

Some thoughts...

This resource was initiated by St. Andrew's Haney United Church, Maple Ridge, BC and their minister, the Rev. Richard Bott.

It was created to help with our growth in our collective discipleship, as represented in the acronym UNITED:

- Uplifted through daily prayer.
- Nourished in weekly worship.
- Informed through daily conversation with scripture.
- Taking God's love to others through service.
- Engaged in spiritual relationships.
- Donating back God's gifts of time, talent & treasure.

A number of participants in the life of the congregation noted how difficult it was to find a community with whom they could worship, when they were away from home. For some, it was because they vacationed in areas that were remote from communities with churches, while for others, time was often spent in countries and cultures where finding worship gatherings in English was extremely difficult.

The "Nourished in Weekly Worship" resource is here for these in-between times, when we can't easily worship with the larger community. Twenty such services have been created, spanning the liturgical calendar.

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ST. ANDREW'S HANEY UNITED CHURCH

Spirit Language (a Pentecost Reflection)

Nourished in Weekly Worship
(A resource for when you can't
gather with a worshiping
community.)

Created by:
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If you are worshipping alone, please read both parts out loud. If not, invite someone to speak the "One" part.

Gathering Time:

Take a moment in silence, to gather yourself. This is a special time – a time when you are intentionally turning your thoughts towards the presence of the Divine.

Call to Gather:

One: The Spirit is here among us
Many: Within us, around us, between us.
One: The Spirit is here to strengthen us
Many: Bringing courage, bringing conviction.
One: The Spirit is here to move us
Many: Making us sing and praise.
One: The Spirit is here.
**Many: May we feel the Spirit as we gather.
May we be fed by her fiery strength.
May we be emboldened by her powerful wind.**
One: We gather in the Spirit's arms to be nurtured as we worship.
Many: And may our worship fill us with the Spirit as we go back out into our daily lives.

Opening Prayers:

**Many: Spirit God,
we come into your presence with awe and wonder,
praying that we would be touched with your power.
In this time of worship remind us of your constant presence,
your gentle guidance,
your hope for the world.**

**As we remember those of old who were moved into speech by the Spirit,
so too may we find our voice to be prophetic witnesses in the world today.**

Remind us...

**that we can all speak Spirit-language,
that we too can burn with the fire of hope. Amen**

Song of Praise

(See 'Suggestions')

**Prayer Before the Scripture::
God who speaks to us in many ways,
open our eyes, our ears, our very beings to see and hear what you have to say.
As we pause now to read from the witness of our ancestors in faith, may we have open minds and hearts. May the old stories find a resonance in our present lives. May we be empowered by your Word within these words, and moved to response. Amen.**

Scripture:

Acts 2. 1-21

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

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power."

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

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

Numbers 11.24-30

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again. Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, "My lord Moses, stop them!" But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!"

And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

One: Hear the witness of God's people!
All: **Alleluia! Amen!**

Questions for Reflection:

(Please feel free to use these questions as "starting points" for an exploration of the text... but don't worry if you go off in other directions!)

Is there a time when you have been overwhelmed by the "spirit of the moment"? How did that feel (great, terrifying, awesome...)?

Often in our Scriptural story people do not know what to do with others who are moved by or filled with the Spirit. How do you imagine you would react to people acting like the Spirit-filled people in the readings?

Have you felt someone or something pushing you to say something unpopular and yet were sure it was the right thing to say? How do we react to that disagreement?

Where do you feel the Spirit leading you at this point in your life?

Time for Silent Reflection

Song of Praise (See 'Suggestions')

Prayers of the People:

As you come to prayer pause for a moment. Encourage the group to bring to mind those people and situations they want remembered in prayer. Ask if anyone wants to name those things. They maybe causes for celebration or causes of concern. (Thanksgiving and intercession to use "church language".)

Pause for a time of silence. Listen to the ebb and flow of breath, of air, of life. Let the wind of the Spirit fill your lungs and your soul with life-giving breath. Breathe in power and hope and blow out despair and tiredness.

As you breathe, call to mind those good things of life. What brings you life in abundance? It may be people, a place, things, or all of the above. For all those things that make life worth living breathe your thanks and your praise.

Now call to mind those things that worry or concern you. Are there people you know who are having a hard time of life right now? Places in the world that you hear about in the news and despair? Name those things and give them to the Spirit-breath, floating on wings of love and care.

Return to the gentle ebb and flow of the Spirit-breath. Relax into the Spirit's embrace. As your lungs fill with good clean air, let your very being be filled with power and hope. Place the mixture of joy and sorrow that is life into the air in front of you and, with your breath, hand it off to God. As you exhale, whisper "God hear my prayers". As you inhale whisper: "And in your love answer". Let it be so.

Jesus' Prayer:

God – our Father and Mother,
who art in heaven,
hallowed by 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 trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
for thine is the kingdom, the power,
and the glory – forever and ever. Amen.

Silent time:

Take a few moments to contemplate what you've shared this day. Pour those thoughts and feelings and questions and hopes into God's love. When it seems that everyone is ready, close with the commissioning and blessing.

Commissioning & Blessing::

One: Here we have gathered.
Many: Here we have been fed.
One: Here we have invited the wind and fire into our lives
Many: Now we go out to be windy firebrands in the world
One: Blowing with the energy of change, hot with the fire of hope.
Many: We go out Spirit-led and Spirit-touched, to be people of the Spirit.
One: And as we go take courage and confidence in the knowledge that the Spirit of God moves in, around, and with us always. Spirit God is our strength and our sustenance.
Many: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Suggestions for the 'Songs of Praise':

If you aren't comfortable singing (or don't know the tunes), perhaps there is something on your iPod, mp3 player, or available CDs that would be appropriate to listen to. (Be creative!)

If you have a copy of Songs for a Gospel People (SGP), Voices United (VU), or More Voices (MV), consider finding songs in these or the following suggestions:

VU198 Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us
VU376 Spirit of the Living God (also SFGP91)
VU381 Spirit of Life
VU375 Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness (also SFGP108)
VU382 Breathe On Me Breath of God (Public Domain)
VU372 Though I May Speak