

Acts 2:1-4

Pentecost has always been of huge significance. Originally Jews celebrated it as the Festival of First Harvest. At the end of the year, after all the harvest of the year has been gathered in, there was to be another celebration and a festival of thanksgiving. But Pentecost was at the beginning of the season and people were invited to give thanks to God for the firstfruits they gathered and expect more to come.

This resonates with Christian Pentecost – the first disciples received and gave thanks to God for the special gift of the Holy Spirit and – were expecting more to come! This is just the beginning of the Book of Acts and the history of Christianity. Many more people would come to Jesus and receive the gift of his Holy Spirit. There's more to come!

Kenny's baptism today is the end of a process and a certain stage of his life. But it also marks a beginning of a new life for him – life with God (this time consciously and by choice) and life as part of us, the Church. He officially becomes one of us today – a very warm welcome to you once again!

The fact that we've decided to baptise him today, on Pentecost Sunday, is a powerful reminder for us as a church that this is just the beginning. There's so much more to come and expect. Why? Not because we're going to make it happen but because we're being given a powerful gift of the Holy Spirit of God himself. If we choose to receive it, we get to be part of God's great plan for this church, for this community, for this nation and this world. There's so much more to come!

Presbyterians are not all that keen on the Holy Spirit – too unpredictable for us, not orderly enough for our liking. Spill the Beans brings us this year the image of a large cardboard box with the gift of the Spirit inside with the following labels on it:

“Contents: Undiluted Holy Spirit. Additives and preservatives: divine adoption, inheritance of eternal joy. Expiry date: never.

Danger: Hazardous Material. Highly Flammable. Do not handle with care or caution. No licence required. Do use if the seal is broken and contents have leaked. Do use without supervision. Do eat, drive, operate machinery, use your mobile phone, while using this product.

Recommended daily dose: As much as you can take. May vary. Suitable for children under 3 years, wheelchair users, vegetarians, allergy sufferers, elderly people, pregnant women.

Possible side effects: May cause alertness, empowerment, loss of control, compulsion to step outside comfort zones, enhanced empathy, substantial hearing gain, prophetic wisdom.

Use liberally in affected areas to alleviate symptoms of injustice, exploitation and greed.

Directions: After absorbing healthy dose, sprinkle or pour externally. Increased effectiveness with increased use.

If undelivered: Keep knocking gently until intended recipient opens up.”¹

Presbyterians or not, let’s open the door, let’s open the gift, let’s allow the Holy Spirit to roam freely in our lives, in our church and in our community. Let’s feel the breeze. There’s so much more to come! Amen.

¹ Spill the Beans, issue 22, p. 127.