

May 31, 2020 – The Day of Pentecost

A Blessed Sunday morning to you, and welcome to our thirteenth online worship service, during the time of church closure due to COVID. If we were gathered today, our banners and paraments would be in the flame colours for Pentecost: reds and oranges, and if you followed Lorre's instructions from last week you might be wearing the right colour today. The days of church closure continue and I miss our gatherings so much – I miss singing together to celebrate our love of God, I miss sharing communion, I miss seeing God in the physical presence of each one of you who comes to church. I wish the days were longer and my energy reservoir was full, to allow me to reach out to everyone by phone but this has not been possible for me. So please, please know, if you want or need to talk, I am relying on you to reach out to me – we are in a season of a fire-fighting model of pastoral care, where I am responding to you rather than having the inner resources to proactively reach out. But everyone is in my heart and my prayers and I am thankful for your emails, texts and notes – every single one ☺

This week the Risk Management Ministry met with a few of us including Bonnie Scott, Brad and I via video/phone conferencing, and soon we will share with you some protocols for small group gatherings for when we are allowed to do that again. More information on this will also be included in the upcoming Lamplighter.

Because of the increased infection risk from singing, Brad has recommended (in keeping with numerous health recommendations) that we not sing. This makes me sad. It has moved me to some very inelegant bawling to be honest. Our collective joyful song onto the Lord has been a primary vehicle of praise for me. But this new reality allows us to listen differently, and to notice the presence of Spirit amongst us differently ... so I encourage you to cry and grieve the things we are losing, if even only for a time, and also to be open to the new gifts God will bring to us in this season – not only of Pentecost, but a season for listening differently, singing solo, and singing from our souls.

When you listen thus to the prelude music, you will realize Brad has done some incredible layering of birdsong, flute and organ ... Lorre has set Brad's composition to pictures of our Grand River, and the prelude incorporates our prayer of territorial acknowledgement. You will have to make yourself still and silent in order to hear and notice everything in the piece ☺ It is a beautiful vehicle of praise and thanksgiving, as is our Sending Hymn today, Spirit of Gentleness – a welcome to the season of Spirit.

Please remember that, as things are opened up, the COVID-19 virus remains alive and well, and for us to likewise remain alive and well, precautions are advised: safe distancing, avid handwashing and polite consideration of and respect for the fears of others are, at this time, acts of love.

Please exercise these acts of love generously.

Remember also to reach out by telephone, email (church phone 519-653-4721, text or cell call 519-588-7701 or by email pastor@st-peters-cambridge.org) or facebook if you want or need a friendly phone call or a screen door, driveway, porch or deck visit. Please remain connected with each other by telephone – make it your goal this week to call at least one person every day for a telephone visit. You will be blessed, and will be a blessing in the process ☺

- with love, in Christ, Pastor Janaki.

**Please take a few moments of silence, prepare your heart,
centre yourself for worship.**



Prelude: Land acknowledgement with Brad's creative composition ☺

Click here: <https://youtu.be/X9Zar8-GeUs>

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with us all, in your home and in mine.

Prayer of the Day:

Holy God, on this Day of Pentecost, we are reminded that you open the hearts of your faithful people by sending into us your Spirit. May Spirit direct us into light, give us right judgment and joy in your peace. Through Spirit, please hold us close – close to you Father, close to our teacher and brother Jesus. Open our hearts anew – sending into us replenishment in Spirit. Amen

The Holy Gospel according to John 20: 19-23.

C: Glory to you O Lord.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." [NRSV]

The Gospel of our Lord. ***C: Praise to you, O Christ.****

Psalm 104: 24 34 Psalm for Pentecost - Bradley Moggach, Piano & Spoken Word.

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tXmEYnqZID4>

Reading homework:

Acts 2 – the story of the descent of Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

(The Message Translation is recommended – here is the link:

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=acts+2&version=MSG>)

Acclamation of the Word:

"Morning Star" The piece was recorded in 2009 for the 175th anniversary of our congregation. It was part of a CD created for the occasion entitled, Remember, Rejoice, Renew." We often sing this song following baptisms at church ☺ It is especially meaningful today when we think of the entry of Spirit ☺

Click here: <https://youtu.be/sNWav0cgSJc>

The Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:4-13

God's various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various ministries are carried out everywhere; but they all originate in God's Spirit. God's various expressions of power are in action everywhere; but God himself is behind it all. Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, everyone benefits. All kinds of things are handed out by the Spirit, and to all kinds of people! The variety is wonderful:

wise counsel
clear understanding
simple trust
healing the sick
miraculous acts
proclamation
distinguishing between spirits
tongues

interpretation of tongues.

All these gifts have a common origin, but are handed out one by one by the one Spirit of God. He decides who gets what, and when.

You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you’re still one body. It’s exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which *he* has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive. [The Message Translation]

Word of God, word of life. ***C: Thanks be to God.***

Meditation (imagine Pastor Janaki’s voice here):

I claim no gifts when it comes to arts and crafts. I have been known to staple or tape a loose hem up due to my allergy to needle and thread. But for some reason, unknown to me, at the beginning of COVID lockdown, I took a canvas and painted it all black. I knew something else was supposed to go on it, but the black canvas was all I had at the start of this journey.

As we have journeyed together (while keeping our social distance) to this point, I have relied deeply on the variety of “manifestations of the Spirit”¹ that are present in our congregational family. They are listed in the reading from 1 Corinthians ...

In the first few weeks of lockdown, Bonnie Berg sent me scripture references to help me understand some peculiar bodily aches I had (wise counsel, proclamation, clear understanding). Later on, in a Facebook discourse, John Goodall expressed his deep and simple trust in Divine Presence over the very real and rampant COVID-fear, demonstrating the capacity to distinguish between the spirits of despair and hope.

In the miraculous acts department, I put Brad and Lorre, for their work on our Youtube channel. Bonnie Scott also goes into the “miraculous acts” department, for mailing out our worship services physically to those who cannot access email/internet (if you know someone who needs a mailout, contact Bonnie for miracle delivery via the church phone). Jean whose fabric artistry has given us so many beautiful banners turned her fabric miracle work into gown sewing, gathering sewing elves to sew gowns. The handiwork of our little body of Jesus Christ is being worn on the frontlines, literally ☺

¹ As the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) expresses it in 1 Corinthians 12:7 “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

Helga has been not only teacher to the Sunday School kids, via email home learning packages, but has been my teacher, sharing proclamation of the Word and trust in God with me via emails, as many others of you have also.

And so many of you have healed the sickness of isolation with phone calls, porch or driveway visits, walks, emails, and the sharing of food and love ☺ You have healed the sickness of frustration and fear, of loneliness and sadness by reaching out to each other in creative and simple ways.

Through this time, the Vision in Mission Ministry Team and our entire Church Council have, indeed, covered so many of these manifestations of Spirit. And this past week, our Risk Management Ministry (for they are a ministry more than merely a taskforce or team) have similarly demonstrated manifestations of Spirit.

As individuals and ministry groups you have found ways to be manifestations of Spirit in these unprecedented times and I know there is more yet to be revealed. I feel your reach, in a variety of ways and Pentecost colours, with hopeful images fill my limited artists mind.

We have not gathered on Sundays, and at times the absence of the gathering has left me bereft and empty as I know it has for many of you. This week, after our Risk Management ministry meeting, I cried big sobby, soggy, snotty Kleenex cries from the raw grief of not being able to be refilled by our voices together making a joyful noise unto the Lord. To say I miss our gatherings is an understatement – and there are not enough words to convey the things I miss. I have felt that sadness with peculiar intensity this week ... maybe it is because, as I said last week, Lent has felt scrunched into Easter, and Easter balled up into ascension ... maybe it is because I find myself missing the body of Christ in its incarnational reality, in the physicality of hugs and bread and wine and voices gathered together on the journey of thanksgiving – for when I have been empty, your voices in song, and the music of Brad and John has been my vehicle to the wellspring of eternal life in Christ. This is manifestation of Spirit at work.

Not having this normal vehicle has been part of the black paint of grief on my canvas. The canvas was black and I didn't know what would go on it ... but I am beginning to imagine what might alight on the dark paint of the loss, grief and change that COVID has brought our way.

We have not been church in that one way: of gathering. But we have been church in ways I could never have imagined, in a time I could not have imagined, in a context where fear, despair and unrelenting change has made us pay attention in different ways, looking, listening, seeking, searching in different ways to fathom, notice and be replenished by God's eternal Spirit.

In all this, like puzzle pieces emerging from a foggy place, with the combination of gifts, with the various manifestations and witness of Spirit I have seen in all of you, there are fiery reds, cheerful oranges, and hopeful yellows working their way into my imagination and consciousness, waiting to land on the dark canvas of loss and unrelenting change.

The Acts reading for today is the one we know from every Day of Pentecost celebration:

"When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them."²

For me as your pastor, in this time more than ever before, I have heard and seen and felt the languages of love from you as you have listened and responded to Spirit's prompting with each of your respective manifestations. And I know there is more manifestation yet to come ... and we do not know yet what it looks like, or what it may be – because these times call for the trust that makes us walk with the light of God that, like an oil-lamp of old, casts a small circle of illumination showing us only one step at a time.

We live though in a GPS world, where zooming out and zooming in is available at our fingertips and we have become used to having this power and being in control like this ... so our frustration, our impatience, even our anger sometimes appears in that tension between our GPS-culture and our lamp-at-our-feet experience. In that tension, when you feel like the baby before King Solomon, being pulled in two directions – trust in God. When in doubt, frustration, impatience and anger - go with God, go to the love of Jesus, open yourself to Pentecost Spirit and trust in the manifestation which will come upon you. When in doubt and you cannot see, trust in the things that you know to be true.

So it might be, that:

- knowing Jesus died, was buried and on the third day rose again ...
- knowing that he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father ...
- knowing that we are knit together in the communion of saints and the life everlasting ...
- Knowing these things, we will walk together in the illumination of Pentecost Spirit, keeping ourselves open as vessels for Holy manifestation, as instruments for Divine use, as channels for the love of Jesus, and take the baby steps we are shown by the lamp at our feet being willing to lay aside the worldly GPS for God's ancient and proven ways of being compass, of being illumination, of pouring Godself into us making us able to manifest things that are not of us, but are of God: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.

Keep on putting one foot before the other and, in Christ I can promise you, we will get there together – for Spirit is manifest in us. Amen.

Hymn of the Day – Heal Our Land (Various artistes from across Africa – it is long!)

² The Message Translation, Acts 2:1-4

You may have been following in the news, about the combinations of flooding, COVID and literally plagues of locusts affecting the African continent. I invite you to join with me in praying for Africa – where many languages are spoken, reminiscent of Pentecost tongues ... this song comes to us from Africa, in many languages including English, and is subtitled in English for the non-English words, forming a powerful prayer.

The words are based from 2 Chronicles 7:14

“ If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.”

Click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OOoIErvDf_E

Prayers of Intercession (Adapted from prayers prepared by Pastor Joanna Miller)

Loving God, in these days, when it feels like we’re living out the realities of Holy Week like never before, keep reminding us that the story doesn’t end with death, or waiting. Help us to believe that something new and wonderful will emerge from this; fill us up with hopeful expectation for what will come. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We are seeing reports, God, of drastic drops in the levels of emissions and pictures of the ways that life is re-emerging. Help us to be inspired by these stories and pictures, that we might become even more committed to the work of caring for this planet we inhabit and for all the creatures who share it with us. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the decision makers, O God. For our political leaders, that they lead according to the best information to keep as many of our neighbours as safe as possible. For the scientists, who are working so hard to understand what is happening and for the ones who work hard for a vaccine. For the business leaders who are responsible for the care of their workers. For the health care providers, who run towards the fire and accept the risk in the name of serving others. For the parents, who struggle to find a balance between work and play, screens and fresh air. Give them all your wisdom and compassion. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are affected by violence during these days, whether it is the plague of domestic violence, or the terrible realities of physical and gun violence. We remember those who are hurting, and we ask you to walk with them Jesus. To bring your peace and comfort to them. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for the vulnerable in our midst. For those whose suffering began long before we heard of COVID-19. For those whose mental health is suffering. For those who are in the midst of treatments and diagnoses and for all who are medically fragile. Be with

each one, send them your healing, be present with them. We pray especially for those we name either silently or aloud. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We give you thanks for all the saints that have gone before us, whose faith reminds us to hold on in the midst of fear and unknown. Bless all those in your presence and all who will die this day. Lord, in your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

All these things, Lord, we entrust to your care, knowing that you hear all of our prayers. And we pray in the way that Jesus taught us to pray:

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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. **AMEN.**

While you listen to the offertory song, continue your prayers and consider how you may be an offering in the coming week.

Offertory – Christ Has Arisen - Bradley Moggach, Piano

Click here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqbD58GJAQk>

Offering Prayer

God of all abundance, receive our brokenness and the offering of our lives.
Take us, who return to you in thanksgiving: form us and shape us into a love like Jesus, so that we may be love for this broken world. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn: Spirit of Gentleness (Brad on Piano and singing – words included)

Click here: https://youtu.be/6LoRbQGq_A0

Blessing:

May God bless us and keep us.

May the face of God shine upon us with grace and mercy.

May God look upon us with favor

and give us ☩ peace.

Amen.

Dismissal:

Go in Peace, Go in Hope. **Thanks be to God. ***

Notices about church in time of COVID-19:

- The Public Health & Provincially mandated closure of churches continues. We will continue to keep you updated on Facebook, via website and by telephone, as we are able. Although the church building is closed, voicemail is checked regularly at 519-653-4721 the church number or 519-588-7701 Pastor. Please call if you need a pastoral telephone visit, or if we can help in any way. It is impossible for Pastor to call everyone in turn, so she is relying on you to reach out if you need a call.
- As far as possible, the regular work of the church continues. Lay leaders are meeting using online meeting tools. In the past week, the Risk Management Ministry Team met to assess protocols for small group gatherings at church when this is available for us. We will follow up in the coming week. Our goal is to share information and be "ready to roll" when COVID lockdown is over.
- Bonnie Scott continues to prepare and share information as widely as possible for those who do not have internet access. Brad continues to come in and practice and record. Pastor continues to visit, via telephone, to accompany however possible, and to prepare worship materials. Alex continues to bear the responsibility of treasurer and reminds us that buying and selling maple syrup is a good way to occupy our time 😊
- Thank you for accessing this Day of Pentecost service. When we re-open, we will have our Easter/Pentecost service in community.
- Please stay in touch with each other. Call each other. Visit on the telephone, and where safe, through closed glass doors, and across fences. Let us know how we can help if you are shut in but need groceries or something delivered. Keep safe, and keep on praying. Think of this time as our time in the tomb, with our Saviour, from which we will be delivered soon 😊 Call Pastor if you need to talk, because she cannot possibly call everyone 😊
- May God bless you and keep you safe ...