

May 24, Pentecost A (Acts 2:1–21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b–13)

Have you ever tried to watch the wind? Good luck.

by [Brian Maas](#) in the [May 2026](#) issue

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Travelers driving west along Interstate 80 in Nebraska will find their attention grabbed by a large yellow sign just east of mile marker 291. By the side of the road a couple of hundred yards before a rise in the pavement, the sign warns, “Watch for wind on overpass.”

We know wind on the plains. It’s a near daily fact of life here. Its gusty dynamism has pumped countless millions of gallons of water for prairie dwellers and their livestock via windmills, the disappearing tin sentinels whose sleek white descendants now harness the wind’s same power to generate megawatts of electricity. And its fearsome might, hurled in straight line gusts and rotating vortices, can cause utter destruction in a matter of moments.

Those who drive that stretch of I-80 often enough can attest to the high-profile vehicles, even semi trucks, that have been toppled off that overpass. We know to be mindful of the wind and to respect its power.

But we also know better than to watch for it. Have you ever tried to watch the wind? Good luck. Seeing the wind is impossible. Recognizing its movement, on the other hand, is a piece of cake. Whether through trees’ leaves, a flag’s snap, a swirling cloud of dust, or the sense of its movement across one’s face, wind offers plenty of evidence of its passing.

The same seems to be true of the Holy Spirit, particularly in the Pentecost story from Acts. Though a tongue of flame rests on each believer, it is the cacophony of their multilingual proclamations of God’s deeds that provides evidence they’ve been filled by the Holy Spirit. The inspired breath that causes the laryngeal vibrations emanating in testimony is invisible, but the stories it carries are unmistakable evidence of its presence.

For some, that Spirit is a mighty gust of power, making things happen, generating energy, and bringing life. For others, it’s an ill breeze portending change, nervously dismissed as the collective boozy breath of those whom they accuse of tipping too early in the day.

Peter, hearing the sneers, holds up the bright yellow sign of the prophet Joel, proclaiming, “Watch for Spirit.” Not the Spirit herself but the evidence of her passing will make clear what’s happening: prophecy, visions, and dreams will break forth as unmistakable signs that God is present, inspiring awe and a call to repentance.

Like the unwary prairie traveler, those present who ignore the evidence of the Spirit in this scene may soon be among those whose world is upended, who experience a rapid, even destructive change to their world. But for those who recognize what’s truly happening, who heed Peter’s call to watch for it, the Spirit holds the potential to propel new courses and generate limitless energy for transformation. Approaching this change in their journey through life, their “What does this mean?” opens them to new life. It is a life already marked, in the wonder of the tongues, by a glimpse of the kingdom of God in which Babel’s curse is reversed. It is a life in which the Almighty’s intent is that unity, not division, be the final word. It is a life in which no one—neither aged nor youth, neither male nor female, neither slave nor free—will be excluded from the wonder of visions and dreams, from the assurance that the new telling of the old, old story includes all of them as well.

That same wind of the Spirit blows through Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. For all the challenges that letter addresses, for all the rivalries and behavioral challenges to which it responds—or perhaps because of them—Paul asserts that it is one single, unifying Spirit that is behind all of the varied gifts, services, and activities that are expressed among faithful believers.

In fact, it is that one Holy Spirit that alone enables diverse people to utter the unifying creed, “Jesus is Lord.” And that same Spirit can never be behind the cursing of Jesus that would break one off from the community of faith. It would seem the will of God, and the working of the Spirit, forever move toward reconciliation and reunification and ultimately toward community.

Potent, powerful, provocative, the Holy Spirit can never truly be seen, yet the evidence of her presence is unmistakable. And that evidence reflects the Spirit's united and unifying source. In a world in which the ancient enemy's art of division is supplemented by behavioral science-backed algorithms and AI-generated content, we have more reasons than ever to seek out evidence of that Spirit wherever we can find it. That dangerous dynamism may in the end be our greatest resource for true safety, perhaps even survival.

If you would have hope, fellow traveler, watch for this wind.