



**Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge of the United Church At  
Home Worship  
May 31, 2020 Pentecost Sunday**



**Minister: Rev. Tammy Allan**

*We gratefully acknowledge that we are on the ancient and traditional lands of  
The Blackfoot Nation, the people of the Treaty 7,  
and of Metis Region 3. May we cherish and care for the land and the people,  
as those who came before us did.*

**Your Worship Space**

*As you worship at home, try to create a space for that. It could be as simple as lighting a candle (either flame or battery); or placing a small cross or a symbol that has meaning for you in front of you. Now that the weather is more amenable, consider worshipping outdoors.*

*If you are alone, perhaps start a journal, as you reflect on the worship experience. Or, perhaps call a friend and share this time with them over the phone. If you are with one or two others, enjoy the conversation that arises...as you practise safe distancing.*

*And...today is Pentecost Sunday. Think bright colours, reds, oranges, yellows! Maybe even dress brightly, and how about a little cake—even with a candle, as we celebrate the birth of the Christian Church! ☺*

**Opening Prayer**

O God, send your Spirit upon us this day. Touch us with the flames of your love. Stir us with the power of your word. Keep us strong in faith, and grounded in truth. Then, send us out in the power of your Spirit to share the love of Jesus with the world.  
Amen.

**Musical selection**      **Breathe on Me Breath of God**    Click here to listen:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ph-t8P2r\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ph-t8P2r_I)

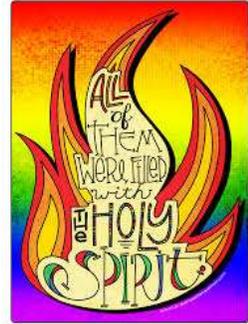
**Readings for today**

**Acts 2:1-21**

<sup>2</sup>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup>Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of

power.” <sup>12</sup>All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup>But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”



<sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

### **A Message for Today**

Pentecost comes in wind and fire. Pentecost – the culmination of the Easter season; the birthday of the Christian Church; the day we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit in power not only long ago, but in our midst, here and now. It’s a great day to celebrate being the church – even if, in these days, we must be the church in ways that seem a little different.

Pentecost began life as a Jewish harvest festival. Fifty days after Passover, Jews from all over would gather in Jerusalem to give God thanks for wheat, for bread, for another year. So, fifty days after Jesus’ death and resurrection, the city was full of Jews, gathered to celebrate together again, as they had gathered for Passover, weeks before. People from all over, people who would not necessarily have spoken the same languages.

And suddenly, they all hear their own languages being spoken. The passage from Acts names 15 different peoples who can hear about Jesus in their mother tongue. The Spirit transforms people who were afraid, who were clustered in an upper room, wondering which one of them would be hauled away next. They are transformed into evangelists – people who cannot stop talking about the glorious things God has done in their world. This is how a church was born.

For most of us, the idea of speaking in tongues is far from our reality. And most of us haven’t experienced the Spirit in the form of wind and fire.

Yet even for us in mainline denominations, the biblical stories of the Spirit are key to our story of faith. We talk of the presence of the Spirit in our lives, inspiring us, and filling us with love and joy. (note that the root word for Spirit and inspire are the same!)

Did you know our Pentecostal brothers and sisters don't celebrate Pentecost Sunday? Not as one Sunday of the year – they celebrate the Spirit each week – they give praise and thanks for the presence of the Spirit's energy, light and love each week.

You could argue that we do too – just a lot more quietly. Think about how you have known the presence of the Spirit. We can't see the wind...but there was no question it can blow pretty strongly in our area of the province. When have you sensed, or felt, or known that you were, as our creed says...not alone?

Have you felt you could share that openly with others? If yes – thanks be to God.

If no – why is that? I can only speak for myself...but there are places where I just don't feel comfortable sharing my faith story – partly because of how I'm afraid people will react; and partly because some aspects of that story need some level of trust between me and the person or persons I'm sharing that story with.

I can say this though – in my life as a pastor, a minister – the more I do share those Spirit moments, the more Spirit moments I seem to have. For those moments of sharing usually become Spirit-filled moments too.

Part of the quest of mission and ministry is to seek ways to bring the Spirit alive for others, for people who are spiritually seeking. That quest is not one person's alone – but is the work of the whole people of God, the whole body of Christ.

I give thanks for the gifts God has given us all to do that faith-filled living. For even if we have trouble proclaiming our faith verbally – we can certainly proclaim our faith by our deeds and actions. In this time when we are separated from one another, when we are not together in our buildings, we are still the church – called to share our experiences of the Spirit, called to share the good news with others.

We don't need the buildings to be the church. I can't help but think of the children's hymn:

"I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together! All  
who follow Jesus, all around the world, yes, we're the church together!  
The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple, the church is not a resting  
place, the church is a people!"

God's desire for us is that we would be open to the Spirit moving in our lives – getting us out of our proverbial "upper rooms" and into new ways of being the church for this time. Just as in the time of the first Pentecost, that's not about the focus of the church being bricks and mortar, but people. People loving and caring, serving God through service with and for the world.

Dr. Deena Hinshaw, Alberta's chief medical health officer, keeps reminding us that this pandemic is a marathon, not a sprint. How we live out being the church may look different for a while yet – it may look different for a very long time. But how the Spirit moves among us, how the Spirit enflames our lives, that will never change. The question is: Are you up for the challenge – and the joy – the comes with discovering new ways to serve God?

**Hymn Spirit of Gentleness** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwIZJpCCBIM>

### **This Week's Minute for Mission**

At Toronto Conference's annual meeting in 2011, youth delegates presented a vision for the future of their church and their place in it. The result of those first ideas was a song that has since inspired many people. Thanks to a Mission & Service Vision Fund grant, the group was able to record it, and that amazing and inspirational song—"Our Generation"—has become the theme song for the Mission & Service music video. Download video at: <http://bit.ly/2NuR1cm> Licence [Creative Commons Attribution licence \(reuse allowed\)](#)

**Prayers for this day** This reflective Pentecost prayer was written by my friend and former theology teacher, Ted Dodd.

*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.*  
*Acts 2:1-2*

Two thousand years ago, a band of disciples felt lost and leaderless. Their leader, rabbi and teacher had been executed. They held to the hope and joy of their Easter faith, But they also questioned: What now? What next? Where do we go from here? In the story of Pentecost, the spirit moves amongst these disciples like the wind. The disciples were energized, strengthened, and mobilized. In the pattern of Pentecost, the winds of God blow us out of apathy, help us to make changes, enable us to take action.

**Holy Spirit come like the wind into our isolation doldrums.  
Breath of God renew us in this time of pandemic.  
Energizing Spirit bring us conviction and strength to face this bewildering time.**

*Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. Acts 2: 3*

Like a fire, a conviction took hold of their hearts. The Spirit was moving in the disciples. They were able to understand in new ways, with deep passion, and with strongly felt faith. Where once there was despair and apathy and disillusionment, there was now hope and energy and meaning. The Spirit's fire was burning.  
**Holy Spirit warm our lives with your presence as we begin to re-open.  
Fire of God enflame our commitment to those most affected by the virus.  
Spirit of Passion be born anew in your people with lessons learned and new vision.**

*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.*

*Acts 2: 4-6*

On the day of Pentecost,  
People from many lands and of many languages came together.  
And there was a miracle of understanding and unity.

**Holy Spirit help us to listen to one another.**

**Spirit of Pentecost grant us the ability to respect each other.**

**God of Possibilities enable understanding in our midst.**

Bless us, as we pray the words of Jesus...

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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen.



### **A Blessing for Today**

Let us go to share God's gifts and grace, and be witnesses to the good news of Jesus, alive in the Spirit. Amen.

*Thank you so much for using this worship resource! Feel free to share it! We are grateful for your connection to the Olds-Sundre Pastoral Charge, and to both Olds and Sundre United Churches. As the time of COVID 19 distancing progresses, know that we are still the United Church in our communities, striving to serve you and the community. Our ability to do that requires financial support, and we are so very grateful for those who are able to continue to supporting us in these challenging times. We also are aware for some, this time of pandemic has created hardship, and we pray for peace and hope.*

*If you already give to the church with PAR (Pre-Authorized Giving) things will carry on as usual, unless you need to make a change.*

*If you give through envelopes, it would be greatly appreciated if you would mail your offering in, or bring it to the office, however please call first to confirm someone is there, as in these days our staff must be cautious as well.*

*And finally, if you are not a regular giver, but wish to support our ministries, we would gratefully accept your gift. Amounts over \$20.00 will be tax receiptable, at the end of the year. Our church mailing addresses are:*

*Olds United Church 4810 50<sup>th</sup> Street, Olds AB. T4H 1E4*

*Sundre United Church PO Box 614 118 Centre Street North Sundre AB. T0M 1X0*

