

The Day of Pentecost - May 24, 2026

Today is Pentecost Sunday. It is a day counted 50 days from the day of Resurrection. Often celebrated as the birthday of the church, it was really something so much bigger. Pentecost was the day the Holy Spirit was unleashed on the world...on all people. It was the fulfilling of Christ's promise to send 'another counselor' (John14:16). Today celebrates the work of the Spirit in renewing all of creation and professes our confidence and security in knowing the Spirit's power is available to all.

### Call to Worship

Come, people of God  
many voices, many stories, many gifts  
drawn by one Spirit who breathes life into all.

**We come as threads of different colors,  
woven by the Spirit into one tapestry of grace.**

The Spirit whispers through each of us,  
calling forth gifts of healing, wisdom, courage, and compassion.  
Not for ourselves alone, but for the flourishing of the whole body.

**We are one body in Christ  
hands and feet, hearts and minds  
each needed, each cherished, each empowered.**

**Holy Spirit, gather us.**

**Make us one in purpose, one in love,  
one in the hope that Christ has placed within us.**

**We worship as many made one, and one made radiant through many.**

### Hymn

*Like the murmur of the dove's song*

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1. Like the murmur of the dove's song,  
like the challenge of her flight,  
like the vigour of the wind's rush,  
like the new flame's eager might:  
come, Holy Spirit, come.
2. To the members of Christ's body,  
to the branches of the Vine,  
to the church in faith assembled,  
to her midst as gift and sign:  
come, Holy Spirit, come.

3. With the healing of division  
with the ceaseless voice of prayer,  
with the power to love and witness,  
with the peace beyond compare:  
come, Holy Spirit, come.

"Like the murmur of the dove's song." Words by Carl P. Daw, Jr. ©1982, Hope Publishing Company.  
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## **Prayer of Adoration and Confession**

Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit,  
your energy moves in us and through us to face each new day.  
You are as close to us as our breath, giving us life.  
You refresh us like the breeze on a warm afternoon, lending us strength.  
You challenge us like a strong wind, rousing our attention.  
Shift our awareness to the wonder of your mystery, wisdom, grace and creation  
and direct our hearts to the warmth of Christ's love.  
To you, O God our Creator, Christ our Redeemer, and Holy Spirit  
we offer our prayers and praise in love and faith.  
Bring us together, united in worship and witness by your grace and power.  
In recalling all that you are and have done, we recall who we are and what we have  
done; and so, we are moved to confess to you our sins:

**God of wind and flame,  
at Pentecost your Spirit inspired Jesus' followers  
to speak, in his name, what was needed  
in ways that all who heard could understand.  
But we confess that we have ignored your guidance  
and kept to our own words and understandings  
rather than letting your Spirit speak through us.  
We have not always attended to the lessons of that first Pentecost  
when the Spirit demonstrated that all cultures,  
all languages can speak your love.**

**We ask your forgiveness for when our witness has been false;  
when what we have said and done in your name  
came not from your Spirit or from love for you,  
but from love of ourselves or of power and control.  
Forgive us for the sins we have committed by our actions  
and the sins we have committed by failing to act.  
Send your Spirit to inspire our faith  
and energize us in repentance and transformation  
for just mission and loving ministry. Amen.**

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## Assurance of Forgiveness

In Christ, hear the good news. Scripture tells us that *“no one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.”* The Spirit who enables your faith has also washed you, renewed you, and made you part of Christ’s body.

Therefore, in Jesus Christ, you are forgiven. Thanks be to God.

## Prayer for Understanding

Life-giving God, as we prepare to hear the Holy Scriptures, open our hearts to the Spirit who speaks through the Word. May the same Spirit who unites us in Christ grant us understanding, faith, and obedience as the Scriptures are read and proclaimed. Amen.

## Scripture Reading 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

<sup>3b</sup> No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit. <sup>4</sup> Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup> and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup> and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup> To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup> To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup> to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup> to another the working of powerful deeds, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup> All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

### One Body with Many Members

<sup>12</sup> For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

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Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. **Thanks be to God.**

## Message One Body, Many Members

Three of these things belong together

Three of these things are kind of the same

Can you guess which one of these doesn't belong here?

Now it's time to play our game.

Do you remember this song from Sesame Street? There is more than one version. Another version starts with “one of these things is not like the other”.

With about 8.3 billion people living on planet earth, we spend a lot of time trying to distinguish ourselves from one another, we also spend a lot of time trying to be just like

others. It is a constant pull. We want to stand out from the crowd and we want to be part of the crowd. We want to have our independence and we want to be part of something.

This is all intertwined with wanting to be important in some way, to have people value us, see us as valuable, while also not being so different that we don't belong at least to some group of people. And when you are thinking about this, don't be so naïve as to think that people all want to be like you. Look around at the different types of communities, organizations, churches, areas of a city, and I am sure I could list more. People just want to belong somewhere while at the same time being the individual that they are.

Now I want to take you into the community that was the Corinthian church in the Apostle Paul's time. This was a niche community of faith, fledgling, trying to find their way in a city that had adopted Venus, the goddess of love. A temple had been built that employed more than a thousand prostitutes. This city was one where prostitutes, strippers, gamblers and the like worked and played and where the rich got richer and more powerful. This was a city at a trade cross roads which included roads and shipping. People from all over the what to them was the known world lived and worked in Corinth. It was the second largest city in the Roman Empire and it was known for the kind of lifestyle that made the Corinthians the butt of dirty jokes, and they were consistently portrayed as drunken brawlers. Money flowed in this city, at least through the upper echelons. It was a place where honour and merit meant more power and more money, more influence and more prestige.

Now as with every church, even to this day, it can be very difficult to separate the church and the world around it. We are called to be the church in the world but not always of the world. We are called to separate from the world in ways that honour our faith and the values we hold dear, but importantly to recognize that Christ is the head of the church and we are the body of the church. We are many members but part of something bigger.

Thinking about that, we consider what a struggle it must have been to try to be different from all that surrounded that group of people trying to be faithful to the way of Christ in a place that did not honour that kind of selfless living. The church was called to do what they did, share of themselves what they could, and the gift of themselves with the whole of the community of faith. Sounds easy enough, but culture has a way of seeping into things. Even that which is not helpful shows up. It happened in the Corinthian church and we can still see it happening in churches that support the platforms of Christian Nationalism, or churches that are unduly influenced by politics the world round, rather than following the teaching of Christ that lifted up those who were vulnerable, struggling, and hurting.

In those early years of the church in Corinth after Paul had left to continue on his missionary journeys, things started to get somewhat out of sync with the gospel message

they had received from Paul. People wanted to up one each other to show how the gifts that they had were more important to the church than what others had.

For a moment let's take a look at what is meant by gifts. To do that let's go back to the moment that the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples.

### **The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost Acts 2:1-4b**

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup>They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them. <sup>5</sup>Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup>When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken.<sup>1</sup>

This Spirit was given to all who were present, this included people from all over, again what to them was the known world. So it is that the Holy Spirit from that point on has been in the world in a new way. In the Christian Church we recognize that there are various and many gifts of the Holy Spirit given to the people of God, not just for their own edification, but for the good of the whole body that is the church, and, I would say for any other work that they are called to do in community with others.

For Christians this is about God being our God, Christ being our Lord and Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit being free to move in us and in the world as it chooses. And so, this is the lens from which we understand the work of the Holy Spirit in us, but that understanding does not limit the Spirit's work in the world.

For the followers of Christ then as for us now, we are given gifts of the Spirit and as Paul writes, there are a variety of gifts, varieties of services, and varieties of activities, but it is the same Spirit, the same Lord, and the same God who activates all of them in everyone. And, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

It seems that Paul had to remind his readers that the gifts they had were not given in a hierarchy of value. That was something the followers in Corinth were losing sight of. They were bickering and challenging one another with taunts of my gift is better than your gift kind of thinking and acting. Paul wrote to remind them of many things in his letter, but one of those things was that each of them had received their gifts because of

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<sup>1</sup> All scripture references taken from *New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition*. Copyright © 2021, National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

the work of the Spirit and moreover those gifts were to be used to sustain and build up the whole body that was their church.

Sometimes it happens in our churches as well. It is especially easy to think that somehow the minister is the one with all of the gifts, but let me assure that I have particular gifts but without each and every person here, we are not the church. Whether you are here just today or this is your home, we are the body of Christ gathered in this moment. You may ask yourself, what gift or gifts do you bring today? Is it gifts of time, energy, healing, compassion, discernment, encouragement, financial, teaching? I could go on as the gifts of the Spirit are not limited to my list or the one you see in this particular scripture reading.

The point of gifts is that they are not ones we should boast about. They are given for the common good, used to sustain and build up the body that is Christ. We happen to have walls that help us identify this particular church, but may I remind you that they are people following this service online who do not enter this place. They are, you are, part of the body this is our church. How can those who follow that way contribute their gifts to the world of the church, this one, or in other ways.

How are the gifts of us here today to be used in the broader, wider church, because the church is not limited to St. Andrew's. The church is more than the Presbyterian denomination; the church is all of those who call ourselves Christian in this city and area. The fellowship of Christ spans the globe. We may think that our gifts cannot possibly have any impact on the church worldwide. However, could it be that our acts of service, compassion, justice and love have a ripple effect so that all who encounter us come to know about the grace of God and that love moves beyond us into the world?

In the power of the one God, one Lord, and one Holy Spirit we are one body in Christ. **All** of us are children of God. Every person walking the face of the earth is a child of God. Every person has gifts of the Spirit. In the church we recognize and celebrate this. We look to each other to supply the gifts needed to share the grace, forgiveness, love, and compassion of God with each other and the community around us. If you think you don't have any gifts, let me suggest that you do, and God wants to use those gifts to bless people. Others can help you discern what those gifts are.

On this Pentecost Sunday may we be willing to feel the wind of the Holy Spirit among us. Maybe we will even catch a little fire! 😊

We are many people but one body. One body in Christ, in God, in the power of the Holy Spirit. Thanks be to God for trusting us to be the hands, feet, heart, lungs, mouth, ear, eyes, and more in the world in praise of God, while we change the world with faith, hope, and love. Amen.

### **Prayers of the People**

Gracious and loving God, on the day of Pentecost You poured out Your Spirit on all people, and by that same Spirit you enable us to confess that Jesus is Lord. You

gather us—different as we are— and make us one body, held together in your mercy. Trusting in your compassion, we bring our prayers to you.

Lord, breathe your Spirit upon your church in every place. Where we are tired, renew us. Where we are divided, heal us. Where we are gifted, help us use those gifts with humility and joy. Make us a people who reflect the love of Christ.

God of all nations, just as people from every land heard the gospel in their own language at Pentecost, speak peace into the places where violence rages, hope into places overwhelmed by despair, and justice into places long denied it. Guide leaders with wisdom and compassion.

Gentle Shepherd, draw near to all who are hurting today. For the sick—bring healing. For the grieving—bring comfort. For the lonely—bring companionship. For the weary—bring rest. Surround them with the care of Christ's body, and remind them they are never alone.

Holy Spirit, help us to see the needs around us with your eyes. Make us generous in love, patient in listening, and faithful in using the gifts you've placed within us. Knit us together as a community that bears one another's burdens and celebrates one another's joys.

Spirit of the Living God, you gave dreams and visions at Pentecost, and you give each of us to drink of the one Spirit. Send us out now— as people united in Christ, strengthened for service, and filled with hope.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray...

## **Lord's 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**

## **Invitation to the Offering**

All that we are, and all that we have, comes from the God who unites us, equips us, and gives gifts for the good of all.

Therefore, as members of one body, let us bring our offerings with gratitude.

May the Spirit who binds us together also shape our giving — that it may strengthen the church, serve our neighbors, and reflect the generosity of Christ our Lord.

May you be encouraged to visit our website at [St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Thunder Bay, ON – Part of the PCCWeb network of churches](#) and give a financial gift to support the work of this ministry.

1. We have this ministry and we are not discouraged;  
it is by God's own power that we may live and serve.  
Openly we share God's word, speaking truth as we believe,  
praying that the shadowed world may healing light receive.  
We have this ministry; O God, receive our living.
2. O Christ, the tree of life, our end and our beginning,  
we grow to fullest flower when rooted in your love.  
Brothers, sisters, clergy, lay, called to service by your grace,  
different cultures, different gifts, the young and old a place.  
We have this ministry; O God, receive our giving.
3. The yoke of Christ is ours: the whole world is our parish;  
we daily take the cross, the burden and the joy.  
Bearing hurts of those we serve, wounded, bruised and bowed with pain,  
Holy Spirit, bread and wine, we die and rise again.  
We have this ministry; O God, receive our loving.

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## **Benediction**

As you enter a new week,  
may you experience God's presence.  
May you feel God pouring out the Holy Spirit  
over your heads and your thoughts and the words of your lips,  
over your hearts and your feelings and emotions  
and your compassion for all others,  
and over your hands and your feet  
as you put into action all that God commands you.

During this week,  
may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with each of you; Amen.

~ posted on the [Presbyterian Church of Canada](http://presbyterian.ca/worship/) website. <http://presbyterian.ca/worship/>