



**THE SOUTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE  
of the United Church of Christ  
June 8, 2014  
Pentecost Sunday**



**GATHERING AS THE BODY OF CHRIST**

The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with hands clasped that we might act with restraint, that we may leave room for the life that is destined to come. To protect what is wild is to protect what is gentle. Perhaps the wildness we fear is the pause between our own heartbeats, the silent space that says we live only by grace. Wilderness lives by this same grace. Wild mercy is in our hands.

Terry Tempest

Healing the wounds of the earth and its people does not require saintliness or a political party, only gumption and persistence. It is not a liberal or conservative activity; it is a sacred act. It is a massive enterprise undertaken by ordinary citizens everywhere, not by self-appointed governments or oligarchies.

Paul Hawken

**READING FROM ACTS OF THE APOSTLES**

Acts 2: 1-8

**\*GATHERING IN THE SPIRIT OF SACRED WILD MERCY**

Holy Spirit, your wild mercy is in our hands,  
not so we may grasp you and control you,  
but so you may grasp us and lead us into the future,  
with eyes and ears, hearts and minds open to those  
looking back at us, praying that we will see beyond our own time.

*Holy Spirit, wild merciful Spirit, Spirit of gumption and persistence,  
come with Pentecostal power! Rouse our souls with your mighty wind,  
ignite our hearts with your fire! Give us vision, loosen our tongues!  
Embolden us, we pray, as you made bold the apostles of old,  
that we may touch the wounds of the earth with Christ's healing power.*

**\*SINGING A HYMN** *Come, O Spirit, Dwell Among Us*

**AFFIRMING OUR FAITH**

World Council of Churches, Indonesia

We believe in God, who is love and who has given the earth to all people;  
in Jesus Christ, who came to heal us, and to free us from all forms of oppression;  
in the Spirit of God, who works through all who are turned toward the truth;  
in the community of faith, which is called to be at the service of all people;  
in God's promise to establish the kingdom of justice and peace for all humankind.  
We do not believe in the right of the strongest, nor the force of arms, nor the power  
of oppression.

We believe in human rights, in the solidarity of all people, in the power of non-violence.

We do not believe in racism, in the power that comes from wealth and privilege,  
or in any established order that enslaves.

We believe that all men and women are equally human, that order based on violence  
and injustice is not order.

We do not believe that war and hunger are inevitable, and peace unobtainable.

We believe in the beauty of simplicity, in love with open hands, in peace on earth.

We do not believe that suffering need be in vain, or that the disfigurement of our  
world is what God intended.

We dare to believe, always and in spite of everything, in God's power to transform  
and transfigure, fulfilling the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where  
justice and peace will flourish.

**READING AND REFLECTING**

**READING FROM THE BIBLE**

Psalm 19: 1-10 and Mark 7: 31-37

**REFLECTING**

What do we need to do to save our world? What we most need to do is to  
hear within us the sounds of the Earth crying.

Thich Nhat Hahn

Play me three notes of *Stairway to Heaven* or *Freebird*, and I can name that  
tune, but play me a symphony of bird songs I hear each day, and I have no  
clue as to their origin or meaning. How could I possibly expect to integrate  
myself as a citizen into the community I at least call home if I can't be  
bothered to learn even their spoken or sung languages. How can I hope to  
grasp, accept, or appreciate what may be said by trees or grass or stones?

Derek Jensen

**SHARING OUR LIVES IN PRAYER  
SHARING CHRIST'S MEAL**

**PRAYING FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD**

**PRAYING AS JESUS PRAYED** (debts and debtors)

**REMEMBERING JESUS' WORDS**

**BLESSING THE MEAL**

In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God. Through the Word, all things came into being. First, the great burst. Then atoms, gases, stars, light, earth, life, consciousness. All that lives and moves and has its being. All coming into being through the Word of God.

*And the Word became flesh and blood, and lived amongst us. The Christ. And Christ offered us his flesh and blood, his very life, and asked us to offer him our flesh and blood, our very lives, that we may live in holy union with God, with one another, and with all that has come into being through him. We accept Christ's offering, and in turn, we offer ourselves to Christ, that Christ may abide in us, that we may abide in Christ, and that we may love creation with the love that is Christ.*

The blessed Spirit of our creator, redeemer, and sustainer is upon this bread and this cup, upon our flesh, our blood, our very lives, and upon all that has come forth from the Word.

*In eating from Christ's bread, in drinking from Christ's cup, may we ourselves be a blessing to God, to one another, and to God's beloved creation. Amen.*

**SINGING BEFORE THE MEAL** *As We Gather At Your Table*

**SHARING THE MEAL**

**GIVING THANKS FOR THE MEAL** Unison

God who is inseparable from all that lives, whose spirit is the breath of life, we open our hearts to you and pour out our deepest gratitude. From the mystery of your creative spirit come sun and rain, soil and air, grain and grape, and all that sustains our lives. From the mystery of your life and light come Jesus Christ and his self-giving love, and all who gather together seeking new life with him. We give you thanks for the bread and the juice, for Jesus Christ and one another. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

**OFFERING OURSELVES THROUGH OUR GENEROSITY**

**OFFERING OUR LIVES AND GIFTS IN SERVICE TO GOD**

In support of The Conference Minister Pastoral Emergency Relief Fund

**\*PRAISING GOD** Tune: *All Creatures of our God and King*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise God all creatures here below.

Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praise God for all that love has done. Creator, Christ, and Spirit One.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen.

**\*DEDICATING OUR LIVES AND POSSESSIONS TO GOD**

**DEPARTING TO PRACTICE CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP**

**\*SINGING A HYMN** *Sovereign God of Every Creature* Tune: *Hymn to Joy*  
Jane Parker Huber

Sovereign God of every creature, Maker of all things that are,  
Carver of each atom's feature, Sculptor of each sun and star;  
We, your people, pause in wonder, Grateful for your loving care,  
Jar us with the Spirit's thunder, Show us how to do and dare.

Shake away our lazy pleasure, Pride in actions of the past;  
Send instead in fullest measure Deeds that witness, hopes that last.  
Teach us graciousness in giving, Echoing Your lavish hand.  
Teach us faithfulness in living Here as stewards of your land.

In Christ's strength would we be serving, Building up the least, the lost.  
By Your grace, forgive our swerving, When we hoard or count the cost.  
Show us each how much we need You In our worship, work, and play.  
Knit together all who heed You, All who hear your call today.

So may we respond with visions, Challenged by your global view,  
Fearing not each hard decision We must make for what is true.  
Lead us not into temptation, Give us tasks demanding skill,  
Christ our Strength and our Salvation, Christ our sure foundation still.

**\*SENDING FORTH WITH WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT**