

# DAILY BREAD

FOR THE WEEK OF AUGUST 15, 2010

**This week's assigned reading: Acts 1 and 2.**

Comments on the assigned reading:

- Consider the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts as a two volume work written by the same author, Luke. The resurrection of Jesus is the dividing line between the two books, where the first volume culminates with the resurrection, and the second volume continues the ministry of Jesus through the church after Jesus' resurrection and ascension into heaven.
- The full name of Acts is The Acts of the Apostles. New Testament theologian Justo González suggests that Acts would be more appropriately named The Acts of the Holy Spirit. In this week's reading we have the story of the first Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured out upon the church in order to empower Jesus' followers for mission. Notice all the references to the Spirit in these first two chapters and throughout Acts.
- According to tradition, Luke was a physician, and scholars are divided as to whether he was or not. Certainly we know that he was well educated because his Greek is the best in the New Testament, apart from the Letter to the Hebrews. Although the Gospel of Luke and Acts were dedicated to Theophilus (Luke 1:3 and Acts 1:1), probably the audience of these writings were Gentiles and Jews living outside of Palestine in the region of the eastern Mediterranean Sea.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Before his ascension into heaven, Jesus commanded his disciples, "You shall be my witnesses..." (Acts 1:8). In what ways is witnessing to someone different than arguing with them or persuading them? When was the last time that you witnessed to your faith?
2. In the story about the first Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13), the first Christians proclaimed "God's deeds of power" (2:11) in many spoken languages of that day, which was truly a miraculous demonstration of the work of the Holy Spirit. In what ways is the church involved in proclaiming the mighty deeds of God in our day? In what ways is the Holy Spirit leading Galilee Lutheran Church to be involved in this mission? What "languages" do we need to be able to speak in order to effectively communicate with people in our day?
3. One of the ways the early church witnessed to the power of God was to "hold all things in common", "sell their possessions and distribute the proceeds to all" in need, and spending much time in fellowship with one another, eating together "with glad and generous hearts" (2:43-47). How can the church make such a witness today?

Suggestions for prayer:

- Pray for those who are hungry around the world, so that no child shall go to bed hungry. Also pray for the food shelf and hot meal ministries in our local area (such as Loaves and Fishes), that those in need will be fed.
- Pray for Galilee's church council which will meet on Tuesday.