



## Theme interpretation: Sent in the Spirit



*for the 2023 Pentecost Offering*

*“Jesus said, ‘Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’*

*And with that he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’”*

*~John 20:21-22, NIV*

It’s difficult to do anything without having sufficient support. It’s a privilege to be invited, but it’s a blessing to be given everything that is needed to move forward. When Jesus approached his terrified and weary followers, they needed divine vision but also heavenly provision.

To be clear, the disciples had good reason to be concerned. The Lord was known for being righteous and innocent of all crimes, but he was put to death as a scapegoat by a hate-filled religious mob and an unjust criminal justice system with more than one official who turned a blind eye to the whole ordeal. Those who followed Jesus were concerned that the people who pleaded for Jesus to be put to death would come after them next. Amid the uncertainty of their situation and of the future, Jesus appeared among them.

We may not be as fearful for our lives as the disciples, but we still have concerns about what the future holds. Offered compelling and compounding data that our sacred task is far too risky and our challenges too numerous, we convince ourselves that we can’t bring healing to our communities, to our country, to our world. And this conclusion, though morose, is correct. In our own strength and might, we simply can’t do or be all that is needed to step out of hiding and make a difference.

However, the Lord has not called us to abandon us. Sent by God, the risen Jesus set his transition plan in motion. Not only did Jesus put the train back on the track, but he also provided fuel for the engine. Like at the time of creation when God imparted the breath of life and animation to humanity (Hebrew “ruah”), so also does Jesus Christ breathe new life and reanimation into his followers (Greek “pneuma”)—with breath that revived his followers after the resurrection and stirs up new life in every age.

Through the missions and ministries of the Church of the Brethren, we recognize our God-given calling and that the Holy Spirit empowers us to continue the work of Jesus. We are calling and equipping fearless disciples and leaders, renewing and planting churches, and transforming communities. Your support of the Pentecost Offering supports these faith-building and life-changing endeavors that we do together—through the power of God and the unity of the Holy Spirit.

We have not been called and left hanging. We have been commissioned to important work and given the support we need to carry it out. We, indeed, have been sent in the Spirit. May we go forth with the Lord who has called us and the Spirit that sustains us.