

Worship at home  
May 23, 2021

*Pentecost Sunday*



<https://godspacelight.com/2014/05/26/resources-for-pentecost-2014/>

**God calls us to worship:**

And because you are children of God, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'<sup>1</sup>

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,  
Forever and ever. Amen.

**We bring our praise and confessions:**

God of power and possibility,  
With the flame of your Spirit, you give us energy  
to move into the world in Jesus' name.  
With the breath of your Spirit, you refresh us  
to engage life in its complexity.  
Your Spirit embraces us in our diversity  
and invites us to find unity in your love.  
We honour you for the gift of creation in all its beauty and bounty.

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 4:6

We praise you for your presence with us in every time and place.  
In this time of worship, awaken us once again to you, Holy Spirit,  
and renew us to serve you in the world,  
the world that aches for the healing and wholeness you offer  
through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

God of mystery and mercy,  
We confess that we have not always paid attention to the urging of your Spirit,  
calling us to follow your will and your way.  
Too often we claim to belong to Jesus,  
but choose instead to ignore his teaching.  
You created us to love you and one another,  
but we fail to offer your love in ways consistent with you.  
Stir in our hearts and in our lives.  
Transform who we are,  
and direct who we shall become through Christ's redeeming love.

**God assures us of his forgiveness:**

This faithful saying is worthy of our trust and acceptance: "In Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Be at peace with God, with yourself and with one another. Thanks be to God for God's steadfast love and mercy!"

**In response to the gospel,  
we confess our faith and offer our lives and resources:**

I believe in God,  
the Father Almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried,  
he descended to the dead.  
On the third day he rose again;  
he ascended into heaven,  
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,  
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

*If you are a member or adherent of either of the Moore Presbyterian congregations, please remember to submit your offering to the appropriate treasurer. For contact information, speak with Rev. Ian.*

**Hymn:** #507 “Break now the bread of life”

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN9x8\\_F32sU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN9x8_F32sU)

(Everingham music)

**God speaks to us through his Word:**

READ: ACTS 1:6-8; 2:1-11

ROMANS 8:18-27

JOHN 15:26-27; 16:12-15

1. The history of Christian missionary activity is peppered with stories of grace and kindness, and stories of harm. One of the legacies of the residential schools of which the Presbyterian Church in Canada played an active part was the loss of language and culture of Indigenous children and thus their children and grandchildren. We assumed that to know God through Jesus Christ they needed to learn English or French and adopt the ways of the European settlers. So, we forced the students to forget their native languages and adopt ours.

In the words of the Confession of the Presbyterian Church in Canada of 1994,

*The Church said of our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, ‘If they could be like us, if they could think like us, talk like us, worship like us, sing like us, and work like us, they would know God and therefore would have life abundant.’ ... we have demanded more of the Aboriginal people than the Gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ...*

We should have read Acts 2.

*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. ... 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? ... **in our own languages** we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.”<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Acts 2:4-11

Today is Pentecost Sunday. Pentecost is a Jewish celebration held on the 50<sup>th</sup> day after the Sabbath of Passover. 49 days plus a day. A week of weeks. Pentecost is also called the Feast of Weeks. The number is significant.

Tradition holds that the Covenantal Law was given to Moses on Mt. Sinai seven weeks after the Lord God passed-over the Israelites and freed them from slavery in Egypt. As the Israelites left Egypt and travelled through the desert, the Lord God began to shape them into a worshipping community. Holy to the Lord. When they arrived at Mt. Sinai and were given the Law, God's plan of redemption was completed. The community had been liberated from the forces opposed to Yahweh, and now were given the instructions by which they could shape their communal life in such a way as to be a living testimony to the presence, the mercy, and the sovereignty of the Living yet invisible God.

Passover – Pentecost.

Freedom – Community.

A week of weeks.

Perfect perfection.

The disciples were in Jerusalem celebrating the gift of the Law. This particular year, the feast was shaded by the events of the past week of weeks. The day before the Sabbath of Passover, Jesus was crucified. The day after, he was resurrected thus bringing a whole new and fuller significance to the Passover celebrations. Forty days later while everyone celebrated the Law and the formation of the holy, worshipping, and witnessing community, the band of disciples were overcome by the awareness and the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the extra-ordinary events of this day was that the disciples found themselves suddenly talking in different languages. This wasn't the speaking in tongues of which Paul spoke that requires an interpreter (a Spiritual gift in its own right), this was such that, regardless of their native language, everyone who heard the disciples understood what they were saying!

*...in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.<sup>3</sup>*

Equipped with this ability, the disciples, of whom Peter was their spokesperson, began telling the crowds about Jesus in language they could understand. Who he was. Why he was here. And what he had done.

**2.** That is the simple purpose of the church as a holy, worshipping community and of individual Christians – as people who have been passed-over and freed from the grip of sin, death, and the devil. Jesus isn't here. The kingdom of God isn't obvious to the naked eye.

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*Those who are Christians, who are citizens in this kingdom of God, who are image-bearers of the Creating God, who are children of the Father by adoption or covenant, are to bear witness, to testify, to reveal the truth of who Jesus is, of what he has done, of what he is doing, and of what he is going to do.*

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This is what it means to glorify something. It means, to expose the truth of the person, place, or thing.

If I am in a darkened room, and I pick up an object, I can guess what it might be based on hardness, texture, length, weight, etc. And, I might be partially right. But until I turn the light on, I won't see it for what it truly is.

The Christian's job is to reveal the truth of the Son of God, Jesus, the Messiah.

And to do so in a way that is consistent with who he is.

That was the task of the Israelites: to reveal the truth of Yahweh. The Law, celebrated at Pentecost, is God's instructions for forming a community of disciples that does just that – that reveals the truth of Yahweh in a way that is consistent with this truth.

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<sup>3</sup> Acts 2:11

Likewise, the Holy Spirit, celebrated at Pentecost, helps us understand and live out the Word of God so that, as individual disciples, and as the church, we bear witness of the truth of Jesus in the way that is consistent with this truth.

The Holy Spirit testifies to us through the Scriptures and through the inner groanings of our souls, so that we can then testify to others.

In addition to the feast of Pentecost, today is the Sunday designated by the Presbyterian Church in Canada as “Healing and Reconciliation Sunday.”

What we have learned through the truth and reconciliation process with the Indigenous communities, particularly in relation to the residential school system and colonialization more generally, is that the church in Canada has, largely – not universally – but largely, failed to testify to the truth of Jesus in a way that is consistent with that truth.

*We have demanded more of the Aboriginal people than the Gospel requires, and have thus misrepresented Jesus Christ.*

Today is also the second Pentecost we’ve celebrated in the context of a pandemic.

It is an opportunity to consider how we have lived by the Spirit and testified to the truth of Jesus in years past *and* during the past months of lockdown and isolation in our homes, at work, at school, and even in the privacy of our own hearts and minds.

We are called to represent Jesus Christ in our thought patterns, in the words we use, in our body language, in our actions, and in our reactions to emotional stimuli. And, we are called to do so in ways that are consistent with the Jesus revealed for us in the Law, the Word of God.

I would suggest (and hope) that the vast majority of Christians would agree with this statement. I am sure that most missionaries past and present have sought to faithfully reveal the truth of Jesus in ways consistent with Jesus.

But there are times we get it wrong. Because, despite our arrogance, we are not Jesus, “we do not know how to pray as we ought.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Romans 8:26

When you add our pandemic-inspired sufferings to the pre-existing sufferings of the world; be it trauma from past abuses, ongoing injustices, personal turmoil, addictions, sickness, or ecological devastation it is very easy to give in to despair. It seems that not only we as individuals but all of creation groans inwardly and outwardly as it waits for healing, for redemption, for peace.

And Paul had the audacity to write in his letter to the Roman Christians that

*...the sufferings of this present time are **not worth** comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.<sup>5</sup>*

The Holy Spirit, speaking through Scriptures and by the inward groanings of our souls, guides us into all the truth<sup>6</sup> if we are willing to wait with humility, holy curiosity, compassion, faith, and patience.

The Holy Spirit is also our assurance that God's plan of assurance is, in some sense, completed:

The Passover sacrifice has been made.

Sin is forgiven.

The power of death and the devil has been broken.

And, Pentecost has happened.

The Law has been given.

The Holy Spirit will teach us to use the Law to form the holy, worshipping community of Christ's representatives on earth.

There are still wrinkles to be ironed out. But the end is not in doubt.

*...the sufferings of this present time are **not worth** comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.<sup>7</sup>*

As we learn to testify to Jesus in ways consistent with who he is through our thoughts, words, body language, and actions, we need to learn to live his Word, relying on the Holy Spirit to guide our thoughts, to assure and calm our hearts, and to make our prayers their own as the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. Amen.

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 8:18.13

<sup>6</sup> John 16:13

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8:18.13

**Hymn #382** “Spirit of God, descend upon my heart”  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiQ\\_R-s6hoo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QiQ_R-s6hoo)  
(Tapestry Chamber Singers)

**We respond with faith and service:**

Holy Spirit, stir our hearts and minds  
on this day of Pentecost:  
renew our faith.

Re-awaken our love for you, together with the Father and the Precious Son.  
Let your flames warm our hearts with trust in Jesus Christ  
and dare us to do great things in his name.

Heavenly Father,  
“Help us to come today in a spirit of humility  
as we pray for healing and reconciliation  
Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and the world.

Help us to listen,  
and break open our hearts in love,  
that we might receive and care for each other well;  
remembering before you the children and the experiences  
of all who attended the Indian Residential Schools  
and the impact their absence had and continues to have on their families and  
communities.

We pray, O God,  
for the Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls.

We pray for Canada and for your church, our own communities, and the places we live.  
Help us to grow in new understandings of our past,  
not that we might be superior to those who have gone before us,  
but that we might be led in ways that value life,  
and healing,  
and wholeness.”<sup>8</sup>

Holy Spirit give us understanding  
for all those whose lives seem so different from ours  
(*Hold a brief silence*)

For those facing situations we’ve never encountered  
(*Hold a brief silence*)

For those with whom we’ve disagreed  
(*Hold a brief silence*)

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<sup>8</sup> Rev. Dr. Karen Dimock.



For problems and challenges we face at home, at work,  
and in the world still struggling with the effects of the pandemic  
(*Hold a longer silence*)

Lord, Jesus, the Christ, bring healing  
for all who face pain or illness, discouragement or disappointment  
(*Hold a brief silence*)

For all who know sorrow, sadness or grief  
(*Hold a brief silence*)

For those who face stress and pressure,  
especially as they recover from the impact of the pandemic  
(*Hold a longer silence*)

Bring us the compassion we see in Christ Jesus.  
Equip us to serve the world you love in his name.  
Refresh us as your faithful followers  
as together, we pray the words he taught us:

### **The Lord's Prayer**

**Hymn:** #284 "Revive your work, O Lord"  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bh2Qgvtrgvo>  
(Gary Brumley)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q1-UaI8akMA>  
(HymnSing)

**God sends us with His blessing:**  
The Lord bless you and keep you,  
the Lord be kind and gracious to you,  
the Lord look upon you with favour,  
and grant you peace. Amen.