

HOLY SPIRIT CELEBRATION

by Glenn Schwerdtfeger



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Holy Spirit Celebration

A reading for Pentecost

by Glenn Schwerdtfeger

CAST

MALE 1

FEMALE 1

MALE 2

FEMALE 2

PRODUCTION NOTES

Pentecost is clearly an event that lends itself to dramatic portrayal. This is a reading for two men and two women, designed to be used on Pentecost Sunday. The intent is to recreate a sense of the wonder and excitement of the Pentecost story from Acts 2, and to describe other aspects of the Holy Spirit — comforter, giver of new life, and unifier of God's people. The drama is meant to leave people with an understanding of the Holy Spirit that is at once broader and deeper.

Holy Spirit Celebration is effective without being difficult to produce. It is perfect for presentation in a worship service without costumes, props, or sets. Relatively little rehearsal is needed. When originally produced, the four readers simply sat on tall stools at the front of the sanctuary and read their lines. (Note: the parenthetical Scripture references are not intended to be read aloud.) In the original service, the reading took the place of a sermon. The reading time is approximately fifteen minutes.

Female 1 and Male 1 have sung lines near the end, which were done *a cappella* when originally performed. The lines could be spoken, however, if the readers prefer. The four bits of song within the script offer worship planners a chance to echo and reinforce the message of the drama by having the congregation sing one or more of the songs in their entirety elsewhere in the service.

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3 MALE 1: It is the Day of Pentecost — come, Holy Spirit!

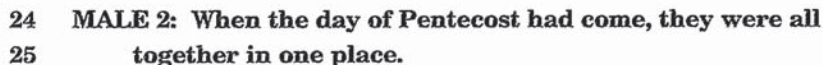
6 MALE 2: Speaking the Word so all may hear — come, Holy
7 Spirit!

10 ALL: And all who call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!

14 MALE 2: It will take place not many days from now ...

17 MALE 1: And there the men and women prayed together
18 constantly — come, Holy Spirit!

20 ALL: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come
21 upon you" (Acts 1:8). Come, Holy Spirit! We need your
22 power!



28 **FEMALE 2:** Fifty days, more or less, after Easter, the
29 resurrection of Jesus.

30 MALE 1: And ten days after Jesus had ascended: He was
31 taken up into the clouds, and they were left — jaws
32 dropped, hearts heavy — staring into heaven.

34 MALE 2: What would they do without Jesus?

35 FEMALE 2: Well, here's what they did: they went to

1 Jerusalem; they stayed close together.

2 **MALE 1:** They prayed.

3 **FEMALE 1:** They selected a disciple to replace Judas.

4 **MALE 2:** And most of all, they waited — waited for the Holy
5 Spirit and its power.

6 **ALL:** Come, Holy Spirit!

7 **FEMALE 1:** And it came! Oh, how it came!

8 **FEMALE 2:** Suddenly in the house where they were staying
9 and praying, there came a wind from heaven. Not a
10 gentle gust. Not a kite-flying breeze. More like a
11 hurricane, a tornado, a gale-force wind, objects flying
12 everywhere. To be honest with you, it is a little
13 frightening, this Holy Spirit.

14 **MALE 2:** And so they went outside, only to be met by the
15 Spirit in another form. Tongues, they said, of *fire*.
16 Flickering, flashing, dancing around them. One for
17 each of them, landing on their heads, shining in their
18 eyes, lighting up their faces. It was bright and hot and
19 real, this Holy Spirit.

20 **FEMALE 1:** And then came the most amazing thing of all.
21 The Holy Spirit was not just around them, not only
22 upon them, it was *within* them. They were *filled* with
23 the Holy Spirit.

24 And they opened their mouths to speak ... only it was
25 not their language that came out. Their native tongues
26 were replaced by all the languages of the world — a
27 language for each person in the crowd. For in
28 Jerusalem that Pentecost day were Jews from all
29 around the world — from Iran and Iraq, from Turkey
30 and Egypt, from Rome and Arabia. They opened their
31 mouths to speak about Jesus, and somehow each of
32 these heard in their own native tongue. It was amazing,
33 astonishing; it made quite a commotion, this Holy
34 Spirit!

35 **MALE 1:** And so people began to wonder. They began to talk.

1 “What’s this all about, anyway?”

2 MALE 2: "Ah," said others, "they're just drunk. Been hitting
3 the wine a little early, that's all. Pay no attention."

4 **MALE 1:** But Peter, always ready to talk, stood up and gave a
5 speech — a sermon, really. “Come on, friends,” he
6 addressed them, “these people can’t be drunk — it’s only
7 nine a.m. (*FEMALE 1, MALE 2, and FEMALE 2 give MALE 1*
8 *questioning looks.*) No, I tell you, they haven’t been
9 drinking! It’s not the ‘spirits’ they are filled with, but
10 ‘the Spirit!’

11 **"It's what the prophet Joel said five hundred years**
12 **ago: 'In the last days it will be, God declares.**

13 That I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

14 **FEMALE 2:** And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

15 And your young men shall see visions,

16 And your old men shall dream dreams.

17 FEMALE 1: Even upon my slaves, both men and women,

18 In those days I will pour out my Spirit;

19 **And they shall prophesy'**" (Acts 2:17-18).

20 **ALL:** Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall
21 **be saved!** (Acts 2:21).

22 MALE 1: It is poured out upon us:

23 FEMALE 1: It opens our mouths to speak of Christ.

24 MALE 2: It is exhilarating and alive.

25 FEMALE 2: It is wind and fire.

26 ALL: Come, Holy Spirit!



28 *(Slower, thoughtful and calm)*

29 **MALE 2:** But, you know, the Holy Spirit is not always mighty
30 wind and fire. It is also gentle and uplifting, the dove of
31 peace, the still, small voice inside us.

32 **FEMALE 1:** "Teach me to do your will, for you are my God,"
33 wrote the psalmist. "Let your good spirit lead me on a
34 level path" (Psalm 143:10).

35 MALE 1: "Like cattle that go down into the valley," said

1 Isaiah, “the spirit of the Lord gave them rest” (Isaiah
2 63:14).

FEMALE 2: "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness," wrote the apostle Paul, "for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

10 **MALE 2:** “And I will ask the Father,” Jesus told his disciples,
11 “and he will give you another Comforter¹, to be with
12 you forever ... He abides with you, and he will be in
13 you” (John 14:16-17).

14 **FEMALE 1:** Like a light in the darkest night.

15 MALE 1: Like a prayer when you don't know what to say.

16 MALE 2: Like a blanket to a crying child.

17 ALL: Come, Holy Comforter!



19 **FEMALE 2:** The Spirit blows like wind and falls like fire. The
20 Spirit soothes and rocks us gently in God's favor. But
21 even that does not exhaust the Spirit. There is more to
22 celebrate in God's Holy Spirit.

23 **The Holy Spirit baptizes, washes, refreshes the soul;**
24 **the Spirit brings life to places of death. Where there is**
25 **revival and enthusiasm, where people and churches are**
26 **“born again,” there is the Holy Spirit.**

27 **MALE 1:** In the beginning God created the heaven and the
28 earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and
29 darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of
30 God moved upon the face of the waters (Genesis 1:1-2, KJV).

31 **FEMALE 1:** In the time of exile, God showed Ezekiel a valley
32 filled with bones, and behold they were very dry; no
33 spark of life was in them. And yet when Ezekiel
34 breathed upon them at God's command, the bones rose
35 up and came to life! This is what God says to hopeless,

¹ NRSV reads "Advocate."

1 despairing people: "I will put my Spirit within you, and
2 you shall live" (Ezekiel 37:14).

3 **MALE 2:** When Jesus was baptized, the Spirit descended on
4 him like a dove, and a voice from heaven proclaimed him
5 well loved. Even so, when we are baptized — even you
6 and even me — the Holy Spirit seals us with God's love.

7 Listen again to Paul: "If the Spirit of him who raised
8 Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he ... will give life to
9 your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells
10 in you" (Romans 8:11).

11 **FEMALE 2:** Like being born all over again.

12 **MALE 1:** Like words of life in places of death.

13 **FEMALE 1:** Like dry bones dancing.

14 **MALE 2:** Like water in the desert.

15 **ALL:** Come, Spirit of life!



17 **MALE 1:** Power to speak and preach, comfort of the soul,
18 bringer of new life — and still there is more to
19 celebrate! How else but with the Holy Spirit can you
20 explain this funny thing called "the church"? How is it
21 held together — this diverse, opinionated, passionate
22 group of people? If it were up to us, surely we would
23 squabble and divide ourselves into oblivion. In fact, we
24 have done a pretty good job of that. But thank God what
25 holds Christ's church together is not our oneness of
26 opinion, not our own natural goodness.

27 **FEMALE 1:** What holds us together is the one Spirit of the
28 one God, given to each at our baptism. The Holy Spirit
29 does not see denominational labels or differences in
30 worship or color of skin. The Spirit sees only beloved
31 children of God, gathered in the name of Jesus Christ.

32 **FEMALE 2:** "For in the one Spirit," wrote Paul, "we were all
33 baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free
34 — and we were all made to drink of one Spirit"
35 (1 Corinthians 12:13).

MALE 2: "[Make] every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit ..." (Ephesians 4:3-4).

FEMALE 2: Like the blood flowing through every inch of Christ's body.

FEMALE 1: Like glue, holding us all together.

MALE 1: Like a weaver, making one cloth from many threads.

ALL: Come Holy Spirit, Bond of Peace.



MALE 2: O Pentecostal power to convert and revive, O gentle presence of Jesus Christ — we celebrate the Holy Spirit!

FEMALE 1: (*Singing*) Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us; Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us. ²

FEMALE 2: O bringer of new life, you who make one out of many — we celebrate the Holy Spirit!

MALE 1: (*Singing*) We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord; we are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord. ³

MALE 2: You, my friends, are a letter of Christ, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts (2 Corinthians 3:3).

FEMALE 1: (*Singing*) Spirit of God descend upon my heart, wean it from earth, through all its pulses move. ⁴

FEMALE 2: This is the word of the Lord: Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, says the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 4:6).

MALE 1: (*Singing*) I'm goin' a sing when the Spirit says sing, I'm goin' a sing when the Spirit says sing, I'm goin' a

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³ "They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love" by Peter Scholtes, © 1966 Lorenz Publishing Company. Reproduced by permission. Permit #505413.

⁴ "Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart" by George Croly and Frederick C. Atkinson, #50C in the *United Methodist Hymnal*. The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1989.



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