

St Paul United Church of Christ
5312 Old Blue Rock Road
Cincinnati, Ohio 45247
Allen M. Fluent, Transitional Pastor
Order of Worship for the Pentecost Sunday
May 23, 2021

(Although we are now holding worship in our building, we are conscious of the ongoing challenge of in-person worship while the coronavirus persists, and the need many feel to avoid the possibility of contagion. Therefore, we will be continuing the practice of sending a worship bulletin to all who are on our mailing lists for email or hard copy. Those who will be worshipping from home and who have computer access will also be receiving a recorded version of the service that will be sent out by email on Sunday afternoon and also can be seen on our Facebook page. We welcome your participation in any way that is convenient for you, and we encourage you to share our worship service with any person you know who may appreciate receiving it.)

Welcome, Announcements and Prayer Concerns

Prelude (recording begins)

Opening Declaration (John 3:3b, 5b, 8)

*Truly, truly I tell you, no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born from above.
Truly, truly I tell you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.*

The wind blows where it will, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Come; let us celebrate life in the Spirit of the risen Christ.

***Hymn**

“Sweet, Sweet Spirit”

#293 in New Century Hymnal

***There’s a sweet, sweet spirit in this place, and I know that it’s the Spirit of the Lord;
There are sweet expressions on each face, and I know they feel the presence of the Lord.***

Refrain:

***Sweet Holy Spirit, sweet heavenly dove, stay right here with us, filling us with your love;
And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise.***

Without a doubt we’ll know that we have been revived when we shall leave this place.

***There are blessings you cannot receive till you know that Spirit’s fullness and believe;
You’re the one to profit when you say, “I am going to stay with Jesus all the way.”***

Refrain

Opening Prayer (unison)

Holy Spirit, gift of the grace of God, may your presence be known among us as we rejoice together in the Gospel of life. May our worship today be filled with life made new each day for us and for all who live by your promises. May we see your presence in one another's eyes, and may we learn to dream your dreams and hold in our minds the vision of your world transformed by the gifts of heavenly love. Amen.

Hymn

"Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness"

#326

in Worship & Rejoice

Refrain:

***Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness, calling and free;
Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea.***

***You moved on the waters, you called to the deep,
then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep;
and over the eons you called to each thing;
"Awake from your slumbers and rise on your wings."***

Refrain

***You swept through the desert, you stung with the sand,
and you goaded your people with a law and a land;
and when they were blinded with idols and lies,
then you spoke through your prophets to open their eyes.***

Refrain

***You sang in a stable, you cried from a hill,
then you whispered in silence when the whole world was still;
and down in the city you called once again,
when you blew through your people on the rush of the wind.***

Refrain

***You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes,
from the bondage of sorrow all the captives dream dreams;
our women see visions, our men clear their eyes.
With bold new decisions your people arise.***

Refrain

Epistle Lesson: 1 Corinthians 12:1, 4-11

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed.... There are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

***Hymn**

“On Pentecost They Gathered”

#334

***On Pentecost they gathered quite early in the day,
a band of Christ’s disciples, to worship, sing and pray.
A mighty wind came blowing, filled all the swirling air,
and tongues of fire a-glowing inspired each person there.***

***The people all around them were startled and amazed
to understand their language, as Christ the Lord they praised.
What universal message, what great good news was here?
That Christ, once dead, is risen to vanquish all our fear.***

***God pours the Holy Spirit on all who would believe,
on women, men, and children who would God’s grace receive.
That Spirit knows no limit, bestowing life and power.
The church, formed and reforming, responds in every hour.***

***O Spirit, sent from heaven on that day long ago,
rekindle faith among us in all life’s ebb and flow.
O give us ears to listen and tongues aflame with praise,
so people of all nations glad songs of joy shall raise.***

Gospel Lesson: Acts 2:1-21

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 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. 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 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, "Men of Judea 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.

Musical Interlude or Choral Anthem

Sermon

The Day of Pentecost was a visionary moment when a new community was brought to life, and the life-giving message of reconciliation was symbolically shared with all the world.

Communion Hymn

"Let us Talents and Tongues Employ"

#698 vss 1-2

***Let us talents and tongues employ, reaching out with a shout of joy:
Bread is broken, the wine is poured, Christ is spoken and seen and heard.***

Refrain:

Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!

***Christ is able to make us one, at the table he set the tone,
teaching people to live to bless, love in word and in deed express.***

Refrain

Sacrament of Holy Communion

We celebrate the new life in the Spirit of Christ, giving thanks for the fellowship of grace, the mutual ministry that is inspired among us, and our common commitment to the way of Christ in our relationships in the world we live in.

We remember the meal where Jesus gave his disciples bread and wine, told them these elements represented the life he had given for them, and invited them to embody his Spirit in everything they would seek to do and to be.

May the food and drink of this Communion table represent to us the living presence of our Lord Jesus Christ among us and within us.

And now, let us pray:

Holy God, we look to you, whose Spirit flows through the whole creation. We thank you for the beauty and wonder that surrounds us, and for the winds of each new day, calling us to new challenges and opportunities to witness the wonders of your love.

God of judgment, we look to you to guide us by your Spirit, as we learn to respond to the prejudices, the competition, and the small-mindedness among us that reduce the world we see to a place of exploitation, conflict and war.

God of gracious love and forgiveness, may the Spirit of Christ be known among us, that we may be forgiving and forgiven, and learn to share your reconciling Gospel in our lives.

God of our calling, may our Communion in this hour with you and with one another remind us that we are one, and never alone, as we seek to share the message of your justice and your love.

As Jesus has taught us, so we pray:

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 evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

This is the Body of Christ that is given for you. Take and eat, in remembrance of him.

This is the new covenant in Christ's blood. Take and drink, in remembrance of him.

We give you thanks, most holy God, for this your sacrament of grace, for the wonder of your love, and for your presence with us till the end of time.

***Closing Hymn**

“Let us Talents and Tongues Employ”

#698 vs 3

*Jesus calls us in, sends us out bearing fruit in a world of doubt,
gives us love to tell, bread to share; God, Immanuel, everywhere!*

Refrain:

Jesus lives again, earth can breathe again, pass the Word around: loaves abound!

***Benediction**

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

Postlude