

Order of Worship for June 8, 2025 (Pentecost Sunday)

Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you,

C: and also with you.

Opening Hymn: “O Day Full of Grace” - Hymn #503

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit, and with that faith--as dear children approaching a loving parent, as sinners redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, as believers filled with the Holy Spirit--let us confess our sins to almighty God.

C: Let us seek forgiveness.

(Silence for meditation and self-examination.)

P: Most merciful God,

C: we have been unworthy and disobedient children. We have ignored our Father's admonitions, disregarded our Savior's instructions, grieved the Holy Spirit. We are not worthy to be called children of God. But we beg you--of your fatherly compassion, by your saving merits, at your inviting call--to have mercy on us and grant us your forgiveness.

P: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit that they may be children of God. Rejoice in the Lord; your sins are forgiven--in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful,

C: and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Alleluia.

P: O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom have You made them all;

C: the earth is full of Your creatures.

P: These all look to You,

C: to give them their food in due season.

P: When You give it to them, they gather it up;

C: when You open Your hand, they are filled with good things.

P: When You send forth Your Spirit, they are created,

C: and You renew the face of the ground.

**All: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of the faithful,
C: and kindle in them the fire of Your love. Alleluia.

P: The Lord be with you.
C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day:

P: O God, on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C: Amen.

Hymn of Praise: *“Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Blest”* – Hymn #498 vs. 1-3, 6

Old Testament Lesson: Genesis 11:1-9

R: Now the whole earth had one language and the same words. And as people migrated from the east, they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. And they said to one another, “Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly.” And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.” And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. And the LORD said, “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the LORD dispersed them from there over the face of all the earth, and they left off building the city. Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of all the earth. And from there the LORD dispersed them over the face of all the earth.

R: This is the Word of the Lord

C: Thanks be to God

The Second Lesson: Acts 2:1-21

R: When the day of Pentecost arrived, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and 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 Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: ‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out My Spirit on 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 on My male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out My Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day. And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

R: This is the Word of the Lord

C: **Thanks be to God**

The Gradual Hymn: “*To God the Holy Spirit Let Us Pray*” – **Hymn 768** (vs. 1)

Holy Gospel: John 14:23-31

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 14th chapter.

C: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: Jesus answered him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. Whoever does not love Me does not keep My words. And the word that you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me. “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. You heard Me say to you, ‘I am going away, and I will come to you.’ If you loved Me, you would have rejoiced, because I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. And now I have told you before it takes place, so that when it does take place you may believe. I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on Me, but I do as the Father has commanded Me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.”

P: This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C: **Praise to You, O Christ.**

Sermon Hymn: “*Creator Spirit, By Whose Aid*” – **Hymn #500**

Sermon: “*Scattered and Gathered*” – **Genesis 11:1-9**

Do you know how many languages are spoken here in Iowa? According to Iowa State Extension, 185 languages are spoken by K-12 students in Iowa. 41 different languages are

spoken by K-12 students here in Story County. Here in Ames, students from 115 countries study at Iowa State and speak a variety of languages. That can create challenges in communicating, in doing everyday life. When you don't speak the language of those around you, and/or they don't speak yours, challenges happen.

More than the fact that we can't communicate because of language is the fact that we misunderstand each other even if we're speaking the same language. A quote attributed to George Bernard Shaw says that America and Britain are two countries divided by a common language.

Even when we speak the same language, we don't always communicate as well as we'd like, as well as we need to. In premarital counseling, I work with couples on assertiveness and active listening, so they can improve their communication with each other. Sin breaks communication. It breaks relationships. It breaks connections. Sin scatters.

In the story of the Tower of Babel, we see sin seeming to act in a connecting way. The people all speak the same language. They're all working together for the same goal. Isn't that what we want?

The problem is in the goal. The people are not coming together to do what God has called them to do. Instead, they're coming together to make themselves like God. They're making a name for themselves, a monument that reaches towards the sky that shows the glory of humanity. They're not scattering over the earth to be fruitful and multiply like they were commanded to do. They're building a tower to rise above the floodwaters that they worry could come again. They're seeking what they think is good, not what God has said is good. Pride and arrogance lead to trouble. God's judgment is rejected which leads to separation between God and humanity.

And so, God confuses their speech. He makes it so they cannot understand each other. The Hebrew verb for "cause confusion" (balal) sounds a lot like the Hebrew noun for Babel. So we might say that God "Babeled their babble." Even more, there is an inside joke in Hebrew. God says, "Let us go down and confuse [נבלה] their speech" (Gen. 11:7). As Jewish scholar Nahum Sarna points out, the Hebrew consonants in this form of the verb for confuse, n-b-l, is a disarrangement of the first three consonants in the word for brick, l-b-n. Because God n-b-l, they could no longer use their l-b-n. We might say that God destroyed the building blocks of their speech.

All of a sudden, where once there was one language, now there were dozens—if not hundreds. None of the builders could understand each other anymore. Now they had different words for "brick," "hammer," "plank," and "measure." Nothing made sense. Their audacity prompted God to confound their speech and scatter them all over the earth. It's a colossal manmade failure.

The tower of Babel—perhaps more than any other Old Testament story—unveils the burning desire in our hearts: we want to usurp that which God is graciously willing to give. We long to attain as an accomplishment that which the Father wants to bestow as a gift. We sweat and bleed in our efforts to build a tower while God stands before us with a free cross in his outstretched hands.

But that's not the end of the story. The next chapter, Genesis 12, is when Abraham is introduced. Instead of humanity making a name for themselves, God chooses to make a name for someone who can't make a name for himself. He heads west, back towards Eden, back towards God's promises. God had scattered people and confused their languages, but was already beginning to gather them back together.

The builders of Babel failed when they tried to construct a tower that reached up to heaven. Their own works couldn't save them. So just as God once came down to confuse their language, so also, he would come down again someday in the person of Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the Son of God Incarnate.

God confused our words but sent his Word to live among us and teach us God's ways and show us God's love and, ultimately, die for our sins. With hammer and nails, the tools used for building, we killed the Son of God, who shed his blood to save us from our sins—and ourselves. Above him on the cross was a sign written in three different languages so all could understand, that He was the king.

But the scattering and confusion of Babel remained. That's all reversed on Pentecost. People who couldn't understand each other are miraculously able to. Communication and connection happens across cultures and languages. What Babel fractured, Pentecost made whole. What Babel scattered, Pentecost gathered. Through the power of the Spirit, humanity can communicate and connect across all divides. Because proclaiming the work of Christ is the primary work of the Holy Spirit, through which He gathers people from all nations into one Church.

The Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost brought people of all nations into the one body of the one Head, Christ. Christ joins and unites all into one faith through the Gospel, even though the different languages remain, and he tears down the wall of separation.

Our Father will not allow us to make a name for ourselves. Names are His to give. And give them He does; in grace and mercy. He names us His beloved children. He etches the name "Christian" into the bricks of our soul. The cross is the only tower we need. In it we are united with Christ and His Spirit. We live rent-free, mortgage-free, for our habitation has been paid for in crimson currency.

Today on Pentecost, we recall the miracle of God pouring out his Spirit on the Church. On that first Pentecost, they spoke in tongues—foreign languages they never studied and learned. All the foreigners in Jerusalem heard in their own language "the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11).

Pentecost is the opposite of the Tower of Babel. Instead of dispersing people, now Jesus gathers his Church. Gathered together, united not by a common language or a common goal against God, but our common humanity before God.

The work of Pentecost continues, though not in as dramatic a way as happened then. There are over 7000 languages spoken in the world, and only about 750 of them have a full Bible. People like Tiffany Smith and the Grulkes work to help bring the message of the Good News of Jesus to people in their own language, in ways that they can understand. More than that, they gather together people from those language and culture groups so that the word will be used, be understood, and be used to gather people from all nations and languages.

We see that here, as well. People from all over the world come to study at Iowa State. Although they can learn English through their schooling, they still need help with conversational English, navigating a strange culture, finding community in a strange land. Through English classes and conversation partners, through quilting and meals, we share God's love with those who need to hear it. And while technology may make it easier to communicate, it doesn't always work. It still takes effort and love.

Confusion and scattering were the result of sin. Understanding and gathering is the result of the Holy Spirit's work, pointing us to Jesus. Even when we misunderstand each other, there is forgiveness. There is peace. There is hope. Not in our work, but in God's. Thanks be to God for that.

Third Article of Creed and Explanation: p.323

Prayer of the Church:

P: Lord in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

Sharing our Ministry:

Offering/Voluntary:

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord.

C: It is good and right so to do.

P: It is truly good, right, and proper that we should in all times and in all places give thanks to You, holy Lord, almighty Father, everlasting God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who ascended above the heavens and, sitting at Your right hand, poured out on this day as He had promised

the Holy Spirit on the chosen disciples. At this the whole world rejoices with exceeding joy. Therefore with angels and all the army of heaven we praise and make great Your holy name, evermore praising You and singing . . .

Sanctus Hymn: “Holy, Holy, Holy” - Hymn #961

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: Blessed are You, O Lord God. King of all creation, for You have not only sent Your Son, Christ Jesus into the world to die with our sins and rise to new life, but You sent the Holy Spirit to give us the faith to put our trust in Jesus. Send that Spirit to us now as we come to Jesus’ altar and receive in true faith His true body and blood for the forgiveness of our sins. Hear us, then, as we pray the prayer Jesus taught us. . .

Lord’s Prayer:

The Words of Our Lord:

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C: Amen.

The Distribution of Holy Communion:

“Holy Spirit, Ever Dwelling” – Hymn #650

“Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord” – Hymn #497

Prayer After Communion:

P: God our creator, earth has many languages, but Your Gospel announces Your love to all nations in one heavenly speech. Make us messengers of the good news that, through the power of Your Holy Spirit, everyone may unite in one song of praise, through Your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

The Closing Hymn: “Holy Spirit, Light Divine” - Hymn #496

The Postlude: