

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 19th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Wait before the Wind: Life Between Promise and Power
Third Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:12-26

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Our God is enthroned in the heavens; He accomplishes all that He pleases.

We gather to worship the King of all creation, whose plans are perfect and whose ways are just.

In seasons of action and in seasons of stillness, the Lord is our refuge and our strength.

We wait upon the Lord, for in Him is steadfast love and abundant redemption.

Come, let us lift our voices in unity to the One who reigns forever.

Let us worship the Lord with gladness and trust!

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we adore You as the eternal King enthroned in majesty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
whose wisdom has no limit and whose mercy knows no end.

We praise You for Your steadfast love that never fails
and for the grace You have shown us in Christ Jesus.

We invoke Your holy presence now:

come among us by Your Spirit,
open our hearts to worship You in spirit and truth,
and draw us near that we may glorify Your name
and find joy in Your fellowship.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Amen.

Call to Confession

As we come into the presence of a holy God,
we become aware of our sin and our need for mercy.
Let us not hide from the truth,

but humbly confess our sins before the Lord,
trusting in His steadfast love.

Prayer of Confession

**Merciful Father,
we confess that we are an impatient people.
We grow anxious when we do not see immediate results,
and we often prefer our own plans over Your perfect will.
Forgive us for the times we have tried to force doors open
rather than trusting Your timing.
Forgive us for the moments we have allowed earthly divisions
to break the unity of Your church.**

**We have neglected the vital work of prayer,
treating it as a last resort rather than our first response.
Cleanse us from our self-reliance,
and renew within us a spirit of quiet obedience
and unwavering trust in our reigning King.**

In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news of the Gospel:

God does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
Through the finished work of Jesus Christ,
your sins are washed away,
and you are clothed in His righteousness.
In Christ, you are forgiven, entirely loved, and securely held.

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 #291: "Thou Whose Almighty Word" (V 1,2,3)

Thou whose almighty word
chaos and darkness heard
and took their flight,
hear us, we humbly pray,

and where the gospel day
 sheds not its glorious ray
 Let There Be Light!

Saviour who came to bring
 on thy redeeming wing
 healing and sight,
 health to the sick in mind,
 sight to the inly blind,
 now to all humankind
 Let There Be Light!

Spirit of truth and love,
 lifegiving, holy Dove,
 speed forth thy flight;
 move o'er the waters' face,
 bearing the lamp of grace,
 and in earth's darkest place
 Let There Be Light!

Responsive Reading

Psalm 130: 1-6

¹ Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!

² **O Lord, hear my voice!**

**Let your ears be attentive
 to the voice of my pleas for mercy!**

³ If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
 O Lord, who could stand?

⁴ **But with you there is forgiveness,
 that you may be feared.**

⁵ I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
 and in his word I hope;

⁶ **my soul waits for the Lord
 more than watchmen for the morning,
 more than watchmen for the morning.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "Fairest Lord Jesus"

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Acts 1:12-26

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James. ¹⁴ All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶ "Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry."

¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ "For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

" 'May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it';
and

" 'Let another take his office.'

²¹ So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²² beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection." ²³ And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴ And they prayed and said, "You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place." ²⁶ And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

Sermon

If you have lived long enough, you know what it means to be in a waiting room. We wait for test results, that could change the future; We wait for the closing on a house; we wait for a prodigal child to finally return home; we wait.

Waiting is one of the most difficult disciplines in Christian life. It is the crucible where our faith is either refined into pure gold or where it withers away under the heat of anxiety. The reality is that we prefer action, clarity and movement. But the Lord in his infinite wisdom, often places His people in situations where they must wait; not passively or idly, but dependently.

It is like when we are waiting at the arrivals gate in the airport, watching the doors that slide open again and again. Every time they open, someone walks through, there is reunion, embracing and laughter, and yet it is still not the one that you are waiting for.

You recheck the screen. It says arrived. You know they have landed; you know that they are in the building. But you cannot see them yet. And so you wait; eyes fixed, heart expectant, living in that strange place between knowing that they are near, and seeing them.

That is where the disciples are here in Acts chapter one. Christ has accomplished redemption. He has risen. The promise of the Holy Spirit has been given, but the spirit has not yet arrived. The mission has not begun in earnest. And so, they stand, waiting, at the doorway of God's next great act.

Jesus gave them a monumental task: to be His witnesses to the world. But he also gave them a strict command: wait. Do not leave Jerusalem until you are clothed in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Scripture we are studying today teaches us how the church lives in the 'in-between', between promise and fulfillment, between Ascension and Pentecost, between when Christ has already accomplished and what He is still doing.

And as we will see it is not an empty time of waiting, it is active, obedient, God-centered preparation.

Acts chapter one teaches us how God's people live faithfully in the in-between—between promise and fulfillment—by obedience, prayer, unity, and trust in the sovereign King.

The Scripture opens with a simple but costly act of obedience.

Acts 1:12-13

¹² Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away. ¹³ And when they had entered, they went up to the upper room, where they were staying, Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot and Judas the son of James.

This is more than just a travel note, it is a theological statement. Luke the careful historian, includes the details of this Sabbath day journey to show us something important about their hearts and minds; they are walking in careful, glad submission to the Lord.

Historically, a Sabbath day journey was a rabbinic tradition defined as 2000 cubits, or just under one kilometer. This limit of travel was derived from the distance that the Israelites were to keep from themselves and the Ark of the Covenant in the book of Joshua.

The rabbis used this as a basis for the rule about how far someone was allowed to travel on the Sabbath without violating the command to rest upon the Sabbath.

Through his mentioning of this, Luke is drawing our attention to their immediate obedience. Jesus had commanded them to return to Jerusalem, and they had done exactly that. Even though Jerusalem was the very city which had just crucified their Lord and in which they were now marked men.

This is the first mark of the faithful: obeying even when we do not yet see the full strategy. Like a soldier who follows orders before understanding the importance of his objective. The act of obedience is an act of trust. The disciples did not flee to the familiar fishing boats of Galilee, instead they went to the place of waiting because it was commanded.

When they arrived, they went up to the upper room. In first-century Jerusalem the upper rooms were usually the coolest and quietest spaces in a home, making them ideal for prayer and deliberation. Many scholars believe that the room that the disciples went to, was the same room that was used for the Last Supper. One thing for us to take note of is that there is no mention of crowds, no miracles, no public preaching campaigns: just a room. But heaven was listening.

This is an important principle for us to understand: God often does His greatest works in hidden places.

The world we live in values visibility and immediate results, but God values faithfulness. A seed grows underground a long time before it ever breaks the surface; if you judge the soil too early, you will assume that nothing is happening.

The Church was being formed not in grandeur and public triumph, but in quiet, hidden dependence upon God. Their obedience is not ultimately to the command but to a King who has ascended. The same Jesus who had walked with them, is now the one who reigns over them. Their return to Jerusalem is their first act of obedience to the enthroned Christ.

And that should still be the nature of Christian obedience today. Not seeking acceptance by society and culture but obeying the risen and reigning Lord.

And once they settled in that upper room, they did not form committees or strategize campaigns—they prayed. And in that prayer meeting the new family of God began to take shape.

Acts 1:14

¹⁴All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

That phrase ‘with one accord’ in Greek is ‘homothymadon’ and it conveys a deep inward harmony and agreement of purpose.

This is actually amazing when you consider who was in the room. In the Gospels we are shown how the disciples were bickering about who was the greatest among them. We have Matthew a

former Tax collector, and Simon the Zealot, men who are on the exact opposite sides of the political spectrum, men who would never normally sit at the same tables.

How does this happen? How do people who would normally never associate with one another end up in the same prayer meeting? There is only one answer: the resurrected Christ is bigger than any earthly divide.

However, the presence of the women is both glorious and theological. In first century Judaism, men and women typically prayed separately, but here in this upper room, they are gathered as one body.

Luke constantly highlights the role of women in the Gospel narrative, and here he shows them at the foundational core of the church.

We see Mary the mother of Jesus, in her final mention in the Scriptures. She is not mentioned as a co-redeemer to be worshiped, but as an ordinary, faithful believer, gathered with others to pray to her glorified Son.

On top of this, we have the brothers of Jesus, men who were skeptical of Him during His ministry.

This room shows the power of the resurrection, transforming people into fully devoted followers.

What is the 'work' of this time of waiting?

Prayer!

The Scripture says that they were 'devoting themselves' to it, again the Greek verb is 'proskarterountes' which implies persistence, stubbornness and holding onto something firmly and persistently. Simply put, this was not a simple and casual time of prayer, but a devoted and sustained prayer of desperate dependence upon the Lord.

When we are waiting on God it is not an idle time, it is a time for preparation through prayer.

Think of farmers, even though they cannot cause the rain, they still need to prepare the soil.

Prayer is the Churches way of preparing the soil of this world for the work of God. Jesus had promised the Holy Spirit, however they were still commanded to ask for Him to come.

As the Puritan Thomas Watson said, 'Prayer is the breath of the new creature.' Without prayer the Church is dead, and with it, even a small group of broken people can change the world.

This kind of unity in prayer does not come through anything of this world, not through personality compatibility or shared preferences, it only comes through a shared surrender to Christ.

Which makes us ask, what is strong enough to unite people like that today?

Acts 1:15-20

¹⁵ In those days Peter stood up among the brothers (the company of persons was in all about 120) and said, ¹⁶ “Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus. ¹⁷ For he was numbered among us and was allotted his share in this ministry.” ¹⁸ (Now this man acquired a field with the reward of his wickedness, and falling headlong he burst open in the middle and all his bowels gushed out. ¹⁹ And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the field was called in their own language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.) ²⁰ “For it is written in the Book of Psalms,

“ ‘May his camp become desolate,
and let there be no one to dwell in it’;
and
“ ‘Let another take his office.’

As the days passed, the group in the upper room started to grow to around 120 people, this is an important note, because in Jewish law 120 is the minimum number of people needed to establish as self-standing community or a local council.

And in the very midst of this group, Peter stands up to address a very painful truth, the apostasy of Judas Iscariot.

Imagine the trauma of the betrayal. Judas had been an insider, he was ‘numbered among us’ and ‘allotted his share in this ministry.’ He had walked with Jesus, preached the Kingdom and cast out demons. Yet he betrayed the Son of God for a mere thirty pieces of silver. How are we to understand this?

Peter explains it beautifully, in a response that is rooted in rock-solid reformed theology: **‘Brothers, the Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke beforehand by the mouth of David concerning Judas.’** Peter uses the Greek word ‘dei’ where we read ‘had to’, it was a divine necessity. Judas’s betrayal was not an accident that caught heaven by surprise, it was woven into the sovereign decree of the Almighty God before the very foundation of the world.

Here we encounter the deep mystery of divine sovereignty and human responsibility. God’s sovereign plan does not eliminate human responsibility for their actions. Judas acted freely out of the wickedness of his own heart, and he is fully responsible for his treason.

Judas was not coerced.

Judas was not manipulated.
 Judas was not a victim.

And at the same time:
 God was not absent.
 God was not surprised.
 God was not defeated. Not then. Not now. Not ever.

Also notice that Peter does not gloat over Judas's end, instead he grieves the loss while affirming God's Word is never surprised by our sin.

There is a very sober warning here for all of us, and I pray that you all take it to heart. It is entirely possible to be near to Jesus, and yet still not belong to Him. Judas heard every sermon, saw every miracle, walked in the closet circle of disciples, and yet his heart remained unchanged by God's Word.

Proximity to Christ is not the same as faith in Christ.

There are people in Churches every Sunday who are close to the things of God—
 who know the songs, who understand the language, who have seen the work of Christ in others
 —
 and yet have never truly bowed the knee to Him.
 Judas is not just a historical warning.
 He is a mirror we dare not ignore.

But the warning is not meant to drive us to despair—it is meant to drive us to genuine faith in Christ, who welcomes all who come to Him

Luke then provides us some details on the horrific death of Judas, describing how he fell and 'burst open in the middle.' This account of Judas's death in Acts aligns with Matthew's, which tells us that Judas hung himself; and after hanging in the heat of Jerusalem, his body likely fell at some point and ruptured on the rocks below, a graphic picture of the spiritual ruin that sin brings.

Peter turns to the Psalms to interpret this tragedy. He quotes:

Psalm 69:25
May their camp be a desolation;
let no one dwell in their tents.

And

Psalm 109:8
May his days be few;
may another take his office!

These words, first spoken by David under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, now find their exact fulfillment in Judas.

The field he had purchased with the reward of his wickedness became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem as Akeldama — that is, the Field of Blood. And this name stands in stark, sobering contrast with the righteous man described in Psalm 1, the very Psalm Peter has clearly had in mind. The righteous are like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in season, but the wicked are like chaff that the wind drives away. Judas had walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and his life yielded only emptiness and ruin.

Peter understands how the Holy Spirit spoke through David concerning the office or oversight of the betrayer. And he knows that Scripture commands what must now happen: “Let another take his office.” This is no mere organizational detail; it is a theological necessity. The number twelve must stand complete as a symbol of the restored tribes of the new Israel. Because the Scripture commanded it, the apostolic circle was being made whole in preparation for what the Holy Spirit was about to do.

Peter then lays out the non-negotiable, Biblical qualifications for this office.

Acts 1:21-26

²¹So one of the men who have accompanied us during all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, ²²beginning from the baptism of John until the day when he was taken up from us—one of these men must become with us a witness to his resurrection.” ²³And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. ²⁴And they prayed and said, “You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen ²⁵to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.” ²⁶And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

The primary job of an apostle was not to be a great philosopher or an innovator; it was to be a witness.

Specifically, they had to be a witness to the resurrection.

Peter defines two criteria:

They had to have been present from the beginning of Jesus’s ministry at the baptism of John until the Ascension and they had to be an eyewitness to the risen Christ.

These criteria ensure that the exalted Lord of the Church is the exact same Jesus who taught and suffered in Galilee.

Christianity is not built on abstract ideas or subjective spirituality, instead it has its foundation in objective, historical truths. The resurrection is the hinge of everything. It validates Christ's work and empowers the church's mission.

The gathered congregation exercised, 'sanctified common sense' and nominated two men from among them who met Peter's rigorous criteria; Joseph called Barabas, also known as Justus and Matthias.

We know almost nothing of these men before this point. Yet they had been faithfully serving in the background for the entire earthly ministry of Jesus without ever seeking the spotlight.

This should be a great encouragement for all of us: God sees or quiet and faithful service, he sees our labor in obscurity. Faithfulness is not measured by fame, it is measured in obedience to the call.

Having chosen the two the church did not have a popularity contest, or an appeal to personal charisma. Instead, they returned to their primary purpose, prayer.

They prayed, **'You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen²⁵ to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.'**

Here is a fun Greek word for you 'kardiognostes' it means knower of hearts, which Jesus is. This is a title that was reserved for the One True living God, and by using it here it proves that the early church held a fully exalted view of Christ's deity.

Finally, after praying, they cast lots. This might sound strange to us, but it was a recognized Old Testament practice for discerning the will of God.

Proverbs 16:33

**³³The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the Lord.**

To them this was not a game of chance; it was an act of complete submission to the sovereignty of Christ.

The lot fell on Matthias and he was officially enrolled as the twelfth apostle.

This is deeply counter cultural for us today. Because we often assume that visibility equals significance. We need to remember that in the kingdom of God, faithfulness is the measure, not recognition.

Neither man ever appears again in the New Testament. Yet one was chosen and the other was not—and both remained faithful. In the kingdom, the question is never 'Will I be famous?' but 'Will I be faithful?'

Interestingly, this is the last time the casting of lots is mentioned in the Bible. Why? Probably because in just a few days at the Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will be poured out to dwell permanently within believers, guiding the church directly through Word and prayer. But in this unique, transitional moment, it was an act of profound and dependent faith.

This is not just the story of the early congregation of God, it is our story too.

We are not living in Acts chapter one, but we are living in a similar tension. Christ has risen, and yet we are still awaiting for His return and the fullness of His kingdom to come.

So how are we to live in this 'waiting room' of the modern world.

First, we need to obey without full understanding, we need to return to our 'Jerusalem' whenever the Lord commands.

Second, we need to value hidden faithfulness, knowing that God does His greatest work in the 'upper rooms' of our lives rather than upon the public stage of this world.

Third, we need to pursue the unity of Christ in all we do, allowing the resurrected Lord to bridge every social, political and cultural divide.

Fourth, we need to devote ourselves to prayer! Not as a last resort, but as our first and most vital work.

And Fifth, we need to trust in God's sovereign plan, knowing that even betrayal and suffering are not outside His control.

The waiting room is not a punishment.

Imagine the stage before a great performance. The curtain is still drawn, but the actors are all in position and there is nothing but silence. To the untrained eye, nothing is happening. But everything is ready.

That is Acts chapter 1, and that is often the Christian life.

So, we wait, not in fear or doubt, but in faith.

The waiting room is not where the story stalls, it is where God prepares His people for what comes next.

Because Christ has not simply risen, He has ascended. He is not absent, he is enthroned.

Even now he rules, he intercedes, he directs the unfolding of His redemptive plan with perfect wisdom and perfect timing.

And that means not one moment of our waiting is wasted. Not one prayer goes unheard. Not one act of quiet obedience is forgotten.

The disciples could not yet see what was coming, but heaven was already moving towards the Pentecost.

And the same is true for each of us. We may not yet see what Christ is doing, but He is never still. His kingdom is advancing. His church is being built. His promises are moving towards their fulfillment.

So we wait.

But not as those who are forgotten.
Not as those who are uncertain.
Not as those who are without hope.

We wait as those who know the King is on His throne.
We wait with open Bibles—because He has spoken.
We wait on our knees—because He hears.
We wait with steady hearts—because He reigns.

Because the next great movement does not depend on us, it depends on Him.
And when He moves...
when the Spirit is poured out...
when the doors finally open...
it will be unmistakably clear—
that it was never our strength,
never our strategy,
never our timing...
but Christ, and Christ alone.

This is how we live in the waiting room of God—obedient, prayerful, united, and trusting the King.

So stand ready. Stay Faithful. Keep Watch.

The doors will open. The Holy Spirit will Come.

And the waiting will give way to wonder as we walk as the Salt and Light of Gods work in this dark and broken world.

Let us Pray,

Grant, Almighty God, that since we are under Your guidance and protection,
we may learn to rest with tranquility in Your care.

Whenever we are tossed about by the storms of this world,
or tested by the delays of this life,
may we never be turned aside from our course.

Keep our eyes always fixed upon Your Word,
trusting that You will be our deliverer.
May we yield ourselves entirely to Your sovereign will,
knowing that You always care for us,
until we are gathered at last into that eternal rest
which has been obtained for us by the blood of Your only-begotten Son.

Amen.

Adapted from John Calvin

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #333: "I Sing the Almighty Power of God"

I sing the almighty power of God
that made the mountains rise,
that spread the flowing seas abroad
and built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordained
the sun to rule the day;
the moon shines full at Gods command,
and all the stars obey.

I sing the goodness of the Lord,
that filled the earth with food;
God formed the creatures with a word,
and then pronounced them good.
Lord, how thy wonders are displayed,
where'er I turn my eyes,
if I survey the ground I tread,
or gaze upon the skies!

There's not a plant or flower below
but makes thy glories known,
and clouds arise and tempests blow
by order from thy throne,

while all that borrows life from thee
is ever in thy care,
and everywhere I could be,
thou, God, art present there.

Pastoral Prayer

Gracious Father,
we thank You for gathering us as Your people,
for feeding us with Your Word,
and for the fellowship we share in Christ.

Strengthen us by Your Spirit to live faithfully in the days ahead,
to love one another as You have loved us,
and to be witnesses of Your grace in the world.

Now, as we move into this time of fellowship together,
bless the conversations, the food, and the laughter among us.

May our time of refreshment deepen our bonds as brothers and sisters in Christ,
encourage weary hearts,
and fill us with joy in Your presence.

Keep us safe, guard our going out and coming in,
and prepare us to serve You with renewed strength.

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Benediction

Go forth into the world in peace,
resting in the knowledge that your King is on His throne.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God the Father,
and the steadfast fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all,
empowering you to wait with hope
and walk in faithful obedience,
this day and forevermore. **Amen.**