



*“I am a feather
on the breath of God.”*

*—Hildegard of Bingen,
caught up in the Spirit*

PENTECOST and RECONCILIATION SUNDAY **31 May 2020**

Acknowledgement of Country

This land is God’s land and God’s Spirit dwells here. As we begin our worship, we acknowledge the Kurna people, traditional custodians of this land under God. We commit ourselves again to working for reconciliation that we might discover together our common destiny in God.

Gathering Prayer — Rev. Aunty Lenore Parker from *A Prayer Book for Australia*

God of holy dreaming, Great Creator Spirit:

From the dawn of creation, you have given your children
the good things of Mother Earth.

You spoke and the gum tree grew in vast deserts and dense forest
and, in cities at the water’s edge, creation sings your praise.

Your presence endures as the rock at the heart of our Land.

When Jesus hung on the tree you heard the cries of your people
and became one with your wounded ones:
the convicts, the hunted, and the dispossessed.

The sunrise of your Son coloured the earth anew
and bathed it in glorious hope.

In Jesus we have been reconciled to you,
to each other and to your whole creation.

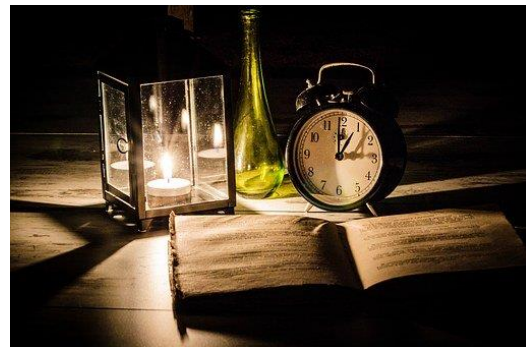
Lead us on, Great Spirit.

Enable us to walk together in trust from the hurt and shame of the past
into the full day which has dawned in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Scripture Reading — Acts 2:1–21

Pentecost coincided with the Jewish Festival of Weeks—an agricultural and religious celebration that occurred fifty days after Passover during the late harvest of wheat. Jews would come to Jerusalem from across the diaspora to make their wheat offering in the temple. During this festival, Jews also recalled the giving of the Ten Commandments by God to Moses. Devout Jews would stay up all night studying the commandments and praying for the law to be revived in their hearts and in the land. The next day, the Book of Ruth would be read to the congregation.

This is the backdrop for the celebration of Pentecost, a day when we recall the gifting of Christ's Spirit. Before reading this passage, you might imagine the expectations of the disciples. You may recall before this scene in the Book of Acts, they enquired of Jesus whether this was the time when he would restore the kingdom of Israel. Now they are up all night, studying Torah and praying in hope for spiritual renewal. What a surprise the dawn will bring!



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 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, "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.'

Going Deeper



- When you consider the expectations and hope of the Festival of Weeks and the events of Pentecost Day as they unfolded, how would you answer the question, “What does this mean”?
- What values and ways of being does the Spirit inspire in you that might be perplexing to others at times? What enables you to continue in faithful observance?
- With what dreams or visions do you sense the Spirit gifting you recently for yourself? for your relationships? for the world around you?

Reflections in Solitude and Silent Meditation

You might choose to read the reflections in solitude here followed by some moments in silent meditation.

How to meditate—from the World Community for Christian Meditation

Sit with your back straight and your feet on the floor. Close your eyes lightly. Then interiorly, silently begin to recite a single word — a prayer word or mantra. We recommend the ancient Christian prayer-word “Maranatha.” Say it as four equal syllables: Ma – ra – na – tha.

Breathe normally and give your full attention to the word as you say it, silently, gently, faithfully and — above all — simply. Let go of all thoughts (even good thoughts), images, sensations and other words as they arise. Don’t fight your distractions: let them go by saying your word faithfully, gently and attentively, returning to it with intention when your attention wanders.

Prayers of Intercession

Holy Breath within creation, stirring, enlivening, setting us free: We pray for the world, the land in which we live, and for those whose paths we cross. In the silence, kindle in us a burning desire for compassion, justice and peace. With open hands we hold before you our hopes and dreams as we pray: *Come, Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.*

For the healing of creation and the restoration of harmony and balance we pray:
Come, Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

For a deeper listening across differences and a greater unity among peoples, especially among the First and Second People of this land we pray:
Come, Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

For a willingness to look at and care about systems that perpetuate injustice and the pushing to the edges of many in our country and world we pray:
Come, Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

For those who are in our hearts and on our minds... we pray:
Come, Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Disciples' Prayer

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

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save 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.

Blessing — from the UCASA Reconciliation Sunday resources

Go out into the world in the power of the Spirit;
in all things, at all times,
remember that Christ is with you;
make your life your worship
to the praise and glory of God.

The love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ and the communion of the Spirit be with us all.