

## Foreword

Throughout the history of the church, Pentecost moments have often come at surprising times when the Spirit “moves like a wind,” bringing new vitality to the church and its mission in the world. In the United States, perhaps the most obvious example of a Pentecost moment was the Second Great Awakening. Following the Revolution, church attendance and membership plummeted, many congregations were scattered, and in some areas, church buildings lay in ashes. Enlightenment rationalism was championed by intellectual leaders, and infidelity seemed rampant among a people made dissolute by war and its aftermath. Political parties were bitterly divided, armed rebellion broke out, and President Washington called in the military to suppress the violence. At the same time, the enslavement of black men, women, and children, with it underlying racism, seemed an intractable economic system. At such a tumultuous and dispirited moment, the churches of the nation found what many believed was the Spirit of God moving among them, giving new faith, courage, and commitments. Without romanticizing the Awakening, many felt the Spirit moving in and among them bringing not only an amazing vitality and growth to the church in the U.S. but also reform movements of many kinds including abolitionism. Of course the consequences of the Awakening were not all salutary, and many social and cultural factors were at work in these developments, but the eyes of faith saw the Awakening as a Pentecost moment as God gave life and the gifts of the Spirit to the church.

So Pentecost Season, 2022, approaches us in these hard, tumultuous days, and we look and wonder if a Pentecost moment can come to the church in the US where many are dispirited, and many congregations are in disarray. We confess that God cannot be manipulated by our feast days and our solemn assemblies, by our many programs and clever techniques, but we also confess that God can be trusted and that the church and its life are God’s gift to us and in God’s keeping. And that trust allows us to find faith and courage stirring and to seek to discern where God is calling us and where God’s Spirit is moving ahead of us in the church and in the world around us.

This Pentecost issue of the *JP* is intended to help preachers in the discernment of the Spirit’s movement and in the proclamation of Good News in the midst our discouragements and infidelities. Discernment for the proclamation of the Gospel begins with serious engagement with the scriptures. In an opening essay, “Jubilee on the Way: Readings from Luke in the Season after Pentecost,” Mary Hinkle Shore takes us deep into the lectionary readings from Luke where “Jesus is found walking, talking, and eating.” Three essays follow that explore the challenges and opportunities of preaching to intergenerational congregations: Mark Ramsey’s “Igniting a Spiritual Blaze for All Our Generations”; Katie Nakamura Rengers’s “Deep Narratives: The Japanese Internment as an Intergenerational Story”; and Thomas Daniels’s “What I hear you saying is that the role of the preacher has changed from being the team’s star player to being a coach.” The next three essays propose entryways for announcing the Gospel in secular America: Bill Brown’s “The Fear of the Lord and the Politics of Awe”; Michael Pasquarello’s “Beauty as an Evangelical Invitation in Secular America”; and Cam Murchison’s “Before the Hills in Order Stood—And Afterwards.” Leigh Stuckey, Chris Henry, and Anna Carter Florence then offer faithful sermons that can inform and inspire those called to announce the good news today. Finally, two es-

says—one by Walter Brueggemann and one by me—look back over forty-five years of publishing the *Journal for Preachers*. The hope, of course, is that this backward look, at this transitional moment for the *JP*, will encourage us all to believe that God is not done with the preaching ministry of the church and that perhaps, in God's gracious providence, a Pentecost moment awaits the church in your time.

Erskine Clarke