



St. Andrew's United Church of Christ

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PENTECOST SUNDAY

May 31, 2020

10:00 A.M.



Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings on this Day of Pentecost! Normally I would have asked that you wear something red today, which is the liturgical color for Pentecost, but that's not happening this Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost simply means "fifty." In the Old Testament, the people of Israel celebrated the Feast of Weeks, 50 days after Passover; fifty days after the resurrection; and the beginning of the church celebrates the gift of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of church.

Pentecost marks the end of the whole season of the resurrection celebration and the beginning (or re-energizing) of the Spirit-led, day-to-day, rubber-meets-the-road-of-ministry. I trust that the Holy Spirit is leading and guiding St. Andrew's through this desert of uncertainty and change.

Thank you again for your prayerful and financial support. Both are encouraging affirmations and making a big difference.

Peace and Prayers

In Christ,

Pastor Bigelow

Silent Prayer for the Beginning of Worship — Eternal and gracious God, during this time of worship, send your Holy Spirit upon us to open our hearts and minds to new insight and wisdom. May our relationship with Jesus Christ be renewed and deepened so that we may grow in discipleship with new wills that give expression to our faith. In the precious name of Jesus, we pray, Amen.

WE GATHER TO WORSHIP THE TRIUNE GOD

CALL TO WORSHIP

May our lives profess and proclaim that “our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth.” (Psalm 124:8)

Amen!

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. (Acts 2:1-3)

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. (Acts 2:4)

The Spirit came upon God’s people that first Pentecost and the Spirit continues to empower all who love Christ and seek to be like Jesus.

We want to act, think, talk and love like Jesus. We are Christians; we wear his name. But being like Jesus is impossible for us to accomplish by ourselves. That is why the Spirit came.

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit began helping people to look more like Jesus. The connection between Jesus and human beings was established and the power started to flow from our Lord to us. Beginning with the disciples in the upper room and flowing out to 3,000 people, the Spirit began to transform sinner human beings into people who want to be like Jesus. Little Jesuses, Little Christs, Christians!!!

We want to be like Jesus! Let us worship the Triune God and become alive in the Spirit!

SALUTATION

Grace, mercy and peace be yours in abundance from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen!

GATHERING HYMN [*More Like You*](#)

OPENING PRAYER

God of power, as we worship, may the boldness of your Spirit transform us; the gentleness of your Spirit leads us; and may the gifts of your Spirit be our goal and strength now and always. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

WE ARE RENEWED BY THE SPIRIT

CALL TO CONFESSION and PRAYER OF CONFESSION

God, we praise and thank you for saving us from our sin and for sending your Holy Spirit to live in us. Yet we also acknowledge that we do not always follow the leading of your Spirit. Forgive us for slipping back into old ways, for seeking to bring glory to ourselves rather than you, for tearing others down instead of building them up, and for trusting in our own work rather than trusting in your providence.

(silent reflection)

Forgive us and change us. Help us to push away our sinful tendencies and instead listen to your Spirit. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE AND FORGIVENESS

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish, but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.”

(John 3:16,17)

Believe this Gospel and go forth and live in peace.

GOD'S DIRECTION FOR OUR LIVES

Micah 6:8

SCRIPTURAL PICTURES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This week's Bible Lesson and Sermon will offer a different format, picturing different descriptions of the Holy Spirit. A variety of scriptures have been provided with an opportunity to reflect on a dimension of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit Comes as God's Breath

Old Testament – Genesis 2:7; Exodus 15:8-10

New Testament – John 20:19-23

Reflection: Take five deep breaths, breathe in deeply and exhale slowly. Do you feel yourself breathing? Now think of the passages. How do you think breath and breathing relate to God and the Work of the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit Comes as Fire

New Testament – Acts 2:3; Romans 12:1

Reflection: What images do you have of fire? Are they calming or frightening images? Could it be a campfire with friends or watching a forest fire? The Romans' texts seem to hint at sacrifice. What of the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit Comes as Wind

New Testament – John 3:8; Acts 2:2

Reflection: One cannot see wind, but we can observe the influences of wind. There are gentle breezes bringing refreshments and winds that have destructive power like a tornado or hurricane. How does wind describe the work of God and the Holy Spirit?

The Spirit Comes as Unity

Old Testament – Genesis 11:1-9

New Testament – Acts 2:1-13

Reflection: The Genesis passage speaks of the breakdown and confusion of language and people not understanding one another. How does the Acts' passage counter act what happens with the Tower of Babel? Describe the work of the Holy Spirit.

HYMN OF RESPONSE [*Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart*](#)

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH – THE APOSTLES' CREED

Christ has died,

Christ is risen,

Christ will come again.

WE GO FORTH TO REVEAL JESUS CHRIST IN THE WORLD

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING AND INTERCESSION

Energizing God, we give you thanks for this day of Pentecost, for the gift of the Holy Spirit and the promise of new beginnings.

In spite of these times, we ask God that your Holy Spirit will breathe new life and new enthusiasm into your church that gives fresh air that only the Spirit can give. May the fire of our faith not be damped by changes that are rapidly taking place, but rather re-kindled anew by the flame of your Spirit to inspire our church and our lives.

We gather our prayers now for those who are near and dear to us; and for those loved ones that are near in our hearts, but in faraway places. We remember those who are burned with illness, those who worry about finances and employment, those who are crushed by oppression and perplexed about the direction of their lives.

We give thanks and pray for all those who are involved in bringing food to our tables. From the farmers who work long and hard, but are running into powers and barriers that are far from their control; to the people stocking shelves and checking-out our groceries. Let us not take these people for granted today.

The St. Andrew's Prayer list includes more specific needs. Please continue this prayer by offering your thoughts and prayers for them.

We pray this in Jesus' name, who taught us to pray:

***Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.***

PARTING HYMN [*Spirit of the Living God*](#)

BENEDICTION

May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so. That you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit! (Romans 15:13)

AMEN!