



May 1, 2025

Honoring Our Neighbor's Faith
Assemblies of God (Pentecostal)

Social Time

Thanks to those who brought treats!

Bible Study Business

Prayer Requests and Update Prayer List

Opening Prayer

Opening Litany

Come, Holy Spirit,

The wind of God, the breath of Life.

Come, Holy Spirit,

Our Advocate, our Counselor.

Come, Holy Spirit,

Teacher of Wisdom, Reminder of Christ.

Come, Holy Spirit,

Granter of forgiveness, giver of peace.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Blow among us,

Enliven our discussion,

Open our awareness to your presence,

Be with us now.

Hymns – Lisa Schlotterbeck

♪ *Because He Lives*

♪ *Victory in Jesus*

♪ *Sweet, Sweet Spirit*

Scripture

Acts 1:8

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 2:1-13

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

Family Tree of Denominations (chart)

Introduction to the Assemblies of God (see attachment)

Discussion

1. Have you had experience with the Assemblies of God or Pentecostal faith?
 - a. If so, please share.
2. The Assemblies of God seek to model themselves on the first Century Church.
 - a. What would that look and feel like?
 - b. How would it be similar to or different from worship at Abiding Savior or other ELCA churches?

3. How do you understand the Holy Spirit?
 - a. What experiences of the Holy Spirit have been most meaningful for you?
4. What do you see as the benefits and drawbacks of infant baptism as practiced in the Lutheran faith?
 - a. What are the benefits and drawbacks of believer's baptism as practiced in the Assemblies of God?
5. How would understanding Holy Communion and baptism as "ordinances" rather than "sacraments" affect how a person experiences them?
6. The Assemblies of God is one of the fastest growing churches and it attracts a diverse mix of people.
 - a. What about the Assemblies of God approach encourages this growth?
 - b. As the Lutheran Church is declining in numbers, are there some lessons we could take from our brothers and sisters in Christ at the Assemblies of God?
7. What aspects of the Assemblies of God faith do you admire?

Birthdays

Closing Prayer

God of power,
may the boldness of your Spirit transform us,
may the gentleness of your Spirit lead us,
and may the gifts of your Spirit equip us
to serve you now and always. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Upcoming Schedule

Date	Pages	Topic
5/1	10-12	Assemblies of God (Pentecostal)
5/8	114-116	Salvation Army
5/15	76-81	Judaism
5/22		Pre-Memorial Day Weekend – No Bible Study
5/29	67-71	Islam
6/5		Field Trip to Mount Zion Jewish Temple

Introduction to the Assemblies of God

History

The Assemblies of God had its roots in the Methodist faith. Some people felt that the Methodist Church had strayed too far from its founding principles of John Wesley. It was perceived by some that the church had become a social club for middle and upper class people to put on their fancy clothes and go to be seen by others each week and make business contacts. In an effort to bring people back to faith that mattered they prayed for God to reawaken faith like that of the first Century Christians. From that the Pentecostal Faith was born. The largest denomination within the Pentecostal faith is the Assemblies of God.

A Seeker's Church

If you ask Lutherans how they came to faith, most will say they were born into a Christian family and grew up in the church. Many Pentecostals came to faith without having grown up in a Christian family. The Assemblies of God church practices and encourages evangelism to convert unbelievers. About 75% of their budget is focused on evangelism and outreach. The Pentecostal Church was originally created to welcome people with little education who are poor and don't feel welcome in middle-class mainline churches. The church especially appeals to immigrants. There is a multicultural, multiracial element to Pentecostal worship. People of a wide mix of backgrounds come together in Pentecostal worship. That also fits with a foundational scripture from Acts 2 as people came together speaking many languages and through the Holy Spirit were able to understand one another.

Worship Style

Worship style is casual and upbeat with a lot of contemporary praise music. Enthusiasm and spontaneity are common in Pentecostal worship.

Mission of the Assemblies of God Church

The Assemblies of God states, "Our mission is to evangelize the lost, worship God, disciple believers, and show compassion to others. We are anchored by our commitment in actively engaging with the Bible, living a life empowered by the Spirit, and sharing the gospel through missions—both nationally and internationally."

Core Beliefs

'Four Core Beliefs' of the Assemblies of God:

- Salvation
- Baptism in the Holy Spirit
- Divine Healing
- The Second Coming of Christ

Following are some explanations from the Assemblies of God website explaining these core beliefs:

Salvation

The doctrine of Salvation forms the core of our Christian faith by proclaiming God's victory over sin in our lives. This truth results in deliverances, healings and restored lives. Whether a new member or a mature Christian, every believer should have a clear understanding of salvation and the difference this truth makes in our lives and churches.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

The doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is our distinctive. This truth explains the passion and power of our witness. Jesus promised His followers they would receive power from on high so that they would be His witnesses. We believe this truth is just as relevant today as our Fellowship continues to take the gospel message around the globe.

Divine Healing

Wherever Jesus went, He ministered with compassion and healed the sick. Christ's example showed an interconnection with salvation as many believed following their healing. Our Lord continues to heal today and it is vital that the church preach, teach and practice this biblical truth. Scriptures command believers to pray in faith and trust God for the outcome.

The Second Coming of Christ

With the world experiencing natural disasters, economic downturns and increasing uncertainties on many fronts, the doctrine of Christ's Second Coming is more relevant than ever. Believers must rest in the certainty of the imminent return of our Lord and share this hope with others.

Other Important Beliefs

The Bible - They believe in the Bible as the infallible word of God. They use the same 66 books of the Old and New Testament as other Protestant denominations.

Trinity - They believe in the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Some other Pentecostal groups have denied the Trinity, but not the Assemblies of God. They also affirm Jesus' virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, death and resurrection from the dead. They believe in a literal heaven, hell and final judgment.

Conversion - They believe a personal conversion experience is necessary – where a person comes to believe in Jesus and repents of their sin. Following conversion, a believer should seek a second experience of Baptism in the Holy Spirit as evidenced by speaking in tongues.

Speaking in tongues – This gift is understood as speaking in a language the person doesn't know. It could be a human language or language not known to humans. Speaking in tongues should occur in worship when there is someone present who can interpret the tongues. If the speaking in tongues is authentically inspired by the Holy Spirit, its message will not contradict the Bible.

Spiritual Gifts - Gifts of the Holy Spirit are understood to be useful to strengthen the church, as a sign to unbelievers, and as a means to contribute to more effective prayer and praise. Members are encouraged to seek gifts of the spirit such as prophecy or healing. They believe that divine healing is an integral part of the gospel and available to all believers. They also believe that prophecy is still available and the church should be open to authentic prophecy.

Salvation depends on Maintaining Relationship with Jesus - They believe that it is possible for a person to fall away from the faith after conversion. They don't believe that once a person is saved, they are absolutely saved even if they later step away from the faith or the church. Salvation of the believer depends on a living relationship with Christ.

Beliefs and Practices Regarding Baptism and Holy Communion

The Assemblies of God practices two “ordinances” – baptism and the Lord’s Supper. The word “ordinance” can be defined as a “God-ordained ceremony.” They don’t regard these as “sacraments” because they don’t see these as a means of grace where God is the agent, but simply an act of human obedience to God’s command.

They support believer’s baptism by immersion, so do not baptize infants. To be baptized, a person must first believe and also repent of sin. Then comes sanctification, being filled with the Holy Spirit and being baptized with the Spirit. Finally comes speaking in tongues, which is the sign that sanctification has taken place.

Speaking in tongues can happen in two different ways. On the first Pentecost, people spoke in different languages from the countries and regions they came from and others who never learned that language could understand them. Another understanding of speaking in tongues is “ecstatic speech” or speaking a language that is not a known language on earth.

They observe the Lord’s Supper, which is generally open to all believers, though some churches place restrictions on who can participate. It is viewed as a memorial done in remembrance of Jesus’ suffering and death. There is not a belief in the true presence of Jesus in the Lord’s Supper. They use grape juice and not wine.

Socially Conservative

The Assemblies of God church teaches a literal interpretation of the Bible. They believe that there is no human evolution and that Adam and Eve were historical people created by God. Traditionally they believed in a literal seven 24-hour day creation cycle, but there is some backing off from that now. They oppose abortion, euthanasia, and same sex marriage and in the US they are also opposed to the drinking of alcohol. Both women and men can be ordained as ministers. Some, but not all, teach the prosperity gospel.

References:

Blankman, Drew and Todd Augustine. *Pocket Dictionary of North American Denominations*, pp. 19-21, InterVarsity Press, 2004

Trickler, C. Jack. *Why are There So Many Christian Denominations?* pp. 227-236 AuthorHouse, 2010

Online Resources:

Assemblies of God website www.ag.org

Video Introductions to the Assemblies of God

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec8u0N9JeA>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=axVYrEhf24M>

Contemporary Christian Music – *Safe in the Arms of My Father* (top AG song of March 2025)

https://www.windberassembly.org/playlist.php?song=in_the_arms_of_my_father.mp3