

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, April 26th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

The Spirit Descends: Pentecost, Promise, and the Power of God
Fourth Sunday of Easter
Acts 2:1-13

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, let us worship the living God, who alone gives life and breath to His people.

We come with open hearts, longing for His presence to fill us.

He is the source of every good gift, the One who unites us as one body.

We gather in dependence, trusting Him to guide our worship and our lives.

Let every voice rise in praise, for He is worthy.

Glory to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty and everlasting God,
You are sovereign over all of creation and all of history.
You speak, and the world is made;
You act, and Your purposes are perfectly fulfilled.

We adore You for Your unchanging faithfulness and Your perfect timing.
As we gather today, we ask that You manifest Your presence among us.
Draw near to us,
strip away our self-reliance,
and fill this sanctuary with Your glory.

Open our ears to hear Your truth,
soften our hearts to receive it,
and unite us in shared devotion.
In Your holy name, we pray. **Amen.**

Call to Confession

God is holy and calls His people to walk in truth and righteousness. Yet we often fall short in thought, word, and deed. Let us come before Him with humility, acknowledging our sin and seeking His mercy, trusting that He is gracious to forgive and restore.

Prayer of Confession

Gracious Lord,
 we confess that we have often tried to live out our faith in our own power.
 We have manufactured our own excitement rather than waiting patiently for Your genuine presence.
 We have allowed pride and personal preferences to fracture our fellowship,
 rather than submitting to Your Word.
 Forgive us for our silence when we should have spoken Your gospel,
 and for our self-reliance when we should have been humbly dependent on You.
 Purify our hearts, burn away our sin, and restore us to faithful, joyful obedience.
 Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear this word of comfort: God is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. To all who turn to Him in repentance and trust, He is faithful to forgive and to cleanse from all unrighteousness.

In His mercy, your sins are forgiven. Walk in peace and in newness of life.

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: "What Grace is Mine"

What grace is mine that He who dwells in endless light
 called through the night to find my distant soul
 and from his scars poured mercy that would plead for me
 that I might live and in His name be known.

CHORUS

So I will go wherever He is calling me.
 I lose my life to find my life in Him.
 I give my all to gain the hope that never dies
 I bow my heart take up my cross and follow Him.

What grace is mine to know His breath alive in me.
 Beneath His wings my wakened soul may soar.
 All fear can flee for death's dark night is overcome.

My Saviour lives and reigns forevermore.

Responsive Reading

Ezekiel 36:25-28

²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

²⁶ **And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.**

²⁷ And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

²⁸ **You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): “Here I am to Worship”

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Acts 2:1-13

2 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. **7** And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?” **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? **9** Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, **11** both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” **12** And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” **13** But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Sermon

Today we turn our attention to one of the most decisive moments in the history of redemption: the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Acts 2:1–13 is not merely a dramatic episode in the early church, it is the fulfillment of ancient promises, the inauguration of the new covenant age, and the public birth of Christ’s church.

What happened on that day was not just an accessory to the Gospel, it is essential to it. The crucified and risen Christ now reigns from heaven, and he pours out His Spirit upon His people so that the saving work He accomplished might be proclaimed to the very ends of the earth.

There are moments in redemptive history when everything converges; promises, expectations, longings, and divine purposes, and in that moment, God acts decisively.

Acts chapter 2 is one of those moments. It is not merely an event to remember; it is an inauguration that defines the church.

The Holy Spirit does not come because the disciples have mastered a technique, achieved a certain emotional pitch, or discovered the right formula. The Holy Spirit comes because God promised, and because God is faithful.

And so we want to read this passage carefully and reverently, paying attention to its historical setting, its theological depth, and its enduring relevance.

We want to listen to the Scriptures themselves, and we want to allow the wisdom of the church, particularly the insights of early Church fathers to help guide our understanding.

But above all, we want to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying to the church through the Word of God.

As we move through Acts 2:1–13, I want us to keep returning to the question that the crowds asked in Jerusalem and the question that still confronts every generation: **“What does this mean?”**

Acts 2:1

2 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

Luke’s opening line may sound like a simple time marker, but it carries the sense of fulfillment.

The day had “fully come.” In other words, Pentecost did not arrive by accident. It was not a random event. It was not merely convenient timing. It was appointed. divinely timed, and now it had reached its God-ordained fullness.

The word Pentecost means ‘fiftieth’ and that is actually of importance.

It was the fiftieth day after Passover, the Feast of Weeks, a time when the Jews celebrated the completion of the wheat harvest. It was also, in Jewish tradition, commonly associated with the giving of the law at Mount Sinai, which took place roughly fifty days after the Exodus.

Do you see the parallel God has created for us here?

At Sinai, God gave his law written on stone. At Pentecost, God gives his Holy Spirit to write his law on human hearts, fulfilling the promise of Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 31:33

³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people

At Sinai there was fire and trembling. At Pentecost there is fire again, but now that fire no longer rests on a mountain but on His people.

Think about that, the law was given at Mount Sinai fifty days after the Exodus, and now the Holy Spirit is given fifty days after Christ, the true Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed and raised. The old covenant was marked by tablets of stone; the new covenant is marked by the Holy Spirit writing God's law on hearts of flesh.

And notice the setting, 'they were all together in one place.'

This is more than just a geographical description of where they were; it is spiritual unity. Acts chapter 1 showed us the church waiting, praying, and submitting themselves to Christ's command. The phrase used to describe them 'with one accord' captures a shared devotion and a shared obedience. They are not scattered in anxiety. They are gathered in dependence on God, waiting for what is to come.

The truth is that God delights to pour out his Holy Spirit where there is humble dependence, patient waiting, and unity around his promises. The disciples were not strategizing or innovating on what they were going to do; instead, they were praying and waiting on God to show them what they were called to do. And God did not fail them.

The truth is that waiting is often how God strips us of our self-reliance and teaches us to live by promise rather than by control. This ten-day interval of waiting between the ascension and Pentecost was not a wasted time, but a trial, a test of their faithfulness.

While the disciples did not know the day or the hour the promise would arrive, they did not succumb to anxiety or the urge to 'do something', instead, they remained in a posture of humble dependence on God. This reminds each of us that God's timing may often seem slow to our senses, but it is always perfectly calibrated to His purposes.

Acts 2:2

² And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

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Luke emphasizes in the Holy Spirit's sovereignty.

He comes "suddenly." The Holy Spirit is not summoned. He is not manipulated. He is not produced by human effort. He comes from heaven. The initiative is entirely divine.

Luke is also careful: it is not wind itself, but a sound like wind.

This is not a natural phenomenon that can be explained, it is a divine sign, an audible manifestation meant to awaken the disciples to an invisible reality that is taking place.

Why wind? Because the imagery of wind is woven throughout Scripture.

In both Hebrew (ruach) and Greek (pneuma), the same word can mean wind, breath, or spirit.

Scripture repeatedly uses this image to describe God's life-giving, sovereign power.

We hear it at creation, when the Spirit of God hovered over the waters.

We hear it when God breathes life into Adam.

We hear it in Ezekiel's vision, where the breath of God raises dry bones into a living army.

We hear it in Jesus' words to Nicodemus,

John 3:8

⁸The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

And the sound of the wind 'filled the entire house.'

Nothing was untouched. When God pours out his Holy Spirit, He does not do so partially or timidly. He overwhelms.

Pentecost is the birth of the church, the moment when a waiting group becomes a living, breathing, witnessing body.

This matters for our faith.

The church does not exist by human cleverness, planning or strength. It exists solely by God's divine power.

Church programs cannot substitute for breath. Strategy cannot substitute for Holy Spirit. Methods may have a place, but they can never create spiritual life. Life comes from God, from heaven, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:3

³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them.

The second sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit is visual: tongues as of fire.

Once again, Luke speaks with care. This is not literal fire, but a visible manifestation resembling fire.

Throughout Scripture, fire is associated with God's Holy presence: the burning bush, the pillar of fire in the wilderness, the glory of the Lord descending on Sinai.

Fire purifies. Fire consecrates. Fire signals that God is close.

But here is what is radically new: this time the fire does not descend on a mountain or a building.

This time it rests on each believer.

Under the old covenant, God's glory rested on or in a place; on Sinai, then in the tabernacle, then in the temple. Under the new covenant, God dwells by the power of his Holy Spirit in his people. Each believer becomes, in Christ, a living temple.

One of the church fathers described this moment as a reversal of distance: no longer is God's presence confined to temple or tabernacle; it now dwells within his people.

And notice the personal emphasis: the tongues rested on each one. The Holy Spirit is not merely given to the church as a worldly institution but to individual believers, men and women alike, young and old, leaders and ordinary disciples. No one is excluded.

The image of fire also carries moral weight we need to acknowledge. Fire purifies.

The Holy Spirit does not merely empower believers; he sanctifies them.

He burns away sin in their lives. He refines their hearts. The Holy Spirit is not given for spectacle but for holiness. To speak of Pentecost without speaking of purity is to miss the Biblical meaning of the sign.

This means if you are truly baptized by the Holy Spirit there should be evidence of sin being removed from your lives. If you are the same person today as the day you first became a Christian, you might want to examine your faith carefully.

The early church also drew attention to the shape: tongues as of fire.

The Holy Spirit comes as fire shaped like tongues because the church's primary weapon will not be the sword or coercion instead it will be through the proclamation of the truth of God's Word. The Gospel will advance through speaking, through preaching, teaching, confession, and praise.

In other words, the Holy Spirit equips the church perfectly for the mission God has assigned.

The church is not born merely to exist; it is born to bear witness. Because the Spirit descended as 'tongues,' we are reminded that the church's primary weapon is neither political coercion nor social status, but the clear proclamation of the Gospel.

As Christians we must trust in Holy Spirit-empowered speech, it is the truth of God's Word alone that has the power to pierce hearts and convert souls! We do not do it, God does. Our job is to simply testify to His truths.

Acts 2:4a

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit

The wind and the fire are extraordinary, but they point beyond themselves.

The center of Pentecost is not the signs themselves but the reality that they signified: the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Luke will use this language repeatedly in Acts. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be under His decisive influence, it is to be empowered, directed, and emboldened for God's work.

This filling is not a second class of Christianity reserved for a few elite believers. Luke is explicit: they were all filled. And for those of you who have not heard me say it before the word in Greek for all, 'pas' means ALL, every believer is filled with the Holy Spirit.

It is at this moment, Jesus' promise is fulfilled:

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.

The disciples who had been fearful after the crucifixion are now transformed through the power of the Holy Spirit. The risen Christ reigns, and his Spirit makes that reign effective in and through his people.

We should also keep clear what Scripture teaches about the Holy Spirit's work.

The New Testament distinguishes between having the Holy Spirit and being filled with the Holy Spirit.

Every true believer has the Holy Spirit. Yet believers are commanded not to just have the Holy Spirit but to be filled by the Holy Spirit, which is a present and ongoing reality.

Acts itself demonstrates this repeated filling: Peter is filled, and then later filled again; the believers are filled again in Acts 4.

To clarify it, there is one once-for-all baptism of the Holy Spirit that brings us into Christ.

Then there are many ongoing fillings of the Holy Spirit that empower us for faithful living and witness in this world.

The Holy Spirit's filling is not a one-time gift but a continual supply.

The church does not live on yesterday's filling. It must continually depend daily on the Holy Spirit to do the work of God.

Also, we must remember the New Testament's tone. Spirit-filling is never presented as something that believers boast about. It is something which is observed by others.

It is shown in our lives by boldness in witness, holiness of life, and steadfast devotion to Christ.

In other words, the fruit of the Holy Spirit's fullness is not spiritual pride but Christlike courage and Christlike character. It is what changes us from who we are into who we are called to be.

This is where Pentecost presses on our own hearts. The question is not merely, 'Did something remarkable happen then?'

The question every Christian must ask themselves is, 'Am I living under the Holy Spirit's influence; yielded, dependent, obedient, and ready to speak of Christ? Am I being changed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in me?'

Luke does not stop there, the verse continues.

Acts 2:4b-11

and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

⁵ Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, ¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

The immediate result of the Holy Spirit's filling is speech.

The disciples speak in 'other tongues', and I cannot emphasize this strongly enough, they spoke in real, recognizable human languages they had never learned.

Luke leaves no doubt about this. The Scripture says, 'each one was hearing them speak in his own language,' and again, 'each of us hears them in his own native language.'

Luke then lists the nations of the people who were present: Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, Judeans, Cappadocians, Pontians, Asians, Egyptians, Libyans, Romans, Cretans, and Arabs.

From east to west, north to south, the Jewish population is represented. Devout Jews and proselytes gathered for Pentecost from all around the region now hear the praises of God in the languages of their homelands.

This matters because it tells us what the miracle is for.

The disciples are not preaching sermons in tongues directed at the crowd. Rather, they are praising God, they were 'declaring the mighty works of God', and the crowd overhears this praise in their own languages.

The Holy Spirit fills them, and they cannot help themselves, out of that fullness comes proclamation of God's greatness.

And the setting is preordained by God.

Pentecost was a pilgrimage feast. Jerusalem was filled with Jews from across the known world.

God chose a day when the nations were represented, so that the sign itself would point to the global scope of the Gospel. As Acts has already promised, the witness will go to the ends of the earth. Pentecost is the first public demonstration of that promise.

The church fathers consistently understood this as a reversal of Babel. At Babel, human pride produced division and confusion. Languages were confused so that humanity could not unite against God.

At Pentecost, divine grace produces understanding and unity. Languages are understood so that humanity may be gathered to God in Christ.

As one early commentator expressed it: what was divided in pride is united in Christ.

Also notice what Pentecost does not do. It does not erase cultural and linguistic diversity. Instead, it redeems it.

There are many languages, but one message.

Many different peoples, yet only one Gospel.

The church is unified not by sameness but by faith in Christ.

From its very birth, the church is global.

This also means that the Holy Spirit is given for witness to others, not for self-promotion, spectacle or show.

Speaking in tongues is not a party trick; it is a sign that the Gospel is going out.

The Holy Spirit empowers speech because the church is called to proclaim. Jesus is to be proclaimed through Holy Spirit-empowered witnesses in a language that others can understand.

And we should be careful here, not every believer receives the same gifts in the same way, and speaking in tongues is not presented in any way ever as the sole evidence of the Holy Spirit's filling.

The defining evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence is not even wind or fire. It is lives that have been transformed by Christ and the Word of God advancing through faithful witness.

Luke concludes with these verses.

Acts 2:12-13

¹² **And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"**

¹³ **But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."**

Whenever God moves in power, it demands a response for man. And the responses are often divided.

First, many are amazed and honestly surprised and confused by what they have witnessed.

They know something extraordinary is happening, but they do not yet understand its meaning. God often works this way, first arresting attention, then opening the way for explanation through his Word.

The question “What does this mean?” becomes the doorway into Peter’s preaching and into thousands being gathered into Christ’s kingdom.

Second, others mock.

They dismiss the work of God as drunkenness. The mockers would rather explain away the miracle than submit to its message. Erasmus observed that spiritual renewal often looks like madness to those who lack spiritual discernment. And Calvin noted how easily hearts untouched by concern for God turn wonders into ridicule.

Yet Luke subtly highlights the irony: they accuse the disciples of being “filled” with wine, when in truth they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

They are “drunk,” but with a sober drunkenness, one that is deadly to sin and life-giving to the heart.

Paul later contrasts these two kinds of ‘filling’:

Ephesians 5:18-21

¹⁸And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, ¹⁹addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, ²⁰giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

This twofold response remains in the world today.

Some will respond to the Gospel with humble inquiry; others with cynical dismissal.

The same Holy Spirit who opens hearts also exposes hearts.

The difference is not that God is unclear; the difference is how we respond to with what God has made known.

Finally, we need to understand that what happened on the day of Pentecost is not repeatable. There is only one historical outpouring that inaugurates the church, just as there is only one cross and one resurrection.

Yet the Spirit that was given at Pentecost still dwells in the church today.

So, the question before us today is whether the reality of what happened at the Pentecost is shaping our lives today. How does it do that?

First, Pentecost confronts every generation of the church with a sobering truth: the church can continue to function outwardly even when its spiritual life has lost focus and has begun to glorify the world.

We can still gather, plan, budget, advertise, and organize. But if the breath of God is withdrawn, we have activity without vitality, we have form without fire.

Pentecost calls us to repentance for self-reliance and to renewed dependence on God's power rather than our own competence.

We need to constantly strive to place God first in all we do as a Church.

Second, The Holy Spirit came when the disciples were *together in one place*, praying, waiting, and obedient. Unity does not earn the Spirit, but division grieves him.

This kind of unity is not sentimental agreement or avoidance of hard conversations. It is shared submission to Christ, on that places His truth, His Word, and His mission above all personal preferences.

So, ask yourself are there attitudes, divisions, or unresolved conflicts in my heart that weaken our shared witness?

Pentecost reminds us that a fractured church speaks with a fractured voice to the world.

Third, the Spirit empowers speech, it creates a clear, Christ-centered proclamation of God's mighty works. The miracle serves the message. The sign serves the Word.

Pentecost warns us against confusing emotional intensity with spiritual vitality, or dramatic expression with genuine obedience.

Ask yourself, does the way I live my life make Christ clearer to others, or does it merely draw attention to a spiritual experience detached from obedience?

The Spirit fills the church so that Christ is proclaimed, not so that believers are admired.

Fourth, Pentecost does not teach us that people must learn a new religious language to approach God; it teaches us that God speaks so people can understand.

This challenges the church to speak faithfully and intelligibly, into real lives, real suffering, real doubts, and real questions.

The Gospel is meant to be shared in words shaped by love, patience, and clarity; not hiding behind religious language that avoids engagement or conflict.

And finally, God delights to use ordinary people for extraordinary purposes.

The crowd gathered at the Pentecost's astonishment is telling: **'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?'**

In other words, who gave these people authority, clarity, and boldness? The crowd gathered in Jerusalem was varied and from many nations and regions but most of them were city people, the word 'Galilean' was a label for the unrefined, the country folk.

Yet, God bypassed the elite to empower the ordinary.

Pentecost assures us that usefulness in God's kingdom does not depend on our natural impressiveness or professional credentials; it relies on supernatural enabling through the power and strength of the Holy Spirit. If you feel 'ordinary' or unqualified, you are exactly the kind of vessel the Holy Spirit delights to fill.

Pentecost presses the church, not toward new techniques, but towards a renewed dependence on God:

- Waiting on God rather than rushing ahead
- Walking in unity rather than guarding our personal preferences
- Yielding to the sanctifying fire, not just the empowering fire
- Speaking the mighty works of God, even when we feel ordinary

The truth is that:

The Spirit fills, and the church speaks.

The Spirit sanctifies, and the church shines.

The Spirit empowers, and the Gospel advances.

So let us not settle for a church that can be explained without God. Let us refuse to confuse activity with spiritual vitality. Let us ask the Lord for what He delights to give: not new techniques, but a fresh dependence on Him; not manufactured excitement, and emotional experiences, but real holiness; not human confidence, but Holy Spirit-given boldness.

And may the same Spirit who fell on that upper room fall afresh on each of us; so that we become the Salt and Light of His Holy Word right here in our community.

Let us Pray,

Almighty God,

Grant that what we have heard with our ears we may receive into our hearts, and that it may bear fruit in our lives. May we not be forgetful hearers, but faithful doers, shaped and governed by Your truth.

Cause Your Word to take deep root within us, so that in all our thoughts, words, and actions we may seek Your glory. Strengthen us by Your grace to persevere in faith, to grow in obedience, and to walk humbly before You.

Let Your truth dwell richly among us, guiding us, correcting us, and sustaining us in every season. We ask this in Your mercy. **Amen.**

John Calvin

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn: "O Church Arise"

O church arise and put your armour on
 hear the call of Christ our captain
 For now the weak can say that they are strong
 in the strength that God has given.

With shield of faith and belt of truth
 we'll stand against the devil's lies
 An army bold whose battle cry is, love!
 reaching out to those in darkness.

Come see the cross where love and mercy meet
 As the Son of God is stricken
 Then see His foes lie crushed beneath His feet
 For the Conqueror has risen.

And as the stone is rolled away
 And Christ emerges from the grave
 This victory march continues till the day
 Every eye and heart shall see Him.

So spirit, come, put strength in every stride
 Give grace for every hurdle
 That we may run with faith to win the prize
 Of a servant good and faithful.

As saints of old still line the way
 Retelling triumphs of His grace
 We hear their calls and hunger for the day
 When, with Christ, we stand in glory.

Pastoral Prayer

Heavenly Father,
we thank You for gathering us as Your people
and for speaking to us through Your Word.
Strengthen us now by Your Holy Spirit to live out what we have heard,
that our lives may reflect Your love, unity, and power in the days ahead.
Guard our hearts from division,
fill us with fresh dependence on You,
and make us eager to serve one another and our neighbors with the gifts You have given.

As we now move into a time of fellowship,
bless the conversations,
the sharing of food and drink,
and every moment of encouragement among us.
May laughter and kindness abound,
may burdens be lightened,
and may Your presence be felt in our midst.
Bind us closer together as one family in Christ,
and send us forth renewed to be Your witnesses in the world.

In the strong name of Jesus Christ our Lord we pray. **Amen.**

Benediction

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the unwavering love of God the Father,
and the enduring fellowship of His Spirit go with you all.

Go in boldness,
live in holiness,
and proclaim His goodness wherever you may walk.
Amen.