



# Pentecost

## Order of Worship

May 31, 2020  
Desert Southwest Conference

### Welcome – Acts 2

*Dior DeSormeau, University UMC, Las Vegas, Conference Spiritual Formation Chair*  
*Rev. Timote Piukala, Tongan UMC, Mesa*

### Opening Song – UMH #539 “O Spirit of the Living God”

*Dr. Benjamin Hansen, Director of Music, Catalina UMC, Tucson*

### Scripture – 2 Corinthians 8:1-7

*Rev. Sandy, John and Camille Johnson, Santa Cruz Valley UMC, Sahuarita*

### Message

*Bishop Robert Hoshibata*

### Invitation to Prayer

*Rev. Nancy Cushman, West District Superintendent*

### Prayer – Written by Rev. Mary Jane Pierce Norton

*Rev. Julius Keller, Cross in the Desert UMC, Phoenix; Rev. Joshua Warner, Faith UMC, Phoenix;*  
*Rev. Paul Cho, First UMC, Tucson; Rev. Antonieta Fernandes, Global Community UMF, Las Vegas;*  
*Rev. Jaycee Salangsang, Grace Fil-Am UMF, Las Vegas*

### A Witness

*Laurie Lineberry, Willowbrook UMC, Sun City, Conference Lay Leader*

### Invitation to Offering

### Musical Offering – “All Creatures of our God & King, Praise Him!”

*DoveSong from Dove of the Desert UMC, Glendale*

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

*Rev. Mark Conrad, South District Superintendent*

### Closing Song – UMH #399 “Take My Life and Let It Be”

*Barry and Kathy Doyle, Cross in the Desert UMC, Phoenix*

### Charge and Blessing

*Bishop Robert Hoshibata*



# Pentecost

## Supplemental Material

May 31, 2020  
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### ***Welcome – Acts 2***

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.

### ***Opening Song – UMH #539 “O Spirit of the Living God”***

### ***Scripture – 2 Corinthians 8:1-7***

We want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God that has been granted to the churches of Macedonia; for during a severe ordeal of affliction, their abundant joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part. For, as I can testify, they voluntarily gave according to their means, and even beyond their means, begging us earnestly for the privilege of sharing in this ministry to the saints— and this, not merely as we expected; they gave themselves first to the Lord and, by the will of God, to us, so that we might urge Titus that, as he had already made a beginning, so he should also complete this generous undertaking among you. Now as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you—so we want you to excel also in this generous undertaking.

### ***Message – Bishop Robert T. Hoshibata***

Whether you are at the moment worshiping on Pentecost Sunday, or some other time, I am very glad to connect with you! I want to express my deep appreciation for you, the laity and pastors in our United Methodist Churches in the Desert Southwest Conference. You have continued to be in ministry even in these times of challenge and change. It is my privilege and joy to serve as your bishop in these extraordinarily challenging times.

So it is appropriate that we meet like this, using the technology of video recording and posting as a means of worshiping and celebrating what it means to be the church in 2020 by looking to the Scriptures for wisdom and guidance. And the occasion selected to worship in this new way with you falls on the day of or in the season of Pentecost.

As we observe the day and the season of Pentecost, we United Methodists join with the family of Christians around the globe to remember and rejoice as we celebrate the birthday of the Church. Two scripture passages guide our thinking and praying today.

In Acts 2, we read of that Pentecost celebration which was the moment of the formation or the

# Pentecost Supplemental Material

genesis of the Christian church. A portion of this story was read earlier to remind us of our roots, our beginning, our cherished history. That Pentecost was a day of spirit and excitement, deeply significant for those who were caught up in the sweeping movement of God's spirit among them.

They had gathered shortly after Jesus' death and resurrection, to celebrate a harvest festival when something new and dramatically different happened. The sound of a violent wind filling the entire house where they were, and divided tongues of fire appearing and alighting upon each one and they began to speak in different languages of the power of God.

Some of the folk who were there were caught up in faith, others were perplexed. Some were proclaiming: "God is present, and I feel the movement of God's spirit in my soul!" Others were scratching their heads, wondering: what is happening? Are those people drunk? That is our birth story. In a fit of spiritual fervor and excitement, a new movement was born. That was the moment when the church was in its initial stages of birth and development.

And yet, from the account of the genesis of the church, we know, from that moment, miracles of faith began happening because of the Christ followers whose hearts were stirred that day by God's Holy Spirit. Taking place shortly after Jesus's death and resurrection, that moment was THE MOMENT when the dispirited, grieving followers of Jesus were overtaken and moved to deeper faith by God's Holy Spirit. And then, filled with God's spirit, the faithful were unleashed to go out into the world to spread the good news of Jesus.

Acts tells us: from that moment, the Spirit was alive in these apostles, and as they went teaching and making disciples of Jesus Christ. That is our birth story. We trace our beginnings to that spirit-filled, spiritual excitement and fervor of Pentecost.

Now, fast forward a bit, perhaps 20 years later. Now we find ourselves with the second scripture passage which comes from Paul's second letter to the Christian church in Corinth. In this passage Paul describes what a faithful church does when it is challenged by a time of severe trial. Not much detail is given at all about the trial, but we know from Paul's words that it was a time of extreme poverty among the church of Macedonia.

Paul's words tell of radical generosity of the Christians in Macedonia, his words effusive with appreciation for the way the church responded, to this critical need, even while they themselves were being challenged. And that they did so out of the depth of their faith in Jesus Christ, which welled up with joy in their hearts as they responded as Jesus would have done.

If Acts 2 tells about the formation, the birth, of the Christian Church at Pentecost, 2 Corinthians tells about the fulfillment of what it means to be the church, that even in times of severe affliction and distress, the Spirit of God lives and breathes life and love and generosity of the heart by faith in Jesus. If Pentecost is the birth of the church, 2 Corinthians is the fulfillment of what Jesus called it to be.

What an extraordinary reminder to us in these days of living with the COVID-19 pandemic!

2 Corinthians might well say: we want you to know, brothers and sisters, about the grace of God

# Pentecost Supplemental Material

that has been granted to the churches in the Desert Southwest Conference in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our churches and ministry settings have been besieged by the invasion that has gripped the entire globe. It is as if a part of our lives died once the Coronavirus arrived with its deadly infection.

Churches stopped in-person worship and gatherings and shuttered their doors. Sanctuaries are dark. Classrooms are empty. Social halls are vacant. Parking lots are asphalt deserts. Study groups and fellowship groups, and support groups and ministry groups came to an abrupt halt. Church as we knew it is no longer; and although the day will come when we will be back together, we do not know what we will look like then.

To the casual observer, our churches, like much of the community, may look abandoned. And yet, in many ways, despite the outward appearance of the church buildings, there are new things taking place. The soul of the church is alive and in many cases, actively at work in the congregation and community.

I am hearing of churches where clergy have had to step up to learn how to plan and implement new forms of worship. Live recordings, such as this one. Many of us are experiencing ZOOM overload from the many, many meetings, conversations, webinars, gatherings we have been participating in. As someone remarked: there are many of our clergy who overnight became televangelists. How many of you have experienced a new form of worship?

I hear of courageous laity who step up to the plate and are assisting with the difficult task of connecting us when we cannot be physically present with one another.

I hear of food distributions, monetary donations, assistance and compassionate companionship in new and exciting ways popping up out of the despair of our shutting down.

Never before have we seen such renewed use of the telephone, especially to maintain relationship with those who do not have internet access.

You are discovering a creative energy that reaches out and touches lives much like Paul described in 2 Corinthians, with abundant joy overflowing in a wealth of generosity.

I have begun to think that Coronavirus pandemic as – a reset of the church. Think of that reset button that you can press when things on your computer are going haywire and nothing seems to be working right. This is a moment when God is telling us: here is your window of opportunity to do things differently, to use this moment to give birth to a new vision of what the church can be and do.

Our Pandemic reset has made us ponder prayerfully:

What is a church anyway?

What is our purpose, our mission and ministry?

Who is our neighbor?

# Pentecost Supplemental Material

What are the things we have always done that we can let go of and still be the church?

If the church is the body of Christ, what does it mean when the neck bone is not connected to the head bone? Is that still the church?

If we cannot shake a hand as we greet someone new, how do we reach new people and welcome them?

What will we have learned about the who we are and what we are called to be and do?

I have received reports of laity and clergy learning new skills for worship and evangelism, mission and outreach, emerging amid the present pandemic. These stories inspire me, revive my soul, reaffirm my trust in the inherent goodness of humanity and tell me that there is a future for our church.

We may be separated, unable to connect with one another. Perhaps we cannot see our beloved church family. We may be unable to enjoy the fellowship hour as we used to. I even heard someone say: I miss those potlucks so much I'm beginning to crave green bean casserole with French fried onion rings. We cannot sing in the choir or play in the handbell choir or the praise band anymore. We are experiencing economic hardships. We just long for the good old days!

Yes, we are feeling all of this and more. BUT, look at what we are learning again about the church:

We have discovered that there is truth in that old Sunday school song: the church is not a building.

On its Facebook page, one of our Hispanic churches boldly proclaimed:

El templo está cerrado,

La iglesia está en las casas.

¡Dios está en todas partes!

The temple is closed,

The church is in the homes.

God is everywhere.

Maybe the church BUILDING is closed right now because of the Coronavirus. But God is everywhere, so wherever you are as you share in this time of worship, God is there with you. And I am convinced that God is calling us to be the church however we can be the church, to discover new ways of being the church, and to share the good news joyfully, generously, lovingly, wherever we are, even in this time when La templo está cerrada, the temple is closed because Dios está en todas partes, God is everywhere.

One of the cherished books I have re-read recently is a book entitled The Book of Joy. It is a wonderful account inspirational and entertaining, of conversations between the Dalai Lama and

# Pentecost Supplemental Material

Archbishop Desmond Tutu. In their conversations, they speak two important truths for The United Methodist Church in the Desert Southwest. The first is that we are wired to be compassionate. The second is that our greatest joy is when we are doing something good for others.

Generosity is not just about the money we give. It is also about how we give our time and our faith. But it reminds us that we come from the factory equipped for cooperation, compassion and generosity, to care about others.

Ministry happens because we are God's people, compassionate and willing to put aside our troubles and respond to the needs of others.

Ministry happens when we focus on God's abundance and our many blessings, rather than being stuck in a mentality of scarcity

Ministry happens when we take very, very seriously God's call in our lives to become the church that is not confined to the structures of wood, stone, glass that we have built to contain our faithful worship.

Ministry happens when we break out of the four walls of our campus and step out into the world in different ways.

Ministry happens when we find new ways of worship and outreach in the world in spite of and perhaps because of the COVID-19 pandemic that we are all struggling with.

And who knows, but in this time when God seems to be pressing the reset button, so we go back to our roots as the church excited and energized about our faith in Jesus Christ, touched and moved by God's Holy Spirit, and launched into ministry and mission in the world with courage to love like Jesus, act for justice, united in hope. The new church of the future, is emerging right before us, and more importantly, because of us.

And so will you pray with me:

Come Holy Spirit, come again.

Let your Holy Spirit sweep like a mighty wind into our lives,

Give us the courage to be the Pentecost church again. Amen.

## ***Invitation to Prayer***

The Holy Spirit that stirred the hearts of the disciples so long ago is still alive and active drawing together people across our conference:

from Las Vegas, Mesquite and Pahrump,  
from Show Low, Winslow and Flagstaff  
from Sedona, Prescott and Payson,  
from Kearny, Safford and Bowie,  
from Sierra Vista, Nogales and Tucson,

# Pentecost Supplemental Material

from Yuma and Ajo and the entire metropolitan area of Phoenix.

And the spirit speaks to each in their own languages English, Spanish, Korean, Tongan, Filipino, and Amharic. United in hope we raise our voices in praise and prayer. As we unite in prayer let us hold in our hearts those who are suffering from COVID-19 whether physically, emotionally or economically and their families, our brothers and sisters of the Navajo Nation who are being hit hard by the virus, and all the essential workers who continue to labor and those working diligently to find a cure or a vaccine. Let us join together in prayer.

## ***Prayer – Written by Rev. Mary Jane Pierce Norton***

Gracious God. We are reminded again when the first believers in Jesus were given the courage to tell others about Jesus. We believe you give us that same courage to tell others about Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit. You know, O God, that sometimes we are fearful and we feel alone. But just like that Pentecost long ago, we, too, are surrounded by your love and presence. Help us live in such a way that others see in us a reflection of your love. Help us have the courage to tell others about the difference it makes in our lives to trust in your love and care. Help us see those around who want to be in the fellowship of Christians. Help us to witness to one another so that we grow in faith. Through the power of your Holy Spirit and the witness of your son, Jesus the Christ, we pray today. Amen.

## ***A Witness***

The prayer mentions being fearful and feeling alone. Kind of like the place that we are right now with the COVID-19 virus. But hearing those words took me back to a time in my college years when I had to move from the place I was in, to a completely different state. This was part of my plan and I embraced the bigger picture of my schooling. Yet when it came to moving, I was totally on my own and alone. Today parents are called helicopter parents as they hover over their children when they leave home. Back then, at least for me, my parents were a cargo plane... opening the door, wishing me a safe landing with a quick shove out the door as the plane flew away. I was moving to a state where I knew no one.

As I drove over the hill into Thousand Oaks and my two-lane divided road became a 10-lane freeway, I have to admit that I was filled with panic and dread. How does anyone drive on something this massive? I looked around...none of the other drivers seemed concerned at all that we just spilled onto an ocean of concrete. A small voice in my head said, "stay in your lane – you will be fine." I finally reached the place where I was going to be staying, exhausted from the anxiety of the drive into L.A. Now I was alone...just me and 5 million people that I did not know and that did not care about me. After unloading my car, I was urged by that same small voice to find a place where I knew I would belong. I found the Phone Book in my apartment and began searching for United Methodist Churches in the Yellow Pages. Using a big paper map of the area acquired from a nearby gas station, I plotted the churches on the map in proximity to where I would be living.

# Pentecost Supplemental Material

On Sunday I sat in a church with people I did not know ...but I knew the liturgy, I knew the prayers and I knew the hymns. I was home in a church of strangers that would soon become my church family, because we believed together and we worshipped together. That connection to church family is a gift that many could use, especially now. The time of Pentecost IS now. Just like my higher education plan, Pentecost is God's plan for us to reach out to others to share the Good News, to help lost people find a place where they can be encouraged, embraced and surrounded by the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

The church continues, especially during this time of isolation. The church is critical in keeping us connected and reminding us that we are loved and missed. And this work of the church needs to be supported. I invite you to continue to give financially to your local church. Share the love of Jesus Christ in a hurting world and invite people to join you in electronic church.

## ***Musical Offering – UMH #62 “All Creatures of our God & King”***

### ***Prayer of Thanksgiving***

God, we thank you for all of the blessings in our lives. You have given us so much. Help us not to take your gifts for granted. Show us ways to take these gifts and use them to bless others. Touch lives with our financial gifts, while guiding us to go farther than just our finances. We offer to you the very lives you have given to us.

Our voice.

Our hands.

Our feet.

Our love. All that we are, we offer to you. Amen.

## ***Closing Song – UMH #399 “Take My Life and Let It Be”***

### ***Charge and Blessing***

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.