



Pentecost 2020

May 31, 2020

St. John's United Church of Christ

As believers in Jesus Christ, we strive with unconditional love and selflessness – using our God given gifts – to provide a nurturing shelter for those seeking a Christian home. We offer opportunities for spiritual growth through worship, education, fellowship, prayer and Christian action throughout our community and the world.

**Called by God
Sharing with the World**

May 31, 2020
Pentecost Sunday

Gathering

Meditation

Genesis 1:1,2

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

Prelude

Holy Spirit Rain Down - Russell Fragar
Tracey Holler, Flute

Opening Hymn

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three persons Blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee
Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see
Only Thou art holy there is none beside Thee
Perfect in power, in love and purity

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty
Oh thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty
God in three persons Blessed Trinity
Oh God in three persons Blessed Trinity!

Welcome and Sharing of the Good News of God's work among us

Lifting up our Joys

Bill Miller

Opening Prayer

Bill Miller

Prayer of Confession

Create in me a clean heart, O God
Create in me a clean heart, O God
Create in me a clean heart, O God
And renew a right spirit within me

Cast me not away from your presence
Cast me not away from your presence
Cast me not away from your presence
And take not your Holy Spirit from me

Restore to me the joy of your salvation
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
Restore to me the joy of your salvation
And uphold me with your free Spirit

Assurance of Forgiveness

Bill Miller

If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

(1 John 1:9)

Bible Reading

Galatians 5:22,23

Elaine Miller

Children's Message

Fruit of the Spirit Song - Uncle Charlie

Bible Reading

Psalms 139:1-10

Elaine Miller

Song

Always There -Brendan Graham, Rolf U. Loveland
Bill Miller, solo

Bible Reading

Acts 1:4-12

Elaine Miller

Song

Holy Spirit Living Breath of God - Stuart Townend and Keith Getty
Ally Murphy, solo

Bible Reading

Acts 2:1-8

Elaine Miller

Today's Message

Bill Miller

Prayers of the People

Lord's Prayer (*unison*) ("*debts*" and "*debtors*")

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 debts,
as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power,
and the glory forever. Amen.**

Please be seated.

Benediction

Barocha - Michael Card

Bill Miller, solo

The flowers are dedicated to the graduates of St. John's.

Chris Holler, Emily Daniels, Ally Murphy

*Blessings to you from St. John's United Church of Christ in
Orwigsburg.*

Chapter 16 from the book *The Cross and It's Shadow* by Stephen Haskell

PENTECOST, so called because it was held fifty days after the waving of first-fruits, it was the last of the annual feasts held in the first half of the year. This feast was called the Feast of Weeks, on account of seven weeks intervening between it and the Passover feast. It was also called the Feast of Harvest, as it came at the close of the harvest. The Feast of Weeks was one of the three principal annual feasts, when all the men of Israel were required to appear before the Lord in Jerusalem.

As the children of Israel journeyed toward Jerusalem to attend this feast, on all sides could be seen the stubble from which had been gathered the ripened grain that lay all ready to be trodden out upon the threshing-floors. At the time of the Passover feast there was uncertainty in regard to the coming harvest, as drought or storm might blight it before it was gathered; but now there was no uncertainty. The fruit of the harvest in their possession, was to be used for their pleasure and the advancement of the work of the Lord. And none were to appear before the Lord empty. They were not simply to bring a few heads of grain, as in the springtime; but they were to bring a freewill offering according as the Lord had blessed them. This feast was sometimes called the Day of the First-fruits because the children of Israel were expected to make liberal offerings to the Lord at this time. It was a season of great rejoicing for the entire family, in Israel the Levites and the poor and afflicted were to join in.

The services of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, occupied but one day. Many offerings were presented at the temple, among them two loaves of leavened bread, which were waved before the Lord. The Feast of Weeks was observed as an annual Sabbath, and was a holy convocation.

When Christ ascended from the earth, He bade His disciples teach all nations. They were to carry the gospel to the entire world. The disciples saw only a mere handful of believers as the result of Christ's three years of toil and sacrifice. But when Pentecost had fully come, or in other words, when the seed which the Son of God Himself had sown during those three and a half years of weary toil, had sprung up, then came the harvest.

The disciples were ignorant of the results of the Saviors' life, work, and sacrifice upon the minds of the people. In explaining to them the parable of the tares and the wheat, Christ had said, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man," but they comprehended it not. As the Savior went from city to hamlet, He was constantly sowing the "good seed". The harvest of souls gathered from this seed was to be presented at the antitypical Feast of Harvest. For centuries the children of Israel had celebrated this feast, bringing offerings from their harvest of grain. Of each one God had said, At the Feast of Harvest thou shalt present "the first-fruits of thy labors, which thou hast sown in the field." The antitype came when the Son of man presented the "first fruits" of His labor, which he had sown in the field. There was a work for the disciples to do in order that they might be ready for the great antitypical Feast of Harvest. They

needed to study the Scriptures, to put aside every difference, and become of one accord, that they might receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, which would enable them to know how to care for the great harvest of three thousand souls that was awaiting them as the result of the Savior's ministry. They also needed this special outpouring of the Spirit to prepare them to carry forward the wonderful work begun on the day of Pentecost, until every creature under heaven should hear the glad news of salvation.

In Palestine there was an early rain and a latter rain, which came in time to ripen the harvest. The prophet John, in speaking of the work of God in the last days, uses the term "former" and "latter rain" to represent the outpouring of God's Spirit. And in the following words he gives the assurance that in the closing work of the gospel in the earth God will again pour out His Spirit: "He hath given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain, . . . and the floors shall be full of wheat." This great harvest of souls at the antitypical Feast of Harvest was only a beginning of the greater harvest that will be gathered before the End of the world

In the type the children of Israel brought liberal offerings to the Lord at the Feast of Harvest. Those who entered into the spirit of the antitypical Feast of Harvest, or Pentecost, "sold their possessions and goods," and gave the proceeds to help in carrying forward the work of the Lord. These offerings enabled the disciples to extend the work rapidly, so that within about thirty-four years they could say that every creature under heaven had heard the gospel. Those who enter into the spirit of the latter rain will, like the early disciples, lay all upon the altar to be used by the Lord in the great closing work.

As the seed sown by the Son of man during His earthly ministry brought a harvest of souls at Pentecost, or the early rain, so the good seed sown by Christ's ambassadors who faithfully scatter the printed page filled with the gospel message, and by voice and life teach the saving truth, will yield a bountiful harvest in the time of the latter rain, when God's Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. Then will be gathered the fruit of what each one has sown in the field. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully," is the divine promise.