

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 12th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Jesus is Still Working
Second Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:1-11

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, let us lift our eyes from what is fleeting to the One who is eternal.
We come to worship the living God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Lord is near to all who call on Him in truth.
We draw near with reverence, with joy, and with hope.

Not by our strength, nor by our cleverness, but by God's mercy we stand.
We come dependent, expectant, and grateful.

Let every heart be awakened; let every voice be raised.
Let us worship God with all that is within us.

The Lord is worthy of all praise.
We will bless His name together—now and always.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty and everlasting God,
we adore You as the sovereign Creator and Redeemer of all things.
You are holy, majestic, and full of compassion; worthy of all honor, power, and praise.
We call upon Your gracious presence now, asking that by Your Holy Spirit You would draw near to us, illumine our minds, warm our hearts, and unite us as one body in worship.
Open our eyes to behold Your beauty and our lives to respond in faithful obedience.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

Brothers and sisters, the God we worship is holy, and His love is pure. In His light we see ourselves truly—not to be crushed, but to be healed. Let us come honestly before the Lord, confessing our sins, trusting that He is merciful and ready to forgive.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious Lord,

we confess that we often live as though
 You are no longer actively at work in the world.
 We make decisions without prayer,
 and we step into our days relying on our own experience and strength.
 We grow impatient in seasons of waiting,
 tempted to take control and move ahead of You.
 Forgive us for the times we have remained silent
 about the most important truth in the world.
 Pardon our self-reliance,
 and teach us to depend fully on Your Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news:
 Christ has ascended, the work of atonement is finished,
 and the King is now enthroned at the right hand of the Father.
 The Lord offers free forgiveness to all who humbly repent and believe.
 In Jesus Christ, you are forgiven, renewed, and empowered.

The Lord's Prayer

**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
 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one
 For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
 Forever and ever, Amen.**

Hymn #260: "Alleluia, Alleluia, Give Thanks to the Risen Lord" (V 1, 3, 4)

Alleluia, alleluia, give thanks to the risen Lord;
 alleluia, alleluia, give praise to his name.

Jesus is Lord of all the earth,
 He is the King of creation. (Refrain)

We have been crucified with Christ;
 now we shall live forever. (Refrain)

Come let us praise the living God,
 joyfully sing to our Saviour. (Refrain)

Responsive Reading

Psalm 47:1-8

¹Clap your hands, all peoples!
Shout to God with loud songs of joy!
²**For the Lord, the Most High, is to be feared,
a great king over all the earth.**

³He subdued peoples under us,
and nations under our feet.

⁴**He chose our heritage for us,
the pride of Jacob whom he loves. *Selah***

⁵God has gone up with a shout,
the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶**Sing praises to God, sing praises!
Sing praises to our King, sing praises!**

⁷For God is the King of all the earth;
sing praises with a psalm!

⁸**God reigns over the nations;
God sits on his holy throne.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "The Blessing Fiddle"

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Acts 1:1-11

¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

The Ascension

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do

you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

Sermon

Many Christians today live as if Jesus’ work ended two thousand years ago — as if the risen Christ retired rather than reigns.

We believe He came.

We believe He died.

We believe He rose again.

But the reality is that we often live as though He is no longer actively at work in the world we live in.

We pray, but not with any real expectations.

We serve, but we rely on our own strengths.

We speak of Christ, but often as a figure whose influence and power is in the past and not present in our lives and in the world today.

However, the book of Acts confronts that accusation head-on.

Today we begin a journey into one of the most thrilling, foundational, and globally significant books in all human history. This is more than just a story of what the apostle did. It is a historical account of what the risen, ascended Christ continues to do through the power of the Holy Spirit and His church in the world we live in.

And what we will see this morning is that:

Jesus has not stopped working.

What He began in His earthly ministry, He now continues from his Heavenly home.

If we are to understand the Book of Acts, we need to understand its connection to the Gospel of Luke. The opening verse is a bridge, explicitly linking this new narrative with the Gospel that preceded it.

Acts 1:1-2

**1 In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach,
²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen.**

Luke, the physician, the careful historian, and the travelling companion of the Apostle Paul writes a letter to a man by the name of Theophilus, a name which means ‘lover of God.’

This is significant, because in the ancient world publishing works like Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts required a lot of time, effort and money, it is very likely that Theophilus was the patron who funded the publication of these writings.

However, the most important detail is found in a single word in that first line.

Luke tells us what Jesus began, and this means that everything that follows in the Book of Acts is not a new story, it is a continuation of the Gospels.

For Luke, his Gospel was chapter 1, the Book of Acts is Chapter 2, and the story is still being written in the world every day, including today!

This is significant.

Every other religious founder—Buddha, Muhammad, Confucius—has a tomb you can visit. Their work ended when they died. Jesus has an empty tomb. His work never ended.

If you visit the tomb of Jesus in Jerusalem, you will find an empty tomb. Jesus Christ's ministry did not end at the cross, it did not end on Easter Sunday when He was resurrected and left the tomb.

What he began in His earthly ministry, He now continues from His seat in the heavens.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Through the work of His church.

Through the witness of His people.

The Book of Acts is the record of a living, reigning and actively working savior in this world.

It is as though a master builder laid the foundation of a great cathedral during his earthly ministry. He planned it and established the cornerstone, setting the entire structure in place. And then he ascends and continues to direct the work from above.

The workers are visible, they are carrying on with the construction of the great Cathedral, but the architect is the one in charge, he is the one telling them where to go and what to do.

This is what Jesus Has done. He made sure that the foundation of His ongoing work was unshakably rooted in historical reality.

Acts 1:3

³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God.

Luke emphasizes the undeniable reality of the resurrection. The word that he uses for 'proofs' is a strong legal term, one that means the evidence and be examined, tested and confirmed to be true.

Jesus did not leave His disciples with just an emotional experience or vague direction.

For forty days, He walked with them after the resurrection.

He spoke with them.

He ate with them.

He showed them the wounds in his hands and in his side.

That was not imagination.

That was not just hopeful thinking, a myth, or a legend.

This was the risen Christ, alive and in their presence in a glorified body.

And that number forty, it is a number that throughout the Scripture is associated with testing, preparation and instruction. The risen Lord was preparing His disciples for what would come next, He was teaching them what they would need to know about the kingdom of God.

Because what was about to happen in the world would require them to have absolute certainty that:

Jesus is alive

Jesus is reigning

And Jesus is still at work in this world.

However, before they could carry on the work of the Lord, they needed something that they did not yet possess.

Acts 1:4-5

⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

Think of the restraint that this would require. The disciples had seen the risen Lord. They had the greatest news story in the entire History of the cosmos. Their natural instinct would have been to run out into the streets proclaiming the Glory of God. Yet here Jesus issues them a strict command: Wait!

Wait. Because the mission of God cannot be carried out in Human strength alone.

Wait. Because what they needed could only come from heaven, not from within themselves.

Wait. Because their obedience was being tested.

And this is where many of us struggle. Because waiting feels like weakness.

Waiting feels unproductive.

Waiting feels like nothing is happening.

But in the economy of God, waiting is never wasted.

Waiting is where dependence is formed.

Waiting is where pride is exposed.

Waiting is where faith is refined.

Some of you are in a season of waiting right now.

Waiting for direction.

Waiting for clarity.

Waiting for God to move.

And the temptation is to take control—to force an outcome—to move ahead of the Lord.

But the command of Christ still stands:

Wait.

Not in passivity—but in prayer.

Not in frustration—but in trust.

Because what God is preparing in you is just as important as what He will do through you.

Jesus tells them that John baptized with water, but they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. While John's baptisms were beautiful symbols of repentance. The baptism that Jesus promised was the reality that symbol pointed toward, a baptism through being plunged into the power and presence of the Holy Spirit.

Here we yet again see the trinity woven together in the New Testament. Jesus the son promises that God the Father will send the Holy Spirit. It is called the 'promise of the father' because a good father only gives good gifts, and this gift belongs by right of inheritance to all His adopted children.

Brothers and sisters, the reality is that the church of Jesus Christ cannot operate on human ingenuity, charismatic personalities, or organizational strategies alone.

And if we are honest, this is exactly where many of us live.

Not in open rejection of the Holy Spirit—but in quiet independence from Him.

We make decisions without prayer.

We plan our lives without seeking the Lord's direction.

We step into ministry relying on our own abilities, our own experience, our own strength.

And then we wonder why there is so little power... so little fruit... so little transformation.

Let me ask you plainly:

Do you actually depend on the Holy Spirit in your daily life?

When was the last time you stopped and prayed before making a decision—not out of routine, but out of real dependence?

When was the last time you felt prompted to speak about Christ... and instead of shrinking back, you obeyed?

When was the last time you stepped into something that felt beyond your ability, trusting that God would supply what you lack?

Because that is exactly the kind of life Jesus is calling His disciples into.

A life that cannot be explained by human strength.

A life that only makes sense if the Spirit of God is truly at work.

Think about that for a moment, if the exalted Son of God operated through the Holy Spirit, how arrogant is it for us to believe that we can accomplish anything of spiritual value without him.

We are utterly dependent upon God.

Even after three years of earthly ministry and forty days of post-resurrection teachings, the disciples still struggled to grasp the nature of Christ's kingdom.

In Verse 6 they ask him:

Acts 1: 6

⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" ⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

It is easy for us to be critical of the disciples, but we need to understand the context of their question. For centuries the Jewish people had lived under foreign oppression, the Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and now the iron hand of Rome ruled over them. Their hopes were fixed on a political messiah, one who would crush their enemies and restore the nation of Israel to a dominant earthy empire. They wanted to know when it would happen.

Yet Jesus does not rebuke them, instead he corrects them, and gently reminds them of the sovereignty of God.

Acts 1: 7

⁷He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

Jesus uses two important and very distinct words for time:

'Chronos' which speaks of general periods of human history

And

‘Kairos’ which speaks of specific and definite dates.

Jesus is saying that the timeline of human history and the precise date of restoration of the kingdom of Israel is locked up in the secret counsels of the Almighty Father.

Jesus is telling them—and us—‘Stop trying to hack the divine calendar. Your job is obedience, not prophecy speculation.

This is a message that many in the church today need to hear. In the Christian world there are many who have an obsession with dates, times, hidden codes, all trying to predict the exact moment of Christ’s return. And this obsession has often led those people into disobedience to God in their lives.

This is why God in His infinite wisdom, has left us in healthy uncertainty about the timing and details of the end of the times, while giving us absolute assurance about the fact that the world will come to an end.

There is a reason why the Book of Revelation is written prophetically and not clearly, we are not meant to get caught up in debates about the timeline, or about the exact way in which the end will come for Christians and non-Christians. The uncertainty is not meant to make us try to discover the truth; it is designed to keep us watchful, diligent and faithful in the here and now.

Jesus is redirecting the disciples from speculation about the future to obedience in the present.

Verse eight gives us the core message of the mandate he is giving his disciples:

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

If the political kingdom was delayed; the spiritual kingdom was not. The Greek word is ‘Dunamis’ a word that speaks of dynamic energy, moral courage and spiritual strength.

Jesus is saying that the same disciples who had fled in terror just a few weeks earlier would soon become bold heralds of God’s truth at Pentecost.

The power that they would receive from God was not for personal prestige or comfort. It is for witness. The Greek word ‘Martus’ is once again a legal word. It speaks of how a witness simply testifies to what they have seen and heard.

Jesus does not say, ‘I recommend that you become witnesses’

He declares, 'You shall be my witnesses.'

Which means this is not a calling for a select few. This is not just for pastors, missionaries, or those in formal ministry. This is for every single person who belongs to Jesus Christ.

You are a witness.

The only question is whether you are a faithful one. Because every day, in every interaction, you are either pointing people toward Christ...

Or you are remaining silent about the most important truth in the world.

Think about the people God has placed in your life:

Your family.

Your coworkers.

Your neighbors.

Your friends.

You may be the only witness they ever hear. And that is not an accident—that is providence. Jesus did not save you merely to bring you to heaven. He saved you to send you into the world.

The truth is that if you are filled with the Spirit of God, you cannot help but testify to the grace of God.

And Jesus gives them a roadmap;

They are to start at home, in Jerusalem, in the city where the Lord had been crucified.

Then go to Judea, spreading the Word throughout the Jewish homeland.

To Samaria, to cross that massive ethnic and cultural barrier with the people they had once despised.

The Gospel is meant to shatter racism, prejudice and hostility.

And then it was to go to the ends of the earth; reaching every tribe, every tongue and nation.

Having given his disciples this commission. Jesus departs.

Acts 1:9

⁹ And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

The ascension was not a movement through space; It was Christ passing out of the visible, physical dimension and entering into the immediate presence of God.

The cloud was Shekinah, the visible glory and presence of Yahweh that had led the nation of Israel in the wilderness, the presence that had filled the holy of Holies in the temple, the same presence that had overshadowed Jesus at the transfiguration. It signified that Jesus was returning to the glory He has shared with the Father since before the world began.

The ascension was necessary for three reasons:

For Christ's exaltation, He now sits at the right hand of the Father with all authority in heaven and on earth

For the sending of the Holy Spirit

And

For the glorification of our human nature; right now, at the right hand of the majesty on High, there is a glorified man. Human flesh has been exalted to the throne of the universe.

After Jesus ascends into the clouds, two angels in white robes stand beside the stunned disciples.

Acts 1:10-11

¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."

The same Jesus. Jesus has not changed! Even as he ascends into heaven he is still the same man who healed the sick, who wept for Lazarus, who welcomed little children, and who bled on the cross. And that Jesus will be the very same Jesus who will return; physically, visibly and on the clouds of Heaven.

The angels' question serves a very real purpose.

'Why do you stand looking into heaven?'

The ascension of Jesus Christ is not an invitation to stand and stargaze. It is the starting signal for the mission of the church.

This means that we live in the 'in-between times' a time between the ascension and the return of Jesus Christ.

And what are we meant to be doing at this time. We should not be debating prophetic timelines, or the exact nature of the end of times. We are meant to be His witnesses to the world.

Acts is finished as Scripture, but the mission it records continues through the church today.

As you will see it ends abruptly in chapter twenty-eight with Paul preaching the kingdom under house arrest. There is no neat conclusion, because the truth is that the story is still being written.

You and I are the continuation, we are chapter twenty-nine.

The command that was given on the mount of Olives still stands.

The Holy Spirit has been poured out. The power is available. The globe is filled with billions who have not yet heard that the King has conquered death and offers free forgiveness to all who come before him humbly and repent and believe.

Christ still builds His church — and you are part of His plan. Don't just admire the sky; advance His kingdom. The Spirit has come; the power is here; the mission awaits.

The angels asked a question that still confronts us today:
"Why do you stand looking into heaven?"

Christ has ascended. The work of atonement is finished. The King is now enthroned at the right hand of the Father. The Holy Spirit has been given and the mission has been clearly defined.

And the world is still waiting.

Waiting for witnesses.

Waiting for a church that actually believes that Jesus Christ is alive... reigning... and still at work. So the question is not whether God is doing something in this world.

The question is whether we will be faithful to what He has already commanded.
 Will we go when it is uncomfortable?
 Will we speak when it is costly?
 Will we trust when it feels beyond us?
 Will we rely on the Holy Spirit instead of ourselves?

Because this is not the time for passive belief.
 This is not the time for speculation about timelines and seasons.
 This is not the time to stand still and stare into the sky.
 This is the time to step into the mission of God.

You are not spectators in this story.
 You are participants.

This is not a finished book.
 You are living in Acts chapter twenty-nine.

And one day, the same Jesus who ascended will return.

And on that day, we will give an account—not for what we speculated about...
But for whether we were faithful witnesses.

So let us go.
Into our homes.
Into our workplaces.
Into our communities.
And to the ends of the earth.
Not in our own strength—
But in the power of the Holy Spirit.
Bearing witness to the risen, reigning, and returning King.
Let us be His Salt and Light.

Let us pray.

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
that my thoughts may all be holy.

Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
that my work, too, may be holy.

Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
that I love but what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
to defend all that is holy.

Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
that I always may be holy.

Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit by St. Augustine of Hippo

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #267: “Rejoice, the Lord is King” (V 1,2,5)

Rejoice, the Lord is King;
your sovereign Lord adore;
give thanks, O mortals, sing
and triumph ever more.

Lift up your heart;
 lift up your voice; rejoice,
 again I say, rejoice.

For Christ the Saviour reigns,
 the God of truth and love;
 when Jesus purged our stains,
 he took his seat above.
 Lift up your heart;
 lift up your voice; rejoice,
 again I say, rejoice.

Rejoice in glorious hope,
 for Christ the judge shall come
 and take the faithful up
 to their eternal home.
 We soon shall hear
 the archangel's voice;
 the trump of God shall sound: rejoice.

Pastoral Prayer

Heavenly Father,
 we lift up our congregation,
 our community,
 and our world to You.
 Guide us as we step out into our homes,
 our workplaces,
 and our communities to bear witness to the risen King.

Help us to trust You when it feels beyond us,
 and to rely on the Holy Spirit instead of ourselves.
 We pray for those in a season of waiting,
 that their faith may be refined and their dependence on You deepened.

As we transition from this time of worship to a time of fellowship,
 we ask Your blessing upon the food prepared and the conversations we share.
 Nourish our bodies,
 knit our hearts together in love,
 and sustain us for the week ahead.
 In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

Benediction

Go now in peace,
strengthened by the grace of God,
upheld by the love of Christ,
and guided by the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

May the Lord bless you and keep you;
may He grant you wisdom for each step,
courage for faithful living,
and joy in serving Him and one another.

And may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
guard your hearts and your minds,
now and always.

Amen.