

Worship Service

BY DAVID W. MUSIC

WITH ONE VOICE

A Service of Worship for Pentecost Sunday

Prelude

*The Greeting: Romans 15:5-7 (ESV)*¹

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

(The people may greet one another in the name of Christ.)

*Congregational Response*²

Opening Statement

On this Pentecost Sunday, we commemorate God's sending of the Holy Spirit upon his people and the beginning of the spread of the gospel throughout the world. As we read the scriptural accounts, sing, pray, and hear the proclamation of God's word, let us be reminded that we do not celebrate a one-time event, but the continual unfolding of the work of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is still at work in the world today, just as it was on that first Pentecost two thousand years ago.

For this reason, we unite our hearts, minds, and voices in glorifying the One who sent the Spirit that we might have eternal life.

Hymn

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (stanzas 1, 2, and 4)

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit
into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit,
let us find the promised rest.
Take away our bent to sinning,
Alpha and Omega be;
End of faith, as its beginning,
set our hearts at liberty.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Charles Wesley (1747)

Suggested Tunes: BEECHER or HYFRYDOL

Prayer of Invocation

Father, through your Holy Spirit
you create us and sustain us.
Open our hearts and minds to your presence now
as your Spirit moves among us.

Pour your divine love into our hearts
that we may live in harmony with one another.
Transform our minds
that we may see your great salvation in one another.
Draw from our mouths
all of the glorious wonder, love, and praise
that you desire and are due.

We pray in the name of Jesus,
and through your Holy Spirit. Amen.



THE CONFUSION OF LANGUAGES AT BABEL

Scripture Reading: Genesis 11:1-9 (ESV)

(Reader 1) Now the whole earth had one language and the same words.

(Reader 2) And as people migrated from the east,
they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there.

And they said to one another,

“Come, let us make bricks,
and burn them thoroughly.”

And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar.

Then they said,

“Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens,
and let us make a name for ourselves,
lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.”

And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower,
which the children of man had built.

And the LORD said,

(Both) *“Come, let us go down and there confuse their language,
so that they may not understand one another’s speech.”*

**So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth,
and they left off building the city.**

Therefore its name was called Babel,

because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth.

And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

Confession and Absolution

Lord, we confess that, like the people of old, we have sought to make a name for ourselves by seeking to be god-like in our own eyes. We have gloried in the works of our hands and our minds rather than in your power, love, and mercy. Forgive us for our confusion as we silently confess our individual sins.

(The people offer their silent prayers of confession.)

Friends, hear the good news of the gospel: God says that “We do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. If Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:26, 10 ESV)

Be glad and rejoice, for God hears and answers your prayer!

Thanks be to God!

(The congregation may sing the Gloria Patri, Doxology, or another appropriate chorus or hymn refrain of praise or thanksgiving.)



THE PROPHECY

Scripture Reading: Joel 2:27-32 (ESV)

(Reader 2) You shall know that I am the LORD your God and there is none else.

(Reader 1) **And my people shall never again be put to shame.**

And it shall come to pass afterward,

that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;

your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

your old men shall dream dreams,

and your young men shall see visions.

Even on the male and female servants

in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth,

blood and fire and columns of smoke.

The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood,

before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes.

And it shall come to pass

that everyone who calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.

(As soon as Reader 1 says the word “Lord,” the members of the choir begin to whisper “Lord” at various speeds, but not together, creating a hubbub by gradually increasing in volume and intensity, changing to “Alleluia” at the mid-point, then slowly fading away until there is silence. After a short period, the introduction to the following hymn should be played without announcement.)

Hymn

“Spirit of God, Descend upon My Heart” (stanzas 1, 3, and 4)

Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
wean it from earth; through all its pulses move;
stoop to my weakness, mighty as thou art,
and make me love thee as I ought to love.

Teach me to feel that thou art always nigh;
teach me the struggles of the soul to bear,
to check the rising doubt, the rebel sigh;
teach me the patience of unceasing prayer.

Teach me to love thee as thine angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame;
the kindling of the heaven-descended Dove,
my heart an altar, and thy love the flame.

George Croly (1854)

Tune: MORECAMBE

(After the hymn the choir may sing a hymn or choral anthem emphasizing unity through the Holy Spirit.)



THE UNITY OF UNDERSTANDING AT PENTECOST

SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 2:1-15, 22-24, 37-41 (ESV)

(Reader 1) When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.

(Reader 2) **And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.

And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.

And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?"

Parthians and Medes

and 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 Arabians –

we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another,

(Both) *"What does this mean?"*

But others mocking said,

"They are filled with new wine."

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them:

"Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these people are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know – this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for him to be held by it.

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles,

"Brothers, what shall we do?"

And Peter said to them,

"Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying,

"Save yourselves from this crooked generation."

So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

Hymn

“A Rushing, Mighty Wind”

A rushing, mighty wind roars through a crowded room,
and tongues of fire upon their heads disperse the people’s gloom.

God’s Spirit blows the wind and lights the blood-red flame;
a Pentecost of tongues explodes in praise of Jesus’ name.

Three thousand souls that day in mind and heart were stirred;
and these were added to the church as they believed the Word.

Lord, make our breath a wind and let our tongues be fire,
and as at that first Pentecost your people’s lives inspire.

David W. Music (2010)

Tune: FESTAL SONG

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(pp.67-69 of this volume)

Sermon

(The sermon should emphasize the unity of believers through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, preferably tying together the three scriptural passages for the day.)

Hymn

“Christian Hearts, in Love United”

Christian hearts in love united:
search to know God’s holy will.
Let his love, in us ignited,
more and more our spirits fill.
Christ the head, and we his members—
we reflect the light he is.
Christ the master, we disciples—
he is ours, and we are his.

Grant, Lord, that with your direction
“Love each other” we comply.
Help us live in true affection
your love to exemplify.
Let our mutual love be glowing
brightly so that all may view
that we, as on one stem growing,
living branches are in you.

Come then, living church of Jesus,
covenant with him anew.
Unto him who conquered for us
may we pledge our service true.
May our lives reflect the brightness
of God's love in Jesus shown.
To the world we then bear witness:
we belong to God alone.

Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1723), translation composite
Tune: O DU LIEBE MEINER LIEBE

Offering

Closing Sentence

Go from this place as people who
have prayed for the presence of the Holy Spirit,
have experienced the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and
depart to share the Good News through the power of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Closing Song

“Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (stanza 4)

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

NOTES

1 Scripture passages marked (ESV) are used by permission from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers.

2 Sing a congregational chorus, especially one that invokes the Holy Spirit, such as “Holy Spirit, Breathe on Me” (refrain only), “Spirit of the Living God,” or “There’s a Sweet, Sweet Spirit in This Place” at the conclusion of the welcome time.

For “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling,” you might substitute “Let Every Christian Pray” by Fred Pratt Green; for “Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart” – “Like the Murmur of the Dove’s Song” by Carl P. Daw, Jr.; for “Christian Hearts in Love United” – “They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love” by Peter Scholtes; for the last stanza of “Love Divine, All Loves Excelling” (at the end of the service) – the final stanza of “I’m Coming to Gather all Peoples of Earth” by Larry E. Schultz. The alternative hymns are in *Celebrating Grace Hymnal* (Macon, GA: Celebrating Grace, Inc., 2010).

The same two readers may be used for all scripture passages or different readers may be used for each passage. The greeting, opening statement, prayers, and closing statement may be read a single minister or lay person, or distributed among several worship leaders.



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