

Welcome, Announcements, and Land Acknowledgement

As we come to worship in Jesus' name we acknowledge with gratitude and respect the Lkwungen people – the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ – on whose traditional and unceded territory we gather. We commit ourselves to just and respectful relationships within our congregation and our neighborhood.

Celebrations / Joys and Concerns

*God's blessing on you. God's blessing on you.
God's blessing, dear friends. God's blessing on you.*

➤ *Don't be afraid (repeat)*

Call to Worship (Psalm 104:24-34, 35b)

O LORD, how manifold are your works!

In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

**Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there,
living things both small and great.**

There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

**These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them,
they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.**

When you hide your face, they are dismayed;
when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works--
who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

Bless the LORD, O my soul. Praise the LORD!

Gathering Prayer and Words of Hope

O Triune God, your call has gone out into the world, and all have heard. All people, all creatures, all things seen and unseen, have heard for there is no language, where you cannot be heard. And together all the world wells up in Hallelujahs.

You have called us by grace, to come together and worship you. Though there are many things that would steal our worship, we gather in praise of you, our Creator. For you alone are true goodness. You alone are faithfulness. You alone are mercy and grace. We know this because

you have sent us your Son, Jesus Christ, who was born and grew up, who taught and listened, who served and suffered and who died and rose again so that we too, can know that life triumphs over death.

We know your goodness O Triune God, for Holy Spirit is here, bidding us come and learn and consider all that have for us. Spirit gather us, enlighten us, challenge us as you transform our minds ... our hearts ... our wills. Holy Spirit will us to be one church, holy and apostolic. Equip us and send us that all may know that you are good.

Holy Trinity, even as we pray, we consider our lives; we examine our actions and words. Please forgive us for the times we have spoken words that have brought division, or doubt or have expressed hatred or intolerance. Instead, Holy Spirit fill us with words of life and unity and compassion. Give us words of encouragement and of faith, that we might, in every season express your gospel light to the world.

In examining our actions O God, we realize that we often hide from opportunities to stretch our faith into action and to be servants in your vineyard. Prune from us, the branches of indifference and fear, so that prayer, service and generosity may blossom in their place. O Holy Trinity, may you help us to be bold and tireless in our service to our neighbours, so that whatever has divided us may be trimmed away and in its place, holiness may flourish in beauty and strength.

We pray by the Spirit, O God, and trusting in the name of Jesus, we are certain that you hear our prayers. **Amen!**

Pentecost is the day that we see grace at work. For at Pentecost, we see that indeed God does not choose to call only those who listen for God, but to those who weren't expecting to hear from God. God is driven to gather all the Creation, and each of us is invited. Friends in Christ, hear the Good News, God has heard our good confession and in Christ we are forgiven and by the resurrection, we are given life eternal. In this new life, together with the gifts of the Spirit, we are given good purpose and work under heaven.

Friends in Christ, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen

➤ *Let every Christian pray*

283

† Prayer for Understanding

Living God, you have created all that is. Send forth your Spirit to renew and restore us, that we may proclaim your good news in ways and words that all will understand and believe. Amen.

Scripture Acts 2:1-21 [NT 119)

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs--in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"

But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." But 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.

Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

'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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And 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. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Message

I remember the first time my Mom took me driving. It was a liberating experience. She took me to a local mall and we drove around the parking lot. I went this way and that way. Turned left, turned right, went straight and weaved around the light standards. After a while, I stopped. I am sure I looked pleased with myself, that I didn't hit anything.

My Mom looked at me and said: "That was good, now do you think you would be able to drive between the lines?"

As we read this story and reflect on the passage it is important to remember that at this point in time the global Christian Church consists of the one congregation in Jerusalem. This church is made up of the 11 remaining disciples, the women who followed Jesus such as Mary and Martha, Suzanna, Silome and Mary, Jesus 'mother. In addition, there may have been the likes of Nichodemus, the pharisee who approached Jesus only in the shadow of night, Simon Cyrene, who helped Jesus carry the cross. Perhaps many of the others to whom the risen Jesus had appeared before he ascended and returned to the Father, were also there.

In total there may have been several hundred, meeting secretly to renew their faith and await the return of Jesus.

The church universal was this: the congregation in Jerusalem. And as far as they knew, it might always be that way.

The harvest thanksgiving festival was coming and so Jewish people from around the Mediterranean would be coming to Jerusalem to offer their gifts at the temple.

The harvest thanksgiving celebration was called Pentecost because it occurred 50 days after the Passover for the Jewish people or Easter, for these new Christians.

But something happened at this Pentecost celebration.

God sent the Holy Spirit, in power, to the Christians in Jerusalem. And just like a dove, the Church at Jerusalem began to spread its wings.

We Christians celebrate Pentecost because God sent the Holy Spirit upon the church and all those travelers to Jerusalem. It became for us, not a celebration of the agricultural harvest, but of the great harvest of faith, mission and evangelism.

The church became something new that day.

You may have heard it said that Pentecost Sunday is the day we celebrate the birth of the church. Some people consider Pentecost to be the Birthday of the church.

But I wonder if "birthday" is, in fact, the best life-cycle event to describe what is happening to the church at Pentecost.

After all what do we all do on our actual day of our birth?

We cry, we eat, we fill diapers.

We aren't in control of anything. We are fairly passive and completely reliant on others for the basics.

So while the idea of being completely reliant upon the Spirit, speaks of a birthday, it fails to describe the power and activity that is breathed into the church after they receive the Spirit of God.

So maybe Pentecost is better understood as the graduation celebration for the church: The day the church graduated from being passive followers to active disciples.

Or better yet, maybe Pentecost is the day the church got its driver's license? Pentecost is the day disciples become the drivers of the church. They will set its course and direction.

The disciples 'have this ministry', left to them by Christ. Despite human frailties and many mistakes throughout history, we, who are the church 'still have this ministry' today. Like them we depend on the Holy Spirit, but we are the drivers.

We make the decisions, we make the mistakes, we make the right turns and sometimes we take detours, sometimes we get lost.

The reason we still have this ministry is because we are guided by the stories of our faith contained in the word of God. We tell these stories and therefore we drive the gospel forward into the world and from generation to generation, always encouraged by the Holy Spirit.

We "drive" the gospel forward.

We've been licensed to 'chauffeur' the gospel with our daily living.

How does our text this morning help us to be the drivers?

The first way the text speaks to us is to remind us that the gospel and our faith in the gospel are more than our own personal property.

The Holy Spirit led the church in Jerusalem to their first discovery as the church of Christ: that faith is to be shared outwardly, not contained inwardly.

I remember the first time I drove by myself. I wasn't going far, only about 3Kms, to the nearest mall. It was exciting, I was in control of the road!

I soon discovered, however, that the road belongs to all of us -all the cars on the road. My ability to get where I needed to go was as dependent on the drivers around me as it was on my own driving. I also realized I was part of their safe journeys to their destinations.

Likewise, when we drive the gospel we don't just drive our own faith, we drive our neighbours' faith with us and they drive us. We can't live the gospel in secret -we our out on the roads together -traveling to the same destination -together.

Before Pentecost, the disciples had been a pretty isolated lot, in terms of their mindset. Meeting only in private, thinking perhaps that they were only supposed to be waiting out their days. They didn't venture out into the world to share the Good News.

After Pentecost the church in Jerusalem was given the opportunity to share the gospel with all the known world. They were given command of the foreign languages, they were convinced that the gospel must be shared with others.

While speaking the multitude of languages -the disciples discovered that being the church was much more than just the local gathering of people -more than being comfortable knowing Jesus

Christ as a friend and saviour; they became aware that they needed to make other people 'drivers' of the gospel also.

In the space of a few days, the church became a multinational, multilingual, multiethnic organism that very day.

The church became a public organism rather than a private one. They went from seeing themselves as passengers on a private coach to an active bunch licensed drivers of the gospel.

This was the first lesson for the church at Pentecost: We are all drivers”.

What else did those first Pentecostal Christians discover?

They discovered that people wanted to hear the gospel.

Yes, some made fun of them - accusing them of drinking alcohol in the morning, but many more accepted what the church had to say about Christ.

At the end of this chapter the story claims that 3000 people were baptized in the first few days after Pentecost.

The gospel appealed to people.

It made sense to people.

I think we believe sometimes that this is no longer the case. That everybody has heard the gospel story and either already accepted it or rejected it.

But this isn't true.

Today many of our neighbours may never have heard of the gospel.

I remember a friend of mine, when I worked at the Keg, was explaining the Easter story to some other coworkers. They literally had blank stares on their faces and wondered what Jesus and the empty tomb had to do with the Easter bunny?

They had never heard of the gospel.

I just read this week of a woman who grew up in church in Quebec during the 1960's, but never understood what it was all about. It wasn't until she was an adult that she heard Billy Graham speak and suddenly God became known to her and church became more than an obligation.

Sometimes people need to hear the gospel again for the first time and in new ways -this is that pentecostal spirit -the retelling of the story -in new ways.

Have you ever been driving a vehicle and become conscious that you have been driving like a passenger?

It can be scary.

Sometimes when we are drivers we get too comfortable in our driving habits -we barely see the signs that help us and that are posted along our regular routes- we become almost like passengers: -listening to music or making lists in our heads -thinking of all the things we haven't done on our lists -we become passengers even when we are supposed to be the drivers.

We become habituated drivers. Habituated drivers ride like passengers -until a deer runs across the road, or a police car flashes its lights, or a another driver reminds us that we are not focused enough on being the driver.

I think today the church has reverted a bit to being habituated drivers. We are often passengers. We haven't always been good at driving home the gospel in faithful, new ways -new ways by which people can hear afresh God's love letter addressed to them and delivered by the pierced hands and feet of Jesus, God's own mailman.

There are people who are anxious to hear the Good News again, for the first time.

We are all drivers. We chauffeur the Good News to the world believing there are people who desperately want to hear it.

One last thing we can learn from the church of the first Pentecost!

They were excited! They were on fire! Flames dancing on their heads -Fire meaning the presence of God.

Remember the story of Moses hearing the voice of God out of the burning bush. That's what we're meant to think of here. The Christian is given license to be the very voice of God -preaching always Good News.

We are licensed to preach the Good News with excitement.

Take out your own Driver's License if you have one with you. Take it out and have a good look at it.

I know some of you have had to give up your licenses and you know firsthand the restriction of freedom that brings. You know better than I, that it is a privilege not to be taken for granted.

But for those of you who have a license, take it out and look at it.

Try to remember when that little piece of plastic was your license to freedom and independence. Try to remember when you would take it out and look at it with excitement. When you first got it, you might have taken it out, looked at your picture and smiled to yourself knowing that you had finally arrived, you were now a driver too.

You could be the one to pick up your friends and take them to the mall or the movies or whatever. You were a driver. But after a while the license becomes just another card.

Really, now the only time you probably take your license out of your wallet is when you have to pay to renew it, pay a fine, or use it as identification to pay for some other identification.

Sometimes your license feels like a burden when you have to get it renewed on a Friday at 3 o'clock before you can get home for the weekend.

But remember when it was new... Remember when it was your license to freedom... This is what Pentecost is meant to do for the church, to renew that first excitement at being licensed for the gospel. That is what Pentecost means to the church... the Spirit sets us free to live and drive the gospel life. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

Look at your license... It has your picture on it... Likewise you are the face of the Gospel of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Smile! You are free! Amen

➤ *O holy Dove of God descending* 392

† Offering Invitation

O Holy Spirit, lead us to give with thanksgiving, not only these first fruits of our labours but even our whole selves, mind, body and spirit, in joyful obedience to you, O Triune God.

➤ *Praise God from whom all blessings flow* 306

† Offering Prayer

Grant O God, that, gathered and directed by your Spirit, we may confess Christ as Lord, with every word and in every action, and combine our diverse and unique gifts, even these first fruits of our labours, with a singular passion to continue Christ's mission in this world until we join together in your eternal presence, with songs of praise. Amen

Vine and Branches¹ - an affirmation of faith

We believe in God, the Root of all living, Creator of all things.

We live in Christ Jesus, God's Son, who loved all people and who makes us one in his love. He suffered, died and was raised to new life. In his death and resurrection, we are also raised to life that is transformed. Christ is our Vine, and we are his branches; and without him we cannot live.

We live by the Holy Spirit, flowing through us so that we may bear fruit for God, the fruit of love. In the Spirit we are one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world.

We trust in the one holy church, the communing of saints, the forgiveness of sin, the mystery of resurrection, and the grace of eternal life.

Gathering at the Lord's Table

For those who need, the bread waits. For those who long, the wine lingers.

For those seeking transformation, the table beckons.

All are invited... not because we have faith, but because we trust;

¹ Methodist – General Board of Discipleship

not because we understand, but because we long;
not because we know, but because we are loved;
not because we are well, but because we know our need.

The table waits, and heaven's host calls. Our place is here.
Come now to the table of our Lord.

➤ *Jesus calls us here to meet him*

528

God be with you.

And also, with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to God.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is good to give God thanks and praise...

Gracious God, we praise your holy name, giving thanks with our lips and our lives...For the power and mystery of your Word by which you created us and called us to yourself, we give you thanks. For the power and mystery of your Word by which you took flesh and lived among us through your Son, Jesus Christ, we give you thanks. ...Therefore, with all your faithful people from every time and place we join with the whole creation to lift our hearts in joyful praise...

O holy, holy, holy God, O God of time and space. All earth and sea and sky above bear witness to your grace. Hosanna in the highest heav'n, creation sings your praise. And blessed is the one who comes and bears your name always!

Faithful God, we offer you our praise and thanks as we return to you these holy gifts of bread and wine...Remembering that on the night of his arrest Jesus sat down to eat with friends. During the meal, he took the bread, said a prayer, broke it and shared it with everyone at the table, saying: **"This is my body which is for you. Do this to remember me."**

At the end of the meal, he took a cup of wine and raised it, saying: **"This is God's new covenant, made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me."**

We ponder, O God, the mystery of his promise that in this meal we are joined to him and to one another as a holy people. We offer you our praise and thanks for Jesus, who took flesh and lived among us, was baptized for our sins, taught us your way of truth, loved us in our lovelessness and died that we may have life. ...We celebrate with great joy the resurrection of Jesus, his presence with us in this feast, and his promise of a new creation as we affirm the mystery of faith:

Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again! Sing Christ has died and Christ is risen, Christ will come again!

God of grace and power, you invite us to share in mysteries that are beyond our understanding...
...in simple trust we seek the transforming power of your Spirit us and upon this bread and wine.

By the miracle of your grace may they be for us your body – vibrant with your life, renewing and making us whole. And as the bread and wine which we now eat and drink are changed into us, may we be changed again into you – bone of your bone – flesh of your flesh, ...loving and caring in the world.

In Christ, with Christ, through Christ – by the power of the Holy Spirit – all glory is yours, now and forever and so we sing...

Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen! Amen, amen, O Holy One! Hosanna and amen!

Sharing Bread and Wine

The one who breathed on the first disciples is present for us in this bread.

The one whose Spirit stirred the Church at Pentecost revives us in this cup.

The bread of life – the cup of grace – we remember and share with thanksgiving these gifts in which God comes to us so that we may come to God.

Those in person have received a pre-sealed communion package. Everyone consumes the elements together in their own space...

† Prayer after Communion

We have come to the table with nothing but our faith, yet we leave filled with visions of heaven and offerings of thanksgiving for the world. As we leave, filled in spirit, may our hearts pour out over the world. As we have shared a meal, may we share whatever we have with others. As we have been filled with you, O Holy Spirit, continue to pour through us as we serve the world in simple ways: May we weep, with those who weep. May we laugh with those who laugh. May we listen to those who do not feel heard. May we speak encouragement to those who need a blessing. May we share an embrace with the one who needs connection. Take our lives, O God, and share us with your world, that we may be Living Sacrifices and a royal priesthood, offering acts of devotion, sacrifice and thanksgiving with the world. As we rise from the table, Lord, you go before us. Give us ears to hear and eyes to see where you will lead us. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus, who taught us to pray together singing:

➤ ***Our Father in heaven (The Lord's Prayer – no repeats)*** **469**

Blessing

➤ ***Sing amen*** **264**