



MINUTE FOR MISSION

Extending the Spirit of the Season: Congregation Sees the Holy Spirit at Work Through the Pentecost Offering

At Parkway Presbyterian Church in Corpus Christi, Texas, worshipers on Pentecost Sunday are urged to seek a Spirit-filled common life that will permeate the congregation's mission and ministries.

"Pentecost is a big part of our church's identity," says Laura Neely, Parkway's associate pastor. On Pentecost Sunday, they rejoice in the Holy Spirit's coming, and after worship, the celebration continues with a Texas-style barbecue. Beyond the Offering, "Pentecost red" is a favorite color for shirts and other church materials. Red carpet occupies the center of the church as a reminder of the Spirit.

In addition to Pentecost imagery, Parkway's ongoing recognition of the Offering is another tangible reminder that extends beyond the seasonal celebration. The congregation sees the ministries the Offering supports as a manifestation of the Holy Spirit's work.

The youth group has been one of the more visible supporters of the Pentecost Offering at Parkway. In 2014, a video by Parkway youth promoting the Offering won first place in a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) video contest. The youth chose scholarships to the 2016 Youth Triennium from among the prize options. Triennium is one of the national ministries that benefit from the Offering.

"[Triennium was] an amazing experience," says Elizabeth Fryer, one of two Parkway youth who attended. "The most meaningful experience would probably be in our small groups when we were talking about the Good Samaritan. We looked at the perspective on how we stereotype people. That was a different twist I had not seen before."

Triennium was "the best experience of my life," says Jacob Beavers, another Parkway youth. "I am definitely going to bring some things back to the church." His goal, he says, is "just to spread the love like I see it being spread here."

"Triennium is a leadership development opportunity," Neely says. "It's a chance to develop leaders for the church—not just ordained leaders, but all kinds of leaders."

At Parkway, members also have seen how the Young Adult Volunteer Program, another Pentecost Offering recipient, can develop future church leaders. "One of our young women, Karen Ware Jackson, served as a YAV in Hollywood, then went to seminary and now serves as a pastor," Neely says. She added that Jackson's experience with the YAV program not only changed her life, but also reinforced the congregation's support for nurturing young adults.

Sixty percent of your Pentecost Offering gifts go to our national church for ministries that encourage, develop, and support our youth and young adults and address the needs of at-risk children. Congregations retain the other 40 percent for local ministries that serve people in the first third of life. Parkway has used its retained share of the Offering to help a local shelter provide emergency and transitional housing for homeless women and children. It has also helped its presbytery's camp rebuild after flooding.

"Pentecost Sunday comes just once a year," Neely says, "but its impact definitely filters through our ministry the rest of the year, especially with the connection with the Pentecost Offering."

Please give generously to this Offering, and support the future of our young people.

Let Us Pray

Empowering God, Pentecost Sunday reminds us of the Spirit's power to transform lives. Help each of us to hear the Spirit's call every day of our lives. May we follow that call into a world of need. **Amen.**