



Pioneer Pastoral Charge
Sunday May 31, 2020
Pentecost

Rev. Helen Reed, Diaconal Minister

Candle Lighting: *The light of Christ... God around us,
among us, within us.*

Call to Worship¹

“When the day of Pentecost came,
they were all together in one place.”

**This Pentecost, our hearts are together,
even though we are apart.**

“Suddenly, a sound like a gale-force wind filled the
whole house where they were sitting.”

**This Pentecost, may God’s Spirit fill our homes
and meet us where we are.**

“Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit
spread through their ranks,”

**This Pentecost, we proclaim that God’s hope,
peace, joy and love are more contagious than
any virus ever could be!**

“and they started speaking
as the Spirit enabled them.”

**with one heart and voice this Pentecost,
let us worship God!**

œHymn: ♪ MV#156 Dance with the spirit.

Scripture is our song for the journey,
the living word passed on
from generation to generation to guide and inspire.
**God calls us to be doers of the word
and not hearers only.**

Scripture opened, God invited³

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.
Acts 2:1-2

Two thousand years ago,
a band of disciples felt lost and leaderless.
Their leader, rabbi and teacher had been executed.
They held to the hope and joy of their Easter faith,
But they also questioned:

What now? What next? Where do we go from here?
In the story of Pentecost,
the spirit moves amongst these disciples
like the wind.
The disciples were energized, strengthened,
and mobilized.

In the pattern of Pentecost,
the winds of God blow us out of apathy,
help us to make changes,
enable us to take action.

Holy Spirit

come like the wind into our isolation doldrums.

Breath of God

renew us in this time of pandemic.

**Energizing Spirit bring us courage, compassion
and strength to face this bewildering time.**

Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. Acts 2: 3

Like a fire, a conviction took hold of their hearts.
The Spirit was moving in the disciples.
They were able to understand in new ways,
with deep passion, and with strongly felt faith.
Where once there was
despair and apathy and disillusionment,
there was now hope and energy and meaning.
The Spirit's fire was burning.

Holy Spirit

**warm our lives with your presence
as we begin to re-open.**

Fire of God

**enflame our commitment to those
most affected by the virus.**

Spirit of Passion

**be born anew in your people
with lessons learned and new vision.**

All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

Acts 2: 4-6

On the day of Pentecost,
People from many lands
And of many languages came together.
And there was a miracle of understanding and unity.

Holy Spirit

help us to listen to one another.

Spirit of Pentecost

grant us the ability to respect each other.

God of Possibilities

enable understanding in our midst.

Words of assurance.

When life blows around us,
when everything feels out of control
God is there.

God's spirit of love surrounds us,
swirling into our souls to wake us up,
to show us that we have the passion and power
to go into the world and love.

God is always with us.

We are never alone.

Thanks be to God! Amen.

Message/Reflections

In today's Pentecost service the prayers and liturgy
come from some of my colleagues.

Our call to worship comes to us from the Rev.
Penny Nelson, of Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia.
Penny was part of the youth group of Camrose
United Church that I led many years ago. She is
now a respected Minister in the United Church and

has offered amazing leadership in these last couple of months as fear and sorrow have repeatedly visited that corner of our country.

Our prayer of opening the scripture – a prayer for God’s Grace – comes to us from Rev. Ted Dodd of Winnipeg, Manitoba. Ted was one of my teachers at the Centre for Christian Studies where I received my ministry schooling and I value his wisdom. In our Diaconal community he continues to remind us of our responsibility to be inclusive, to invite folk in, to be a voice that raises injustice. I consider him a good friend.

Our Communion liturgy is given to us by the Rev. Gord Waldie of Grande Prairie. Gord and I have met through many Conference events. He can be mischievous, but also very serious and he has a knack for speaking about faith in the now, connecting to today.

So, with contributions from me, this service brings together voices from four different provinces, four different perspectives, four different contexts, four different experiences. Yet we are all joined together in our dedication to living our faith in our daily lives. Even in those moments when life has challenged us, even when the folk we serve turn to us for guidance (despite the fact that we are as confused, frustrated and as scared as they are), each one of us knows that God is there with us offering us what we need to take the next step forward. Each one of

us tries to offer our best to make the world a little bit brighter, a little bit better.

As Ministers, there are times when we may feel lost, or alone, or empty, or frustrated, or angry at the world. These are the times when it is imperative that we turn to God and lean into the strength, guidance and love of the holy. This is how we re-ignite our fire of faith that will move us forward again.

The story of Pentecost occurs fifty days after Easter. The faithful disciples, as we heard Ted identify, were unsure about what they were to do next, how were they to live forward into the new and unknown and dangerous world before them. We find ourselves in a similar situation. Many people from many countries had come to one place to celebrate Harvest (their climate is reversed from ours) bringing a multitude of opinions, contexts and attitudes to the gathering.

In that gathering of faithful people something happened... “look what the wind blew in” we might say. A big wind came and shook them up. Some might say that winds come here way too often and when they do we grumble that they are tiring, that they make life a bit harder. Sometimes winds are destructive and when the really big winds land familiarity can be uprooted, treasures are lost and life will never be the same again.

So first the wind blew in and shook people up. Then, we hear that tongues of fire, rested on them. They became energized, this new thing that they hadn't seen before inspired them to go out and find a new way of being God's leaders in the world.

Now, I'm going to bring in another perspective, another voice: Rev. Robin King, of Rising Spirit ministries in Bashaw and Ponoka United Churches, shares a celebratory date with me. We both entered the Order of Ministry 10 years ago at High River, Alberta and have become friends and colleagues through Coronation Presbytery.

Robin, in a reflection about Pentecost this week wondered if the Spirit wasn't already there. Perhaps that wind fanned the tiny embers or flames of a faith that was just waiting to be recognized and released into the world. The Spirit blowing through, ruffling feathers, created an opportunity to recognize a space for inspiration to move into their new world, for creativity to blossom as they looked for new ways to be the church, for connections to be made with others who didn't necessarily speak the same language or have the same context as them, for strangers to become friends, for people to look at the world differently and bring love into it.

Over the last few months our world has become tumbled and uprooted and a bit harder. We have had to change how we go about our daily business and the world is becoming restless and angry and

nasty at times. We see, and sometimes we do it ourselves, people being judged for what they look like rather than who they are, assumptions are made, lives are lost and fear moves in.

I wonder if we are living in a windy moment but that opportunities are before us to be inspired, to be creative, to connect in new ways. Is God lighting a new faith fire in us? Like those voices from many corners of the world who joined together in Jerusalem, we may need to let the power of the spirit blow into life the power of faith that hides within us. We are part of a community that has many contexts, and opinions and voices but we have the power to be God's love in the world... caring for others, listening to other's stories so that we know who they are. We need the connections with many people to create something good. We need God to show us how to grow what is already in us.

Can we, each in our own way, lift our voices to God and share not only our frustrations but also our willingness to hear where and how God needs us to be? Can we see the many lights of love around us ready to journey together into a better unknown? Each of us has our own context, our own struggles but as Pentecost shows us God can bring us together if we are willing to listen and learn and move forward from fear into God's world – even if we don't recognize it.

Let God's powerful wind of love, light the faith within you. Let your light shine in the world.

Offering Invitation

Almighty God,
You blow around us changing our directions.
You fire us up so that
we can do your work and be your unselfish love.
We bring to you our gifts of time, talent,
and treasure.
Bless all that we offer,
that it might be for the stewardship
and the nurture of your beloved creation,
and all of your people.
By our gifts,
may your presence in this world be made known.
By our gifts, may we embody your grace and love
towards all that you have made. **Amen.**

Hymn: 🎵 MV#142 Oh, a song must rise

Communion²

From the Beginning,
followers of Christ have broken bread together.
Gathered at tables fancy and simple,
sharing wafers or full meals.
In this era of pandemic and separation
we continue to gather together.
Sitting in our homes, with our own supplies,
but linked together by the bits and bytes and cables.
The meal we share is hosted by
the God who meets us where we are.

Great Thanksgiving

May the Peace of Christ be with you.

And also with you.

Feel the wind of God blow in your lives.

Refreshing us, bringing in new air.

We offer ourselves to God who is
in our every breath.

**With the breath of God in us
we share our fears, our hopes,
our dreams, our thanks.**

God you speak Creation into being.
We give thanks for all that You have made.
For the waters from which life sprang forth,
for the wind that fills our lungs,
for the food that sustains our bodies,
for the fellow creatures with whom
we share the world.
We sing songs and shout
our praise and thanksgiving.

God you call us to live in you
and you choose to share our lives.
So we share with you
our fears and anxieties...
we name our laments....
we dare to share our dreams and visions...
Trusting that you hear our prayers,
trusting that in love
you hold them and answer them.

God you meet us where we are,
be that in our churches, or in the fields,
or in the forest, or in our living rooms.
You speak to us constantly through many voices.
You remind us over and over again
that even when we are distanced from each other
we are not alone.

We thank you for all those voices
that have shared your love and promise
over the centuries:
prophets and pastors,
men and women filled with your Spirit,
all those who remind us
of how you would have us live
within the world you have made.

Song of Creation: MV #203 (Tune VU#625)

**O Holy, Holy, Holy God,
O God of time and space.
All earth and sea and sky above
bear witness to your grace.
Hosanna in the highest heav'n,
creation sings your praise.
And blessed is the One who comes
and bears your name always!**

Remembering

As followers of Jesus,
the one we name as the Messiah
we remember his story.
Born of the young woman Mary,
raised in a backwater town,

he came to share your vision for the world.
He modelled your Kingdom,
lived by its values,
and in doing so enraged those with power.
Knowing what was to come,
he promised that we would not be left alone;
that an Advocate,
the Holy Spirit, would be there
to sustain us always.
Then he was arrested, tried, convicted executed.
But the story was not over.
You, God of power in weakness,
you raised him from death
and he returned to breathe hope and life
into his fear-filled followers, into us.

**As we gather for this meal
we remember a meal that
Jesus shared with his friends
on the night before his death.**

We remember that he took some bread,
blessed it, broke it, and passed it to them saying:
**This is my body broken by and for the world.
Eat this and remember me.**

Later he took a cup of wine, blessed it, and passed
it to them saying:

**This is the Cup of the New Covenant,
Drink it and remember me.**

And so, even all these years later,
we continue to eat and drink and remember,
sharing in the meal of faith.

And pledging, as we remember,
to follow the Way that Jesus laid out for us.

Invoking

Holy Spirit, you blow through closed doors
and into the places where we are.
You meet us in our homes and fill us with hope,
you light the fire of transformation in our hearts.
As we pause to remember today,
make us, while separate,
unified in heart and hope.
In this bread and this cup
may we meet the Risen Christ.
In this meal of faith and transformation
may we feel the fire and wind of the Kingdom.
And once we have eaten may we be,
unified in the common quest
to share the dreams You have given us.
Willing to offer what we have
so that those dreams and visions
take shape in our world.

We pray in the name of the One, who breathes
hope and peace into our fear, and who encouraged
us to pray together as we sing

The Prayer of Jesus (VU 959)

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us;
lead us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours.
Now and forever. Amen.**

Breaking/Pouring

The Bread we break is the Bread of Life
The Drink we pour is the Drink of Love
These are Gifts from God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

Prayer After the Meal

Even while we remain physically separated,
this shared meal unites us.
May this meal we share with each other
and with the whole Christian family
across the centuries and miles
changes who we are.
May it feed the fire of our faith.
May it strengthen us
when the storms blow through.
As we continue to live as people
who have had the Holy Spirit
breathed onto and into us,
may we love and serve God,
our neighbour, and ourselves.
Amen.

∞Blessing

Let us go out into God's world
knowing the love of God is always with us.
Let us go out into God's world,
letting an abundance of God's love
overflow from us as blessings to the world.
Let us go out into God's world
but being the face of God in our communities.

May the grace of Jesus the Christ,
and the love of God,
and the inspiring breath of the Holy Spirit
be with all of us, today and always.
Alleluia! Amen.

Changing the Christ Candle:

The light of Christ, shining into all the corners of the earth,
showing us where we are and where we are meant to be.
The Spirit of God. Breathe it in...and know that God is with us
wherever we go.

Hymn: ♪ MV#135 Called by Earth and Sky

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Acknowledgements

- ¹ Call to Worship: Rev. Penny Nelson. Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia
- ² Communion Liturgy: Rev. Gord Waldie, Grande Prairie, Alberta
- ³ Opening the Scripture: Rev. Ted Dodd, Winnipeg, Manitoba
Rev. Robin King: revrobsgodblog.blogspot.com May 29, 2020