



Theme interpretation: A breath of fresh air



for the 2024 Pentecost Offering

“And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house.” ~ Acts 2:2

Inhale. Exhale. The simple but life-giving rhythm that sustains all humans and creatures. Every breath—involuntary or intentional—is a gift from God. In particular, deep breaths can serve many purposes. Physically, deep breaths can help us quiet our minds, discern our emotions, or maintain steady movement. Relationally, they can help us listen more closely and receive fresh perspectives that are shared by others. Spiritually, deep breaths provide a cadence to take in inspiration from one another and from God.

Following the ascension of Jesus, the disciples gathered for fellowship and prayer. On the day of Pentecost, a great wind filled the house where they were gathered. It was the Holy Spirit whom Jesus had promised, a burst of new energy, a breath of fresh air.

To be clear, the Holy Spirit wasn't full of hot air, providing a false sense of security or inspiring naivete. There would be challenges ahead. There would be (real and metaphorical) hills to climb and valleys to traverse. Jesus had told them that they would face the hostility of neighbors and adversaries (Matthew 5:11) and speak before councils, judges, and governors (Matthew 10:16-20)—but those were concerns for another day. On that day of Pentecost, the disciples breathed deeply and embarked on a new season of ministry that was powered and sustained by the Holy Spirit.

The Pentecost Offering of the Church of the Brethren highlights our passion for calling and equipping fearless disciples and leaders, renewing and planting churches, and transforming communities. Through the work of Discipleship and Leadership Formation and other ministries of the denomination, we take deep breaths together and welcome the movement of God among us. Together we create space to witness and receive strength and inspiration from the Holy Spirit, and we use this energy to serve God and others.

No one knows what the future may hold or what challenges we will face, but if we lean into the Holy Spirit, we will receive strength for today and hope for tomorrow. Let us inhale and exhale, receiving a breath of fresh air from God.