

St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Perth
Sunday, May 24th, 2026
Rev. Gerry Gallant

Ordinary Grace, Extraordinary Community
Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:41-47

Welcome

Announcements

Call to Worship

Come, people of God—let us turn from distraction to devotion, from noise to reverent wonder.

We come to worship the living God, who calls us by grace and holds us by power.

The Lord is not distant; He is near to the humble and attentive.

We lift our hearts to Him—our strength, our joy, our salvation.

Let us not chase a passing rush, but seek a steady life shaped by holy love.

Shape us, Lord, by Your Spirit, that Christ may be visible among us.

Come, let us give thanks with glad hearts, and bow with awe before our King.

We will worship the Lord with joy, and serve Him with our whole lives.

Prayer of Adoration and Invocation

Almighty God,

You are the sovereign Lord who builds Your people by Your own power.

We adore You for the finished work of Jesus Christ,
which is the sole and firm foundation of our lives.

Holy Spirit,

we ask that You press Your truth deep into our hearts today,
that it might shape our minds,
our wills,
and our common life together.

Rid us of casualness,

and grant us the holy gravity to see that You are here.

Draw us into a steadfast, single-minded fidelity to Your presence.

Amen.

Call to Confession

Brothers and sisters, the living God calls us not to perform for Him, but to come honestly before Him. When we drift from steadfast devotion, we do not drift into freedom—we drift into self-reliance. When we loosen our grip on Christ, we tighten our grip on lesser things. When we make God casual, sin becomes normal. And when we hide, we harden.

But the Father is not looking for excuses—He is inviting repentance. So let us bring our sin into the light, not to be crushed by shame, but to be cleansed by mercy. Let us confess our sins together.

Prayer of Confession

Merciful Father,
we confess that we have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed.
We have loved comfort more than holiness,
and we have preferred our own way to Your will.
We have been slow to listen,
quick to speak,
and careless with our words.
We have treated Your nearness as ordinary and Your kindness as small.

We confess our divided hearts:
our prayerlessness,
our distracted minds,
our coldness toward others,
and our reluctance to give ourselves away in love.
We have withheld forgiveness,
resisted accountability,
and chosen isolation over covenant life.
We have trusted our schedules,
our resources,
and our control more than Your power.

Forgive us, Father, for Jesus' sake.
Wash us clean, renew a right spirit within us,
and restore to us the joy of salvation.
Teach us to walk in humble obedience,
to love Your people sincerely,
and to live with open hands and glad hearts.

By Your Spirit,
 make us steadfast—devoted to what is true,
 faithful in what is ordinary,
 and eager to honor Christ in all things.
Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

Hear the good news: the Christian life is not a heavy burden we strive under to earn God's favor. Real joy is the deep assurance that Christ has acted, is present, and will completely finish what He began. In Christ crucified, risen, and exalted, your sins are entirely forgiven.

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: "Your Will Be Done" (V 1,2,4)

Your will be done, my God and Father
 As in heaven, so on earth
 My heart is drawn to self-exalting
 Help me seek Your kingdom first
 As Jesus walked, so I shall walk
 Held by Your same unchanging love
 Be still my soul, O lift your voice and pray:
 'Father, not my will but Yours be done'

How in that Garden he persisted
 I may never fully know
 The fearful weight of true obedience
 It was held by him alone
 What wondrous faith, to bear that cross!
 To bear my sin, what wondrous love!
 My hope was sure, when there my Saviour prayed:
 'Father, not my will but Yours be done'

As we go forth, our God and Father
 Lead us daily in the fight
 That all the world might see Your glory
 And Your Name be lifted high
 And in this Name we overcome
 For You shall see us safely home
 Now as your church, we lift our voice and pray:
 'Father, not my will but Yours be done! '

Responsive Reading

Colossians 3:12-17

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

¹⁴ **And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.**

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

¹⁶ **Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.** ¹⁷ **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Anthem (Music Ministry): "God is the Strength of My Heart"

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Acts 2:41-47

⁴¹ So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Sermon

Today we finish our lesson on Pentecost on the actual day of Pentecost. As we have learned, it is the chapter of noise and fire; the rushing wind, the tongues as of flame, the astonished crowd from many nations, the bold sermon by Peter, and the sudden harvest of three thousand souls.

But Luke, carried along by the Holy Spirit, slows the camera down. He wants us to pay attention. He wants us to see what we might call the miracle after the miracle. Not the spectacle of the moment, but the enduring legacy of it. Not merely that three thousand people were converted in a day, but that three thousand people were formed into a new kind of community, a community that would display the beauty of Christ in the ordinary rhythms of life.

And that is crucial for us, because many of us are tempted to chase the ‘Pentecost feeling’ and miss the ‘Pentecost fruit.’

We want the rush. We want the extraordinary. We want the dramatic turning point. Yet the Holy Spirit often gives us a rhythm in life more than a rush. He loves to build people and the church through what looks ordinary: steady devotion, shared meals, consistent prayer, faithful teaching, practiced generosity, and durable joy.

So Luke gives us a portrait of the lives of a Gospel-shaped people. It is not a rigid blueprint that must be copied in every detail, but it is a divinely inspired pattern. It shows what the church looks like when Christ is central, the Holy Spirit is active, and the Gospel is deeply believed.

As we begin, I want you to take a moment and consider a simple and searching question: **What does a healthy church actually look like?**

Some of you may answer with numbers, energy, programs, polish, facilities, or reputation.

But when God gives His own portrait of a healthy church, He gives something far deeper: a community grounded in truth, united in fellowship, overflowing in worship, marked by generosity, and growing by God’s sovereign power, a people whose common life makes the risen Christ visible and beautiful.

However, before we dive into this description of the early church, we need to address a danger that often arises with this text.

It is very easy to look at Acts 2:42-47 and see it as a ‘Golden Age’ of the church that is meant to make us feel like failures. We look at their radical generosity, their daily

meetings, and their unity, and we think, ‘We could never be that. Our church is too messy. Our lives are too busy.’

When we treat this text as an ideal to pine for, or a legalistic checklist to prove we are ‘real Christians,’ we miss the point entirely. This passage is not a club to beat the modern church with; it is a Spirit-formed direction for it to walk in.

The Jerusalem church didn’t become this way because they were ‘super-Christians’ or because they lived in a simpler time.

They lived in a city that had just executed their Leader. They faced poverty, social ostracization, and impending persecution. This community didn’t happen because they were better people than us; it happened because they were captivated by their Savior.

We do not strive for this life to earn God’s favor; we live this life because we have received it through the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Luke will in the coming chapters show us this community’s imperfections, conflict, hypocrisy with Ananias and Sapphira, complaints in Acts 6, and persecution. But in this first snapshot, the Spirit lets us see what happens when the risen Christ pours out His Spirit: He creates a people who together reflect His glory.

Everything begins with verse 42

Acts 2:42

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

The Greek word Luke uses (*proskarterountes*) carries the rich sense of persistence; continuing steadfastly, holding fast with single-minded fidelity and wholehearted resolve. This was not spiritual dabbling. This was not the Jerusalem church riding an emotional wave. This was devotion: habits, commitments, patterns, and priorities shaped by the Holy Spirit.

And what were they devoted to? Luke gives us four pillars — four strands braided into one shared life: **the apostles’ teaching, the fellowship, the breaking of bread, and the prayers.**

If you want a good way to determine the health of a church, it isn’t novelty or charisma or entertainment. It is sustained, Spirit-empowered devotion to these appointed means by which Christ forms and sustains His people.

Luke begins with doctrine: ‘the apostles’ teaching.’

Pentecost did not create an anti-intellectual church. The Spirit pressed truth deep into hearts so that it would shape minds, wills, and lives. Christianity is not primarily a mood; it is glorious, historical, life-giving news anchored in Christ crucified, risen, and exalted as Lord.

The apostles' teaching is the authoritative witness to that Gospel, preserved for us in the New Testament. Faithful churches remain unashamedly Word-centered. The church is built on the foundation of apostolic truth with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone.

And with this knowledge comes a warning, one that is vital for the survival of any local church. The early church was 'devoted' to the teachings of the Scriptures, implying that they did not feel free to innovate their own truths.

The greatest threat to the church has rarely been external persecution; it has almost always been internal departure from the Word of God.

We live in an age that prizes 'subjective experience' and 'personal truth.' People want a Jesus who fits their lifestyle, a God who never contradicts their desires, and a Gospel that requires no repentance.

When a church strays from the absolute authority of Scripture, it no longer serves a purpose.

Think of the God's Word as that lighthouse on a dangerous coast.

The waves of social trends and political scandals are like a storm crashing against the base. The lighthouse doesn't move to accommodate the waves. It doesn't lean into the wind to be 'relevant.' It doesn't turn off its light to avoid offending the sea.

Its only job is to stand still and keep the light burning.

If the lighthouse moves, it becomes a hazard. If it dims its lamp, it becomes useless. And if it tries to imitate the waves, it stops being what it was built to be.

When we move the light of Scripture to accommodate cultural trends or to avoid being 'offensive,' we are not being loving; we are being treacherous.

The Apostle Paul warned Timothy:

2 Timothy 4:3-4

³For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, ⁴and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

If we stray from the Word of God:

- Our fellowship becomes a social club.
- Our prayer becomes a monologue to a god of our imagination.
- Our mission becomes mere social work.

We must be a people who say, 'If the Bible says it, that is where I stand,' even when it is unpopular, even when it is costly, and even when it contradicts our own feelings.

Devotion to the apostles' teaching looks like this: making Lord's Day worship non-negotiable, that includes Sunday sports even for youth, opening Scripture regularly in the home, joining a Bible study as a steady rhythm, and measuring our opinions by the Word rather than measuring the Word by our opinions.

The second point Luke makes is that they devoted themselves 'to the fellowship' (*koinonia*).

This word means sharing, participation, and communion, a common life rooted in a common Christ. Fellowship is not first an event; it is a bond. Christians are united to one another because they are united to Christ.

Solitary Christianity is foreign to the New Testament. If you remove a coal from the fire, it grows cold. God's design is for Christians to live Covenant life together, bearing burdens, practicing hospitality, meeting needs, confessing sin, and speaking truth in love.

This challenges our radical individualism. Acts 2 calls us to belonging and responsibility. The Spirit forms a people who begin to say, 'Your need is my concern; your joy is my joy; your suffering matters to me.'

Devotion to fellowship looks like learning names and stories, opening your home, choosing proximity over isolation, and showing up when someone is hurting.

Thirdly Luke mentions that they devoted themselves 'to the breaking of bread.' This includes both ordinary meals in homes and the Lord's Supper. Meals were not merely functional. Table fellowship signaled acceptance and belonging. Ordinary spaces became holy ground because Christ was present.

When the Supper is celebrated, the gospel is made visible: Christ broken for His people, strengthening faith and binding believers into one body. The Spirit loves to use shared meals, shared gratitude, and shared remembrance to make the gospel tangible.

Do not treat the table lightly, whether the Lord's Table on the Lord's Day or kitchen tables throughout the week.

And finally Luke speaks of ‘the prayers.’ This suggests recognized habits of corporate prayer, structured, habitual dependence. A prayerless church is a self-reliant and ultimately powerless church. Prayer confesses: ‘Unless God acts, nothing eternal happens.’

Verse 42 gives us the engine: sustained devotion to Word, fellowship, table, and prayer. From this root, the Spirit produces beautiful fruit.

Acts 2:43

⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

‘And awe came upon every soul.’ This is reverent wonder, the sense that God is near, real, and at work. There is holy gravity to their life together.

‘Many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles’, authenticating the apostolic message in that foundational era. Yet the signs served the Word; Christ remained the center.

Our age is saturated with entertainment, which flattens everything into spectacle. Awe humbles, recalibrates, and puts God back at the center. When a church loses awe, it eventually loses joy and credible witness.

Ask yourself: Do I approach God with awe? Or have I made Him casual? A Spirit-filled church is not only active, it is reverent and weighty with God.

Acts 2:44-45

⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

This is not a mandatory political system or early communism. The sharing was voluntary, responsive to need, and never abolished private property.

Instead, Luke shows us a Spirit-formed ethic: a community where Jesus is more precious than possessions, so possessions become instruments of love. In a world of patronage and status-seeking, their generosity was motivated by genuine concern, not self-glory. Goods are for the good of another. Grace loosens our grip.

The phrase ‘as any had need’ calls for attentive, Spirit-led care. This requires knowing one another well enough to meet needs before they become crises. Generosity often travels along the road of proximity.

Some will feel crushed by this text, ‘I must liquidate everything!’

Others will dismiss it ‘That was then’.

Luke allows neither. He calls us to normal, practical, real generosity — not theatrical or guilt-driven, but the overflow of grace.

This is one of the Spirit’s most striking miracles: not simply tongues of fire, but open hands.

Acts 2:46-47

⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

Christianity was not a weekend activity. Day by day, the Gospel shaped ordinary life. They gathered publicly for worship and privately in homes for meals and intimacy.

Their posture was ‘glad and generous hearts’ — sincere, unmanufactured joy. This is Gospel gladness: the joy of forgiven sin, reconciled relationship, and new family.

A gloomy Christianity is a contradiction. Real joy is the deep assurance that Christ has acted, is present, and will finish what He began. Their life together was attractive, winning favor with the people — not because it was perfect, but because real grace is beautiful.

‘And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.’

Notice who does the adding: the Lord. This is both humbling and liberating. We cannot covert people to God. Our calling is to live a life of faithfulness — preach, pray, love, serve, witness. God’s work is fruitfulness.

The Word, fellowship, table, and prayer are not alternatives to mission; they are the fuel of mission. When these means of grace are alive, the church becomes a magnet because Christ becomes visible.

Acts 2:42–47 is not finally about an impressive community. It is about an impressive Christ. The cross stands at the silent center. Their devotion, love, generosity, and joy all flow from His self-giving love.

The invitation is not ‘Try harder to be a nicer community.’ It is: Come again to Christ. Ask for His Spirit to make His grace visible among us.

There are four questions we need to ask ourselves if we are to be a Spirit-Filled Church:

1. Are we devoted to the apostles' teaching? Do we submit to Scripture, hunger for Christ in the Word, and value faithful exposition because we love His voice?
2. Are we devoted to fellowship that becomes responsibility? Do we know one another well enough to bear burdens, meet needs, confess sins, and practice hospitality?
3. Are we devoted to the table — Christ remembered, grace received, welcome extended? Are our homes places where joy and sincerity grow?
4. Are we devoted to the prayers? Do we pray like people who believe God acts?

And as these become real among us, do we live with expectant witness, trusting the Lord to add those being saved?

Many of us are devoted to many things — routines, comforts, anxieties, screens, control. The early church became devoted to Word, fellowship, table, and prayer — and the life of love that flows from them.

These are not elite practices for spiritual athletes. They are ordinary Christian life together. The Spirit delights to use simple things to do profound work.

Do not read Acts 2 and merely admire it. Receive it as a mirror and an invitation. If convicted, run first to Christ. If inspired, return to the means of grace

May God grant us grace to be a devoted church, an awe-struck church, a generous church, a joyful and worshiping church, and a growing church built by the Lord that walks as His Salt and Light in this community for His glory alone.

Lets us pray,

Blessed Lord,
 who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning;
 grant us that we may in such wise hear them,
 read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them;
 that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word,
 we may embrace,
 and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life,
 which thou hast given us in our savior Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Thomas Cranmer

Invitation to Offering

Offering Prayer

Closing Hymn #438: “When Morning Gilds the Skies” (V 1,2,4)

When morning gilds the skies,
 My heart awaking cries:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!
 Alike at work and prayer
 To Jesus I repair:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!

To God, the Word on high,
 the hosts of angels cry:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!
 Let mortals too upraise
 their voice in hymns of praise:
 May Jesus Christ be praised!

Be this, while life is mine,
 My canticle divine,
 May Jesus Christ be praised!
 Be this the eternal song
 Through all the ages on,
 May Jesus Christ be praised!

Pastoral Prayer

Father in heaven, we thank You for drawing us together.
 Thank You that You meet ordinary people with extraordinary grace,
 and that You do lasting work through simple, faithful means.
 Seal what is true in our hearts, not as information we admire but as life we embrace.
 Where we are convicted, lead us quickly to Christ.
 Where we are weary, strengthen us by Your Spirit.
 Where we are anxious, steady us with Your promises.
 Where we have been cold toward one another, soften us with Your love.

Make us a people marked by reverent joy
 joy that is not manufactured,
 but rooted in forgiveness and upheld by hope.
 Make us attentive to one another:
 quick to bear burdens,

eager to show hospitality,
ready to give,
and slow to assume the worst.
Teach us to speak truth in love,
to pray with dependence,
and to keep Christ at the center of all we do.

And as we move from this gathering into fellowship,
we ask You to bless our conversation, our meals, and our time together.
Let tables become places of welcome.
Let words become instruments of encouragement.
Guard us from shallow talk that distracts and from careless speech that wounds.
Give us sincerity without performance,
warmth without cliques,
and joy without pretense.
Use this time to knit hearts together,
to notice needs,
to strengthen the lonely,
and to draw newcomers into real belonging.

Send us out as quiet witnesses
faithful in the ordinary rhythms of life
so that our neighbors might see the beauty of Christ
not merely in what we say, but in how we love.
We ask all of this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Benediction

May the God who gives endurance and encouragement grant you unity in Christ;
may the Lord make you steadfast in what is true,
joyful in what is good, and generous in love;
and may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all
now and always. **Amen.**