

Sunday June 8, 2025

Pentecost - 100th Anniversary of the United Church of Canada

Today's service was, largely, prepared by the Rev. Penny Nelson, currently serving Avon United Church, Hantsport, NS, and the Rev. Michelle Armstrong, currently serving St. Paul's United Church and St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Fredericton, NB.

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The remainder of today's service is taken from the inaugural service of the United Church of Canada, June 10, 1925, and is so noted.

We Gather In God's Presence

Prelude: "Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart" Morecambre. F.C. Atkinson. Setting by John Carter

Birthdays, Celebrations, and Life and Work of the Congregation

Lighting the Christ Candle:

Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light for my path.

Preparing Our Hearts for Worship

Call to Worship

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

Today, we gather in many places and ways, yet we are one in heart!

Touched by the Spirit, the first disciples were enlivened.

By the Spirit, we live and thrive!

On the day of Pentecost, the Church was born.

Today, we celebrate 100 years of being the United Church!

In their gathering that day, people were changed by the Spirit.

In our gathering today, we seek the Spirit's direction for tomorrow.

With open hearts, let us worship God and pray for the Spirit's presence amongst us.

Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Hymn MV 142 "Oh, A Song Must Rise" Words and Music © 1995 Paul B. Svenson. Arrangement © 2006 Bryn Nixon.

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Opening Prayer (*unison*) (As based on the original Opening Prayer of the Inaugural worship service of The United Church of Canada)

Awesome God,

on Pentecost, you gave the gift of the Holy Spirit

to an expectant and united church.

And by your Spirit, you bring us to this time and place

to lift our hearts, minds, and bodies to worship you.

Grant us the hope of the same Spirit
in our life and worship.
Help us to expect great things from you,
and attempt great things *for* you!
We are diverse in many ways, but our hearts are one in you.
May we show the world
the love we experience in Jesus,
and the power we find in the Spirit
as we seek to honour your dream.
To your glory be our worship and witness. Amen.

Ministry of Music: Hymn Sing

Prayer of Confession

The act of Confession is a way that we admit to dampening the movement of the Spirit in our lives and the world.

Gracious God,
Time and again, you send us the gift of your Spirit.
Time and again, you send us the gift of your dreams.
Time and again, you love us back into being.
And time and again, we turn away from you.
Gracious God, forgive us
for all the times we have twisted or forgotten your Good News,
for all the times in which we have confused unity with “sameness”,
for all the times we have failed to let your Kingdom inspire our living,
We are sorry.

For the times we have tried to be the church without you,
for the times we have doubted your presence and power to work in us,
for the times we have believed the lie that there is not enough and we are not enough,
forgive us.

Take all the ways that we have fallen into hubris and fear,
missing the mark as individuals and as a denomination,
and in your mercy, help us to move into the future you have for us.

Open our hearts, God.

May your Spirit ignite your dream in us again!

This we pray in Christ’s holy and powerful name. Amen.

Words of Assurance

Dear Ones of God, receive these words and take heart:
God poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost,
healing hearts and divisions,
empowering the church to move forward in Christ's spirit.
And God continues to pour out the Holy Spirit on us today.
So, let us rejoice in God's love and forgiveness,
And share this blessing with all those we meet,
for we are forgiven, and we are blessed to be a blessing.

Thanks be to God!

Amen.

A New Creed VU 918

We are not alone,
we live in God's world.

We believe in God:
who has created and is creating,
who has come in Jesus,
the Word made flesh,
to reconcile and make new,
who works in us and others
by the Spirit.

We trust in God.

We are called to be the Church:
to celebrate God's presence,
to live with respect in Creation,
to love and serve others,
to seek justice and resist evil,
to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen,
our judge and our hope.

In life, in death, in life beyond death,
God is with us.

We are not alone.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn VU 321 "Maker, in Whom We Live" Words: Charles Wesley, 1747. Music: George Job Elvey, 1868.
Words and Music in the Public Domain.

Maker, in whom we live, in whom we are and move,
the glory, power, and praise receive for your creating love.
Let all the angel throng give thanks to God on high,
while earth repeats the joyful song and echoes to the sky.

Incarnate Deity, let all the ransomed race
render in thanks their lives to you for your redeeming grace.
The grace to sinners shown, you heavenly choirs proclaim,
and cry, "Salvation to our God, salvation to the Lamb!"

Spirit of Holiness, let all your saints adore
your sacred energy, and bless your heart renewing power.
No angel tongues can tell your love's ecstatic height,
the glorious joy unspeakable, the beatific sight.

Eternal, Triune God, let all the hosts above,
let all on earth below record and dwell upon your love.
When heaven and earth have fled before your glorious face,
may all the saints your love has made sing everlasting praise.

We Open Ourselves to Receive God's Blessings

Prayer of Illumination

Spirit of God, you hovered over the waters before the first days of Creation,
and you hovered over the disciples on the first day that Christ's church came alive.
You were present to our ancestors in faith 100 years ago as they came together to form
The United Church of Canada,
You were present in all those who continued to build a uniting church in the generations that
followed,
and we believe that you are still present with us today.
Open our hearts to you in this time so that
we might know your wisdom,
trust in the ways you proclaim,
and live into them with hope!
All this we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Responsive Reading: Psalm 104:24-35 *VU 827 part two.*

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation.

O God, how manifold are your works!

**With Wisdom at your side you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.**

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation.

There lies the great and mighty Sea,
teeming with living things both great and small.

**Upon it sail the ships,
and there is Leviathan, the monster you made to play in it.**

All these look to you,
to give them their food in due season.

What you give them they gather up.

**When you open your hand,
you fill them with good things.**

But when you hide your face they despair.

When you take away their breath, they die, and return to dust.

**But when you send out your spirit, they live again,
and you renew the face of the earth.**

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation.

May your glory, O God, endure forever.

May you rejoice, O God, in your works.

When you look at the earth it trembles,
when you touch the mountains they smoke.

I will sing to God as long as I live.

I will praise my God while I have being.

Bless, O my soul, the Almighty, who rules all creation.

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21 The Coming of the Holy Spirit

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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 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 people 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. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?"

Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit,
and they shall prophesy.
And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

*The other readings for this week are: **Genesis 11:1-9 (alternate); Romans 8:14-17; John 14:8-17, (25-27)***

Sermon: “Are you the Messiah?”

Hymn VU 459 “Here, O My Lord, I See You Face to Face” Words: Horatius Bonar, 1855.

Music: James Langran, 1861. Words and Music in the Public Domain.

Here, O my Lord, I see you face to face;
here would I touch and handle things unseen,
here grasp with firmer hand eternal grace,
and all my weariness upon you lean.

Here, would I feed upon the bread of God,
here drink with you the royal wine of heaven;
here would I lay aside each earthly load,
here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song;
 this is the heavenly table for me spread;
 here let me feast, and feasting, still prolong
 the fellowship of living wine and bread.

Too soon we rise; the symbols disappear.
 The feast, though not the love, is past and gone;
 the bread and wine remove, but you are here,
 nearer than ever, still my shield and sun.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
 yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
 giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
 the Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.

Invitation to the Table

(from the inaugural service of the United Church of Canada – June 10, 1925)

Beloved in the Lord,

As we celebrate the Holy Communion of the body and blood of Christ, we are gratefully to remember that our Lord instituted this Sacrament to be observed in His Church for the perpetual remembrance of the sacrifice of Himself in His death, to give a visible assurance and seal of all the benefits thereof unto true believers, to be a bond and pledge of their union with Him and with one another as members of His body which is the Church, and to engage them further in the fulfillment of all the duties they owe to Him.

Hear the words of the institution of this Sacrament as recorded in Holy Scripture (1 Cor. 11:23-25)

I have received of the Lord that which also I deliver unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed took break:

And when he had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who by the blood of Thy dear Son hast consecrated for us a new and living way into the holiest of all, and who admitest Thy people into such wonderful communion that they should dwell in Him and He in them: grant us, we beseech Thee, the assurance of Thy mercy, and sanctify us by Thy Holy Spirit, that, drawing near unto Thee with a pure heart and undefiled conscience, we may receive Thy gifts with thankfulness and offer unto Thee a sacrifice in righteousness.

It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God. Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee, and saying,

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Glory be to Thee, O Lord most high.

Holy and Merciful God, who didst give Thy dear Son for the life of the world: not as we ought but as we are able, we bless Thee for His incarnation, for His life on earth, for His precious sufferings and death on the Cross, for His resurrection from the dead, and for His glorious ascension to Thy right hand, where He maketh continual intercession for us.

And we most humbly beseech Thee, O Merciful Father, to vouchsafe unto us now Thy gracious presence, and so to sanctify with Thy Word and Spirit these Thine own gifts of bread and wine which we set before Thee, that the bread which we break may be to us the communion of the body of Christ and the cup of blessing which we bless the communion of the blood of Christ.

And we beseech Thee to receive this memorial of the blessed sacrifice of Thy Son which He has commanded us to make until He come; in union with whom we offer unto Thee our souls and our bodies; entreating Thee to grant unto us and unto all Thy people, through the mediation of our Lord Jesus Christ, the remission of our sins and all other benefits of His passion.

Amen.

The minister shall then take the bread and, breaking it in view of the people, say:

Our Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took break: and, when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Then the minister, taking the cup in his hand, shall say:

After the same manner also He took the cup, when He had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Distribution of the elements.

As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.

We Respond To God's Grace

Invitation to Invest in God's Mission

We have witnessed the fruits of God's Spirit, in the faithful ancestors who came before us building the church, in the humble acknowledgement of wrongs and the seeking of reconciliation, and in the works done for justice. We have witnessed God's blessings, in communities gathered sharing love and grace and in resources shared for the flourishing of all. With thanksgiving and joy, we present our offerings this day for what has been and what will come.

Offertory Hymn VU 218 vs. 1 "We Praise You, O God" Words: Julia Cory, 1902.

Music: Netherlands melody, 1626, harmonized Edward Kremser, 1877.

Words, Music, and Harmonization in the Public Domain.

We praise you, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
in grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
We lay it before you; we kneel and adore you;
we bless your holy name, glad praises we sing.

Prayer of Dedication

Empowering God,
we believe your Spirit is with us this day, leading us into a new future.
We offer our time, talents, finances, and hopes,
trusting you to do more than we can dream possible.
Bless us and these offerings with your Spirit.
May we be bold disciples,
deeply connected to you,
who dare to act for justice.
This we pray, in Jesus' name.
Amen.

Hymn VU 380 "She Comes Sailing on the Wind" Words and Music: Gordon Light, 1985.

Arrangement: Andrew Donaldson, 1994. Words and Music © 1987 Common Cup Company.

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She comes sailing on the wind, her wings flashing in the sun;
on a journey just begun, she flies on.
And in the passage of her flight, her song rings out through the night,
full of laughter, full of light, she flies on.

Silent waters rocking on the morning of our birth,
like an empty cradle waiting to be filled.
And from the heart of God the Spirit moved upon the earth,
like a mother breathing life into her child.

Many were the dreamers whose eyes were given sight
when the Spirit filled their dreams with life and form.
Deserts turned to gardens, broken hearts found new delight,
and then down the ages still she flew on.

She comes sailing on the wind, her wings flashing in the sun;
on a journey just begun, she flies on.
And in the passage of her flight, her song rings our through the night,
full of laughter, full of light, she flies on.

To a gentle girl in Galilee, a gentle breeze she came,
a whisper softly calling in the dark,
the promise of a child of peace whose reign would never end,
Mary sang the Spirit song with in her heart.

Flying to the river, she waited circling high
above the child now grown so full of grace.
As he rose up from the water, she swept down from the sky,
and she carried him away in her embrace.

She comes sailing on the wind, her wings flashing in the sun;
on a journey just begun, she flies on.
And in the passage of her flight, her song rings our through the night,
full of laughter, full of light, she flies on.

Long after the deep darkness that fell upon the world,
after dawn returned in flame of rising sun,
the Spirit touched the earth again, again her wings unfurled,
bringing life in wind and fire as she flew on.

She comes sailing on the wind, her wings flashing in the sun;
on a journey just begun, she flies on.
And in the passage of her flight, her song rings our through the night,
full of laughter, full of light, she flies on.

Prayer for the Church

Men: Holy One,
We are your church, your people gathered.
Since the beginning, you have been with us.
In the dry and desert-like moments,
when decline and death surround us,
you teach us that we need you and to trust in you.
When these truths have been remembered, your people have flourished.

Women: We have been together as The United Church of Canada for 100 years.

On this historic threshold, we remember yet again
that we live and move and have our being in *you*.

It is time to dance with the Holy Spirit as we move past this moment.

All: Empower us loving God,

to live by your Spirit,

unafraid of where She is taking us.

Now is the time to dig deep in our faith!

To dare to be your resurrection people, for Christ's Way is our way.

Let us be alive by your Spirit's power!

Awaken us to your moving among us even now

so we can boldly follow your call into tomorrow.

Commissioning (from the inaugural service of the United Church of Canada – June 10, 1925)

Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever.

Amen!

Sung Response: VU 424 vs. 1 "May the God of Hope Go with Us" Words: Alvin Schutmaat, 1984.

Music: Argentine folk melody. Words and Music in the Public Domain.

May the God of hope go with us every day,
filling all our lives with love and joy and peace.

May the God of justice speed us on our way,
bringing light and hope to every land and race.

Praying, let us work for peace, singing, share our joy with all,
working for a world that's new, faithful when we hear Christ's call.

Postlude: "Spirit of the Living God" Daniel Iverson. Setting by John Carter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BBQ & National Centennial Anniversary Service TODAY: We are planning a bbq dinner at 4 p.m. prior to viewing the National Centennial Anniversary Service in the sanctuary at 5:30 p.m. The service will be broadcast live from Gower Street United Church in St. John's, Nfld.

UCW Summer Event is July 19 at Siloam United Church, London, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. The guest speakers and musical performers are Colleen Jamieson, Danielle Hill and Jolene Jamieson-Nethcott. They are members of Oneida First Nation and are known collectively as "Sisters in Spirit."

Lectionary Readings for next week: June 15, First after Pentecost (a.k.a. Trinity Sunday)
Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15