

Today we celebrate the birthday of the Christian Church.

This birthday began when God poured out the Holy Spirit on the disciples at Pentecost, just as Jesus had promised.

In John 14, Jesus told his followers that the Father would send the Holy Spirit to live in them forever.

That promise was fulfilled in Acts chapter 2, when the disciples heard the sound of a mighty wind, saw tongues of fire, and were filled with God's Spirit.

But what we know as Pentecost was not the beginning of the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit had been active since creation. In Genesis, the Spirit hovered over the waters, and God breathed life into Adam.

Humanity was created to live in close fellowship with God, but sin broke that relationship. Even so, God did not abandon his creation. He set in motion a plan of redemption that was foretold by the prophet Isaiah and fulfilled in Jesus.

Through our acceptance of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, our relationship with God is restored. As Paul the Apostle writes, anyone in Christ is a new creation.

Before returning to heaven, Jesus told his disciples to wait until they were "clothed with power from on high."

Then at Pentecost, God breathed spiritual life into this new creation, just as he breathed life into Adam. The prophecy of Joel was fulfilled as the Spirit was poured out on all believers.

The Holy Spirit gives us power to live for God and draws us into a deep relationship with him.

This means that our calling is to remain connected to Jesus, depend on him, and continue in the Spirit.

As we pray, read Scripture, and trust God, the Holy Spirit fills us with peace, strength, and joy.

The same Spirit who empowered the first disciples empowers us today to witness for Christ in our generation.