

MAY 6, 2018
SIXTH SUNDAY
OF EASTER



The Holy Spirit expands the vision of Jesus' followers.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

These passages are related to the Lectionary texts for this Sunday.

Sunday	John 15:9-17	Love one another
Monday	Acts 10:44-48	Gentiles receive the Holy Spirit
Tuesday	1 John 5:1-6	Faith conquers the world
Wednesday	Isaiah 61:1-11	Good news of deliverance
Thursday	Romans 12:9-21	Love with sincerity
Friday	1 Thessalonians 1:2-10	The church's faith and example
Saturday	Psalms 98	Make a joyful noise
Sunday	John 17:6-19	Christ's prayer for his disciples

SCRIPTURE VERSE FOR THIS WEEK

"Can anyone withhold the water for baptizing these people who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" So he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. **Acts 10:47-48a (NRSV)**

PRAYERS AND BLESSING

A Prayer for the Week:

Gracious God, just as the Holy Spirit surprised Peter and his friends by including Gentiles in the church, open our hearts and minds to new ways to accept and love others. Amen.

Mealtime Prayer:

God at our table, giver of bread, bless us to love, just as you've said. Amen.

A Blessing to Give:

May the God who has done marvelous things, bless you with joy and God's steadfast love and faithfulness. (Psalm 98)



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HYMN OF THE WEEK
Spirit of the Living God



CARING CONVERSATIONS

Discuss in your home or small group:

- Tell of a story when you were greatly surprised by something.
- Talk about an event that changed or influenced your life.
- The church's identity changed to include Gentiles for the first time (Acts 10:44-48). How has your understanding of the church grown over the years to be more inclusive?

DEVOTIONS

Read: John 15:9-17.

Jesus' command to love one another describes the life of his followers, people who were chosen by Jesus to be his disciples and enabled to bear fruit (v. 16). That opens up the lives of Jesus' followers to love and befriend others. Similarly, in Acts 10:44-48 the Holy Spirit amazed Peter and his fellow disciples and expanded their vision to include the uncircumcised to be accepted as part of the church. God's ways surprise and empower us through the word of God and the Spirit of God. Reflect on how God's word (Jesus' commandment to love) and the Holy Spirit have opened your life to love others and see the call to discipleship in ways that connect you to a larger world of care. Conclude by praying:

Pray: Dear God, thank you for choosing me and all whom you call friends. Grant me and all believers your power to bear fruit and to love and accept others for Jesus' sake and in his name. Amen.

SERVICE

Cornelius welcomed Peter and others into his home. It was in the home that Cornelius received Peter's message and where his household was baptized. Peter and his friends were asked to stay in Cornelius' home for several days, obviously giving the new converts more time and experience with the message of Jesus. In the New Testament the home is church, too. Invite others to your home and use portions of this *Taking Faith Home* bulletin to share God's word and empower lives in the Christian faith.

RITUALS AND TRADITIONS

Throughout the Bible and the history of the church, singing has been a faithful way of worshipping God and expressing one's faith in God (Psalm 98). Sing and/or pray the words of *Spirit of the Living God* and add other songs as well. Begin your singing and praying by saying the words of Psalm 98:4: **Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.**



In addition to *Taking Faith Home*, celebrate milestones in your daily life as an effective faith formation tool. Go to: www.milestonesministry.org