

WESLEY UNITING CHURCH, FORREST, ACT
SUNDAY, MAY 19TH, 2024
9:00am

PENTECOST



The three weeks of Ascension (last week), Pentecost and Trinity (next week), follow sequentially for good reason: they are connected. Ascension Sunday, when Jesus, leaves his followers with the Spirit, to have the freedom to get on with the job of renewal of the world, paints a picture of human beings as co-creators with God in shaping history:

Today, Pentecost Sunday, we continue this idea of human beings moving beyond themselves to “the more”, to become God’s creative partners in the world. In the ancient world characterized by tribalism, the vision of people hearing God speak across their tribal languages was unheard of. Language is one of the most concrete, tangible marks of difference between people, a mark that makes people unintelligible to each other. The experience of people hearing God in their own diverse languages, directly challenged the idea of a God who should reflect national or cultural, or group interest.

At Pentecost, the vision is romantic, broad and dramatic. To use the modern over-worked term, it is about inclusivity – but grounded in God, not in national, cultural or linguistic identity.

Bruce will be reflecting upon one particular gift of the Spirit: gratitude.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY AND SAFE CHURCH STATEMENT

LIGHTING THE CHRIST AND COMMUNITY CANDLES

GREETING

In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
The Lord be with you
And also with you.

WELCOMING SONG

Spirit, Lead Us
Paul Somerville (c) 2012

Fire of prophet, cool wisdom of sage.
Sacred encounters across every age.
Searching these pages, the journey goes on
into the beautiful mystery of God.

Spirit, lead us,
light up the truth in these tales we retell
Spirit, lead us,
as we become the next chapter ourselves.

CALL TO WORSHIP

From the Hebrew reading of Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones.

Pay attention. Can you hear it?
So many of us carry dry bones that clank around in our hearts.
Dreams that are dying.
Gifts that are languishing.
Hopes left undernourished and neglected.
Loneliness that eats away
at our sense of connection with one another
until we wonder:
Can these bones live?

Pay attention. Can you sense it?
 God is always putting us back together.
 In dreams of abundance and visions of cooperation,
 in the cacophony of voices
 who share and receive the good news in their own languages,
 the Spirit revives us and restores us, reminding us:
**These bones live, because Love dwells among us,
 now and always.**

Thanks be to God!

THE COLLECT

PRAYERS OF CONFESSION

God stuck her tongue out at the church
 and we grabbed hold of it,
 as if it were a swimming-pool noodle
 and before we knew it
 we were hearing things, speaking things
 we had never dreamed of or wondered about.

Welcome stranger, alien, outsider;
now you are called sister, brother, friend.
 Gather around asylum seeker, refugee, immigrants;
we hear your language, no-one shuns you here.

Dance your way through the door lost ones;
 and teach us your wild moves;
and we will teach you ours.

Stroll in you wounded souls and skins;
and let us wrap and kiss your pain to healing.

Make room, settled ones
 for the wave is surging;
and it will unsettle your closed-mouth silence.
 Silence

Let us confess beginning the first paragraph with the choir side of the church and then the pulpit side of the church.

**We confess to you, Renewing Spirit,
that we confuse unity with uniformity,
and diversity with divisiveness**

**We speak and behave as if being a part of your family
means assimilating others to our way of living.**

**We deny and destroy the beauty you created in each person.
We long to change these patterns, O Creator,
but we do not know how.**

**Teach us to value challenge.
Help us to see strength in difference.
And empower us to build your kingdom in creativity and love.
Amen.**

DECLARATION OF FORGIVENESS

Hear the good news!
God's Spirit has been poured out upon all flesh,
and we have been made one.
We are no longer scattered or divided,
but gathered together to build the kingdom here and now.
Thanks be to God!

THE PEACE

We share the peace with each other with the words; "The peace of the Lord be with you. And also with you". We do this with either our hands clasped together or our right hand on our hearts. Today we use Portuguese:

A paz de Senhor esteja convosco:
E também com você

SCRIPTURE

ALL AGE INTRODUCTION: Bruce**CHILDREN'S SONG, Live in the Spirit of Love
Ed Seabough (c) 1977**

Live in the spirit of love,
live in the spirit of love;
Love one another as Jesus loves you,
live in the spirit of love.

Serve in the spirit of love...

Go in the spirit of love...

The children will remain with us to help us build the banner in different languages.

The reading today will be read in numerous languages. The English is presented here for you to follow.

READING: ACTS 2:1-21

We celebrate the Day of Pentecost as the day of the coming of the Spirit because of Luke's symbolic history. He is celebrating the presence of the Spirit in the early Christian movement. He does so with a slight sense of humour, alluding to the phenomenon of speaking in tongues, which Paul also mentions, and gives it also a symbolic twist. It makes people sound like drunks to those who do not know what is going on. But to those who do know, here is a language miracle, which reverses the curse of the story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis. The 20th century theologian, Karl Barth, emphasizes Pentecost as the reversal of the Tower of Babel with great enthusiasm.

²When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors

from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. ¹⁸Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. ¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. ²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord - **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

THINKING TOGETHER: FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT – GRATITUDE: Bruce

BUILDING A BANNER: Brenda

PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Today we pray for the Indian Ocean islands: Comoros, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius and the Seychelles. We continue to pray for Gaza, Israel, Ukraine and Russia. At the end of each prayer/petition with the words, ***Lord Christ, hear our prayers.***

OFFERING SONG

Our Help

Dave Fournier, George Romanacce, and Nathan Stiff (c) 2015

1. Jesus, when you left, you didn't leave us on our own.
 You said you'd send your Spirit so we'd never be alone.
 A guide on this adventure to help us grow in holiness,
 a true and living compass who leads us to what's best.

Chorus:

*Our help! to understand your word,
Our help! who gives us strength to serve,
Our help! So we can love you more,
we need your Holy Spirit, Lord.*

2. Your Spirit lives inside and he points us to your truth,
shining like a flashlight, revealing more of you.
He fills us with your love, Lord, and he's come to guarantee
that God is always with us and he will always be...

Chorus (x2)

LEAVING

LEAVING SONG

Like a Candle

Tim Beale and Roger Imms, words by Craig Mitchell (c) 1996

1. Like a candle burning wildly,
raging soft against the night,
spark that leaps to clear the shadows,
sending warm, disturbing light.
We are called to live the passion.
Hope stands strong against all pain.
For it's only in the burning
that the candle shows its flame.

2. Like a river running freely,
rapids swirl beside our feet,
swiftly flowing from the highland,
comes to rest, still waters meet.
All our journeys rising, falling,
making turns we least expect,
when the Spirit churns within us,
know God's power through the test.

3. Like an angel walking lightly
on this fragile earth of clay,
touching folk with raw compassion
laughing, playing on the way.

Freely living every moment
 in the mystery of grace.
 Giving, dying, living, rising-
 see the beauty of God's face.

4. See the hope that burns in darkness,
 show compassion strong and kind,
 bind the hurt and broken-hearted,
 be God's hands and voice and eyes.
 Sing a new song every sunrise,
 climb to places out of reach,
 walk in freedom in God's Spirit,
 as we die so we shall live.

We are called to live the passion.
 Hope stands strong against all pain.
 For it's only in the burning
 that the candle shows its flame.

BLESSING

Go out into the world,
 Dream dreams, pursue visions
 and speak of God's goodness.
 And may the God who breathed life into creation be your delight.
 May Christ Jesus give hope to your dreaming,
 and may the Holy Spirit, your advocate and supporter,
 breathe life into your being.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ

Our service has ended.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

In the name of Christ