

Living into the Pentecost Vision
Intercultural Church Sunday
Second Sunday of Pentecost
Trinity Sunday

May 22, 2016

GATHERING THE COMMUNITY

(A time of singing, especially of unfamiliar songs, will add comfort and perhaps greater participation for this service of worship. If possible, consider adding drumming to the service (e.g., Africa, First Nation). International flags and colorful materials, symbols, etc. from many cultures contribute to a celebrative, diverse, and inclusive atmosphere. Leading up to this Sunday, consider encouraging everyone to wear clothing customary in their cultural tradition.)

PRELUDE

(During the prelude, use as many cultural hymns, and other appropriate music, as possible. Consider songs with music and words from many countries and cultural traditions, including spirituals. Many of these hymns can be found in the hymnbooks Glory to God and The Presbyterian Hymnal (blue). This is one way to help the congregation realize the many rich ways to worship, not only through different words but, also, through different styles, tempos, and beats.)

WELCOME

(During the welcome, encourage the congregation to try the new songs and the new languages in the worship service. Perfection is not the goal, but participation is--members of a community participate together. Also, encourage everyone to feel free to use first languages, and other learned languages, that are not English whenever possible.)

CONGREGATIONAL INTROIT

Wa wa wa Emimimo (Come, O Holy Spirit, Come)

(Suggested hymn is # 283 in Glory to God. It may be helpful to have the choir sing the hymn a couple of times, then lead the congregation in singing this Nigerian gathering song several times.)

***THE CALL TO WORSHIP**

One: Holy God of constant surprise, we are people of the Resurrection--

All: Opening our hearts to surprising new ways of being.

One: We are people of the Resurrection--

All: Opening our hearts to challenging new ways of living.

One: We are people of the Resurrection--

All: Opening our hearts to joyful new ways of doing community.

One: Jesus, luring us into a journey with you, we are people of the Way--

All: Following you on the way to the transformation of our lives.

One: We are people of the Way--

All: Following you on the way to the transformation of our relationships.

One: We are people of the Way--

**All: Following you on the way to the transformation
of the community called "church."**

One: Spirit, ever on the move, we are people of Pentecost--

**All: Receiving power, as you lead us on the way, to become the new church--
the church needed in our own time and place.**

One: We are people of Pentecost--

**All: Receiving power to become the church that is
richly diverse and powerfully welcoming.**

One: We are people of Pentecost--

All: Receiving power to become the church of bold inclusion and true love.

One: Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

Come to surprise us!

Come to transform us!

Come to empower us!

And all of God's people say:

All: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit, Come!

*HYMN

Help Us Accept Each Other

(Suggested hymn is # 754 in Glory to God and # 358 in The Presbyterian Hymnal--blue.)

CONFESSION OF OUR FAILURE TO BE THE WHOLE PEOPLE OF GOD *(in unison)*

Loving God, who loves all of your children equally, we want to love--but sometimes we want to limit our love to the people most like us, those most familiar to us, the ones with whom we feel most comfortable. We want to follow the challenging ways of Jesus, at least we think we do--but sometimes it's just so hard to stand up to injustice and power the way Jesus did. We want your Spirit to move powerfully within each of us, and among our gathered community--but to be honest, sometimes your wildly moving Spirit really scares us, and we stand trembling, or frozen in place, as the Spirit beckons to us to travel down the path of continual growth into the whole people of God.

When we don't want to open our hearts and our minds to more loving and inclusive ways of being your people; when we don't want to be empowered to embrace new

opportunities for living the Jesus Way; when we don't want to live in Christian communities as richly diverse as the amazing, colorful world you have given to us—forgive us, transform us, and draw us into intentional, intercultural relationships and community that we might become more whole.

INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS *(in silence)*

HYMN *Spirit of the Living God (in English)*
(Suggested hymn is # 288 in Glory to God and # 322 in The Presbyterian Hymnal--blue.)

RESPONSIVE ASSURANCE OF THE DEPTH AND BREADTH OF DIVINE LOVE

One: From our Holy, Awesome God, there is Good News:

All: Even when we do not love the way God wants us to love;

One: Even when we will not follow the Way of Jesus,
or do not even hear the call to follow;

**All: Even when we refuse the leading of the Spirit
because we are afraid, or content, or just don't want to be bothered;**

One: Divine Love is so deep, it reaches us where we are.

Divine Love is so broad, it draws us into a loving embrace.

Divine Love is so certain and strong, we are always accepted and welcomed in.

**All: Forgiven and forgiving, we are transformed and empowered
to move out into the world, transforming brokenness
in relationships, in communities, in the church, in the world.
Thanks be to God. Amen.**

HYMN *Spirit of the Living God (in Spanish and/or Korean)*
(Spanish and Korean are on # 288 in Glory to God. If possible, ask someone to transliterate and teach the Korean.)

***SHARING THE PEACE OF THE LIVING CHRIST**

One: Jesus walked the earth, showing us the ways of peace.

The Living Christ abides with us now, filling us with true peace;
inviting us to be disciples--agents of peace for all of the church,
for all of your children, for all of the world.

The Peace of the Living Christ be with you.

All: And also with you.

*(The gathered community greets one another, especially the strangers in their midst,
with the Peace of Christ. Culturally diverse ways of greeting are welcomed.)*

OPENING THE SCRIPTURES

Calling on the Spirit to Open Our Hearts and Our Minds

Wa wa wa Emimimo (Come, O Holy Spirit, Come)

(Suggested hymn is # 283 in Glory to God--used here as a congregational Prayer for Illumination; also used as the Congregational Introit at the beginning of the service.)

LISTENING FOR A HOLY WORD TO US Proverbs 8:1-4 and 22-31
God's Word for us. **Thanks be to God**

WELCOMING THE CHILDREN

Suggestions for Welcoming the Children:

- 1. On a globe or map assist the children in locating Swaziland. Talk about cultural traditions, toys, dress, food, etc. of children in Swaziland (pictures, a toy, etc. are helpful). Teach the hymn "Sizohamba naye" to the children, and talk about what it might mean to "walk with God," particularly beside our Swaziland sisters and brothers. Lead the children in saying a prayer for Swaziland. As the children leave, let them lead the congregation in singing "Sizohamba naye." Consider giving children small percussion instruments--if they are remaining in the service, you may want a plan for retrieving these instruments right away.*
- 2. Show pictures of children from other countries and cultural traditions and/or ask the children about friends they may have from other countries/cultural traditions. Continue a discussion with them, talking about these pictures/friends and explore Proverbs 8: 31 and what it might mean to "delight in the human race." Before the children leave, lead them in praying that everyone in our church may welcome in, and delight in, all of the Children of God—the whole human race.*

***HYMN** *Sizohamba naye (We Will Walk with God)*

(As the children leave for children's worship, church school, or to return to their pews, the congregation stands and sings "Sizohamba naye" several times, alternating the English text and the Swaziland text. Hymn is # 742 in Glory to God.)

LISTENING FOR A HOLY WORD TO US Romans 5: 1-5
God's Word for us. **Thanks be to God**

PROCLAIMING THE WORD

Suggestions for Proclaiming the Word:

- 1. Drawing on lectionary readings Proverbs 8: 1-4 and 22-31 and on Romans 5: 1-5, with suggested title: "Delighting in the Human Race."*

a. The first creation story in Genesis describes an amazing and diverse new creation emerging from emptiness and chaos.

b. After Jesus' death, even with resurrection hope and appearances, the community that had followed Jesus is in crisis, but not so much because Jesus, as they had known him, is gone. The looming crisis is if the community that followed Jesus can remain together, or if it will disappear. The days between Easter and Pentecost are a time of crisis and uncertainty--chaos if you will. Can anything good, or new, emerge?

c. Pentecost comes with surprising uncertainty and chaos. Yet, again, out of chaos, a new creation comes into being—the Church is born.

d. In this time of much societal change, including much change in the church, the ground is shifting beneath our feet--there is uncertainty, perceived crisis, and what often seems like chaos. Would learning to truly embrace, and delight in, the entire human race allow something new and amazingly wonderful to emerge from the chaos? Immigrant congregations and congregations not representing the dominant culture are growing. Worshipping communities with diverse memberships are emerging. Might these sisters and brothers show us the way? In Proverbs, it is the voice of "Wisdom" that is speaking the words, ". . . rejoicing in God's inhabited world and delighting in the human race."

e. Romans 5 is calling us to endurance, which will produce character in us, and lead us into hope as God continues to transform us. As we are transformed, we become more attentive to the movement of the Spirit. We begin living the Pentecost vision of being an intercultural community of faith, opening our hearts and our minds to "delight in the whole human race." Out of the crises and chaos of our time, an amazing, richly diverse, new creation of the church may yet emerge.

2. Again drawing on ". . . rejoicing in God's inhabited world and delighting in the human race:"
 - a. Address "race" as socially constructed categories that divide us, while empowering some and disempowering others.
 - b. Develop the ideas that diversity is built into creation, is richly beautiful and life-giving, creates an environment where individuals thrive, and empowers and strengthens communities, including communities of faith. Tell stories as examples, or identify a couple of others to tell a short story as part of the sermon, or use short video segments as illustrations.
 - c. Redefine "race" as the "human race"—the whole human race, all of the Children of God.
3. In some congregations, it may be possible to have a "participatory sermon" in which some in the congregation tell stories of hope out of crisis, creativity out of chaos, their own positive experiences of diversity, etc. One option is to keep the sermon short, then to ask for participation, and end with a short sermon conclusion. Another option is to break the sermon into short meditations, asking for participation after each short meditation. It is helpful to let people know ahead of time that responses should be very short, there will only be time for a few responses, and the conversation can continue after worship during the "cultural potluck meal" (see below). It is also helpful to have three or four people already prepared to respond in case others do not.

Alternate suggestion:

If you choose to use the lectionary reading, Psalm 8, consider pairing it with the Proverbs passage, focusing on the awesomeness of God, the glory of all creation, and how humankind has been given the responsibility to care of all the earth and all who live upon it. Connect this to Proverbs 8: 31: “. . . rejoicing in God’s inhabited world and delighting in the human race.”

Responding to the Spirit Moving Through the Community

***HYMN**

Lord, I Want to Be a Christian

(Suggested hymn is # 729 in Glory to God and # 372 in The Presbyterian Hymnal--blue.)

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

Option one for the “Prayer Jesus Taught” following the Prayers of the People:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-Maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all, Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name shall echo through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed
by the peoples of the earth!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!
Your commonwealth of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.**

(from The New Zealand Prayer Book)

Option two: If you choose to use the more traditional prayer, encourage the congregation to use the language and words with which they are most comfortable—it’s ok to hear several languages at the same time; and, if speaking English, it’s ok that not everyone is saying and hearing exactly the same words at the same time--remember what happened on Pentecost? This also is another way to let people know that differences and variety are welcomed in this place. If you choose the second option, you may want to print something like this in the bulletin:

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE AND THE PRAYER JESUS TAUGHT

(Feel free to use the language and words closest to your heart)

OFFERTORY

(Similar to the Prelude, consider using different cultural hymns and other appropriate music, perhaps a tradition that has not been included in congregational hymns and responses.)

***SONG OF RESPONSE FOR THE GIVING OF OUR GIFTS**

(Suggested hymns are “Heleluyan” # 595, First People: Muscogee, in The Presbyterian Hymnal--blue—or “Halle, Halle, Hallelujah!” a Caribbean melody, # 591 in Glory to God.)

***PRAYER OF DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS AND OF OUR LIVES** *(in unison)*

**Grateful for all that we have been given;
Grateful for the opportunity to share in the Holy, Sacred Work
that you place before us;
Grateful that you call us to come, follow you, and be partners
in healing the brokenness around us;
We bring our gifts, we bring our lives,
we bring all that we have, and all that we are, to you, Holy God. Amen.**

***SONG OF RESPONSE FOR THE DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS AND OUR LIVES**

(Same response as used above for the “Giving of Our Gifts.”)

*** RESPONSIVE CHARGE AND BLESSING**

One: We have come into this place of welcome and love.

All: We have been challenged to welcome and love all of God’s Children.

One: We have come into this place of hope and peace.

All: We have been challenged to take hope and peace to all the world.

One: Go out into the world to bring justice and peace to all of God’s Children,
following Jesus across all the boundaries that divide us,
joyfully embracing our rich, beautiful differences that add meaning and strength
to our lives, our relationships, and our world.

All: Guide us, Holy Spirit, as we follow the Jesus Way.

One: God grant us wisdom, and courage, and the true peace that comes
when there is justice for all of the Children of God. Amen.

*** HYMN**

Canto de Esperanza

(English, Spanish, English)

(Suggested hymn is # 765 in Glory to God and # 432 in The Presbyterian Hymnal--blue.)

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*You are invited to rise in body or spirit at your discretion

Cultural Potluck Meal

Everyone has a cultural heritage. Many have more than one cultural tradition in their family's genealogical background. Leading up to this Intercultural Sunday, encourage congregational members and friends to bring a favorite food from their culture to share with others at a "cultural potluck meal" following the worship service.

*This Order of Service was prepared by the Rev. Sharon L. Mook.
With the exception of the prayer from The New Zealand Prayer Book,
all liturgical elements were written by Sharon L. Mook
for the Presbyterian Church (USA) Intercultural Sunday, May 22, 2016.
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