All Together!

The sound of rushing wind. A fire spreading with all-consuming speed. A forceful energy that envelopes a crowd. Like a rock concert, a sporting event or even...a worship service? Do you remember what a "full house" on Sunday morning felt like? The electric experience of a gathered crowd, close together, both giving and receiving as all share in the presence of something larger than themselves? We celebrate Pentecost each year and recall the birthday of the Church, when the message caught fire and spread beyond a small group of people and began to literally transform the world. That's a worthy celebration, but what might happen if we acknowledge, this Pentecost Sunday, that the holy fire still burns in, through, and around us?

We crave interaction with others. Gathering in community makes that happen. With the great realignment well underway -- people moving to

new communities and new jobs during the pandemic - congregations everywhere have a chance to re-form, to re-imagine, and re-create community, welcoming new folks into their midst like never before! Just like the first Pentecost, our neighbors are eager, so we must engage! In the South Central Conference that looks like a church plant with the mission to revitalize an urban neighborhood and fight gentrification by offering micro-loans to local entrepreneurs. It looks like a church leveraging technology to spread the gospel on a schedule that meets young families at convenient times in busy lives. And another congregation stands as a beacon of hope and the lone progressive Christian voice in a growing community where new folks are connecting with them weekly.

These are a few examples of what can happen when we're all together in one place. As you give to Strengthen the Church this Pentecost Sunday, may you receive the Spirit's fire and share it with boldness and innovation, too! All Together, our offerings will empower leaders, engage communities, and shape spaces that will change lives.

Rev. Phil Hodson
Conference Minister
South Central Conference,
United Church of Christ

Gifts to the Strengthen the Church Offering Renew the United Church of Christ.

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STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH