**An Order for Worship**

**Pentecost, 2020**

*An Ecumenical Service Offered to God’s Glory*

*By the Churches of the Montana Association of Christians*

**GATHERING**

*As the first believers of long ago gathered from different nations, the Word was preached and the Spirit was poured out – knitting them into one body with diverse gifts for the common good. This service has been knit together by MAC leaders from different denominations, and offered for use by the believers of today in Montana. “Many tongues” – or different voices - are reflected in this liturgy. May God be glorified by our diverse gifts - shared for the common good of the church; may God be glorified by our unity - as we are sent to a beloved world.[[1]](#endnote-1)*

**Call to Worship[[2]](#endnote-2)**

One: Enter into God's presence on this Pentecost Sunday and prepare for surprises!

**All: Like a rush of mighty wind, Spirit fills the room**

One: Fills us with vision and possibility.

**All: Fills us with hope and encouragement**

One: God is at work in this place

**All: In us and through us and around us, to be the church for this time and space.**

**Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Forgiveness[[3]](#endnote-3)**

Prayer of Confession: Holy and Loving God, this Pentecost Sunday, we hear the promise of Christ again to us and to the Church: “You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses…” Today, we confess Your greatness, Your love for us and your Church, shown and gifted into the world in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is because of your great love that we may humbly and safely confess one of our main sins: that, while we do try to live faithfully, we often forget to ask for and live into the power and wisdom and love pouring forth from the Holy Spirit, which you have readily made available to us and all your people. Forgive us, Lord. Cleanse us from sin by Your Almighty Grace. And fill us with the Holy Spirit. Give us fresh resolve to start again, trusting that the gifts and fruit of the Holy Spirit to come forth in our lives. For it is in Christ’s Name that we pray. Amen.

**Assurance of Forgiveness**: On that first Day of Pentecost 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Peter stood before the crowds in Jerusalem to preach. He quoted the prophet Joel saying, “And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved!” As forgiven people, beloved and cleansed, let us live out the Christ-life in faith, hope, and love.

**Thanksgiving for the Holy Spirit[[4]](#endnote-4)**

Today, as we receive the gift of forgiveness and celebrate the coming of the Spirit to Christ’s Church, we give thanks to God for the Spirit’s coming even unto us, the Church of today in its variety of expressions:

* Spirit, you are the Life of the Creator, who moves over the waters in creation and calls true Life into being.
* Spirit you are Breath itself, called from the four winds to bring love to earth and holy relationship to all.
* Spirit you are Wind who blows wherever and whenever you will -- unpredictable, uncontrollable -- tirelessly renewing the face of world and pouring new life into death.
* Spirit you are the Energy of holy relationship between God and all of God’s creation, gushing and frothing into history, blissing out Jesus’ followers so much we can’t help but proclaim God’s gospel.
* Spirit, you are the Empowerment of love that continuously creates the molten core of Christ’s Church, empowering the community of Christ by calling and gathering us to live and love together in Christ’s name.
* Spirit, you are the Courage of life who fills us, even in times of death, with the willingness and the courage to push forward into living Jesus Christ into the world.

Holy Spirit we thank you even as we continue to pray:

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,

**and kindle in us the fire of your love.**

Holy Spirt, seek us and permeate us,

**and kindle in us the fire of your love.**

Holy Spirit, pray with us and for us,

**and kindle in us the fire of your love.**

Holy Spirit, counsel us and enlighten us,

**and kindle in us the fire of your love.**

Holy Spirit, transform us and raise us up,

**and kindle in us the fire of your love.**

Holy Spirit, dwell in us and saturate us with your presence so that together we are forever equipped to build up the body of Christ and serve God’s common good. Amen

**WORD**

**First Scripture Reading: The First Christian Pentecost**

*Pentecost is 50 days after Passover and Easter. Pentecost was a time when Jerusalem celebrated the annual feast of Shavuot. People from all around the world gathered. At the celebration recorded in Acts after Jesus’ resurrection something happened by God that had never happened before. Prompted by the Holy Spirit some people began to speak a message of God in ways that everyone else could understand regardless of language differences. The words spoken were all about the works of God. Peter recognized that God was doing a new thing and proclaimed that all people could be welcomed into God’s realm, just as the prophets had foretold.[[5]](#endnote-5)*

**Acts 2:1-21[[6]](#endnote-6)**

1When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes 11Cretans and Arabs — in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

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

**Second Scripture Reading**  (arranged for two voices)

*Paul writes numerous letters to the Church in Corinth. There is not a lot on “oneness” in Spirit in Corinth as this is Church weighted down with disagreements and divisions. Paul perhaps builds on Peter’s Pentecost message that professing life in Jesus makes people one in God. For all the differences that can get in the way of people getting along for the sake of Gospel, in the Spirit there are differences that work together for good. Paul writes here how the Spirit gifts people differently so that people of faith can be one in Christ Jesus.*

**1 Corinthians 12:3b-13**

**A, B: 3bNo one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit.**

B: 4Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit;

A:  5and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord;

B: 6and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them…

**A,B: …in everyone.**

B:  7To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. 8To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom,

A: and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit,

B:  9to another faith by the same Spirit,

A: to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit,

B:  10to another the working of miracles,

A: to another prophecy,

B: to another the discernment of spirits,

A: to another various kinds of tongues,

B: to another the interpretation of tongues.

A:  11All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

B: 12For just as the body is one and has many members,

A: and all the members of the body, though many,

B: are one body,

**A, B: so it is with Christ.**

A:  13For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body —

B: Jews

A: Greeks

B: slaves

A: free

**A, B: …and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.**

**Gospel Reading**

*In the ancient Jerusalem Temple, waters were known to flow beneath the temple mount and gush out in springs of healing and thirst-quenching pools and rivers all around the area. It is another festival day in Jerusalem, sometime before Passover and Pentecost that Jesus tells people to imagine a new source of water that will heal souls and quench the thirst of faith. Though people had no idea what he was talking about when he said the Spirit would make it happen, come Pentecost the world knew, because the Spirit then spoke through the people, that Jesus was indeed this living water.*

**John 7:37-39** 37On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, 38and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” 39Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

**Reflection**

***The Spirit Poured Out Among Us Meets our Thirst for Wholeness***

**RESPONSE**

**Discerning and Offering of Diverse Gifts[[7]](#endnote-7)**

Each one of you has received gifts of the Spirit – yes, really, everyone! Yes, you too! -- because in our baptisms, we all drank of the same Spirit. “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good,” the apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 12.

All of these gifts are activated by the same Spirit. Nobody has a lesser amount of the Spirit than anyone else; no one has a greater amount. Everyone gets an equal share, brimming with the abundance of God. And in that abundant Spirit, different gifts are given to different people so that all can play a unique and important role in serving the common good.

Today we give thanks for the many different gifts, callings and activities we’ve received from the Spirit.

For the gifts of speaking wisdom and knowledge and prophetic exhortation in the Spirit.

**We give thanks.**

For the gifts of faith and healing and miracles in the Spirit,

**We give thanks.**

For the gifts of discernment, and creativity, and evangelism in the Spirit

**We give thanks,**

For the gifts of leadership, ministry, and administration in the Spirit

**We give thanks,**

For the gifts of intercessory prayer and servant hospitality and teaching in the Spirit

**We give thanks.**

For the gifts of our many vocations and callings that serve God’s world,

**We give thanks.**

For the gifts of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control in the Holy Spirit.

**We give thanks.**

Our work and our rest, our gifts and our service are empowered by the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit’s power, God has knit us into the one body of Jesus Christ. “Y’all are the body of Christ and individually members of it” and every member matters in Christ’s body for the good of all.

Let us pray…Holy Spirit, activate and utilize the diverse gifts present in your church, that they share your life and your love with all. In Christ’s name we pray. Amen

**Discerning and Offering of the One Body[[8]](#endnote-8)**

Some of our members may celebrate communion by the bread and the one cup;

others of our members may celebrate communion by worshiping in many homes in one Spirit.

Some of our members will cherish the body of Christ in receiving the broken bread.

Others of our members will cherish the body of Christ in sheltering vulnerable members.

All of our members will celebrate the communion that has been given us in the Spirit,

building us into the one body of Christ, sent into the world.

*(Some congregations may include here liturgy for the Eucharist)*

Let us pray:

Creator God, we praise you for the prayers and promises of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, that we might receive the Spirit and become one. You are in us, and we are in you, that the world might recognize your love. And so we pray:

That the communion of your Holy Trinity would be reflected in our communion:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That your church around the world would offer a unified witness of your saving love:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That we would minister with courage, compassion and generosity:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That the offerings of our tithes, hearts and hands would be blessed for your work:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That divisions of every kind between people would be overcome:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That those who are neglected, oppressed, excluded would be draw into fullness of life:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That those weighed down in grief, addition, illness or despair would be lifted up:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

That resentments, tensions, and conflicts would be healed:

**Pour out your Holy Spirit.**

Continue to build us up as the body of Christ in the world, until that day when you will gather up all in the fullness of your kingdom;

Through Christ all glory and honor are yours, with the Holy Spirit in the holy church, now and forever**. Amen.**

**COMMISSIONING AND BLESSING**

Holy Spirit,

River of love, divine delight,

flow through me.

Flame of sun, burn in me.

Wind of heaven, breathe in me.

Tongues of strangers, speak in me.

Love of God, sing in me.

Lead me beyond myself,

to return to you in the other,

to love you in my stranger,

my foreigner, my enemy.

Burn with your fire in me,

that it may be mine.

Breathe yourself into my life,

that it may be yours.

I am your song, and your singing.

I am your candle; you are my flame.

Holy Spirit,

love the world

in me.

(*Steve Garnaas-Holmes,* [*Unfolding Light*](http://www.unfoldinglight.net/)*)*

**[[9]](#endnote-9)**Pentecost 2020,

in the time of COVID 19, unprecedented and frightening,

yet nevertheless falls beneath the outpouring of God’s fiery Spirit.

Let us go out into God’s world filled with the spark of this Spirit.

It may be from our laptop screens, it may be with masks.

It may be together or alone.

However it looks, it will be with God’s thirst quenching and life giving Spirit.

Let love guide our actions

and let us spread the peace and hope of Christ

in all we do and say, this special and holy day and always.

Amen.

1. Beth McCaw, Presbytery Leader, Presbytery of Glacier (PCUSA) [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Sandy Messick, Transitional Regional Minister and President, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the Northern Lights Region [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. George Goodrich, CoGeneral Presbyter for Yellowstone Presbytery (PCUSA) [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling, Bishop, Montana Synod, ELCA [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Marc Stewart, Conference Minister, United Church of Christ in MT – NWY [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Scriptures from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Rev. Dr. Laurie Jungling, Bishop, Montana Synod, ELCA [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Beth McCaw, Presbytery Leader, Presbytery of Glacier (PCUSA) [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Rev. Deborah Christine, Montana East District Superintendent, Mountain Sky Conference UMC [↑](#endnote-ref-9)