapter to a close. We are no longer taking donations at this time and our last day for item pick up will be May 26.

We are so grateful to the community for providing so many wonderful furniture and household items free to those in need. For nearly three years, we have been able to bless many people in the community through this outreach and we, in turn, have been blessed through this ministry.

Welcome Home



Sunday Mornings

9 a.m.
Sunday School Classes

10:30 a.m.
Service in the Sanctuary

Sunday Worship Attendance

| | | | |
|-------------|----|-------------|----|
| Apr 19..... | 34 | May 3..... | 27 |
| Apr 26..... | 25 | May 10..... | 37 |

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The next issue is
May 28, 2025

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Keeping in touch with our church families

For Healing & Comfort...

Gary Ross

In Sympathy...

Shoba Brown and family

Thank you...

Dear FCC,

We here at North Star Advocacy Center want to extend a sincere thank you for your recent donation. Knowing our community is so supportive gives us pride in our mission of serving victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Fellowship is close to our hearts here, and we are happy to utilize your donation to continue acts of service, case management, an open ear, and service coordination that allow our clients to stand on their own.

Thank you for your support, and all you have done for our organization. Thank you for being a guiding light.

Sincerely,
Wyatt Williams
Executive Director

Thank you for your monetary donation and your continued support of our Angel Program. Your generosity will benefit many seniors in their ability to pay for hot meals through our Center.

Sincerely,
Nodaway County Senior Center

Our Staff

Gina Johnson
Senior Pastor

Peggy Dowis
Custodian

Virginia Ripple
Office Administrator

Johnathan Morrison-Keller
Audio/Live Stream Lead

Anita Dew
Organist



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
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MARYVILLE MO 64468
Return Service Requested



We will be closed
May 25

Looking Ahead...

- May 20:** Small group study—"That's in the Bible?!", 6 pm
- May 24:** Pentecost Sunday (wear your red!)
- May 25:** Memorial Day, office closed
- May 27:** Small group study—"That's in the Bible?!", 6 pm



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and Blue Sky

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