

***Gathering,* Pentecost 1 2022**

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## Pentecost Sunday to Labour Day

## Pentecost

**Dates:** Pentecost is celebrated on a Sunday 50 days after Easter (counting Easter Sunday), or seven weeks (seven times seven) not counting Easter Sunday.

**Meaning of Name**

Pentecost comes from the Greek word *pentekoste* meaning “50th” (day). Pentecost is a reference to the Jewish festival Shavuot or the Festival of Weeks, which is held on the 50th day after the second day of Passover. This festival celebrates the giving of the Torah to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. In Acts 2, it is said that the disciples had gathered on the day of Pentecost, or the day of the festival of Shavuot. That’s when the wind and fire and Spirit came!

**Liturgical Colour: Red**

Red is a primary colour and a warm colour. It symbolizes fire, spirit, energy, passion, strength, power, intensity, courage, and determination. It draws to mind the flames dancing over the disciples and friends of Jesus gathered in the upper room on the day of Pentecost.

## Ordinary Time (a.k.a. Season of Pentecost)

**Dates:** Trinity Sunday through to Reign of Christ Sunday—the longest season of the church year.

**Feast Days\* and Special Days**

\*Trinity Sunday – the Sunday after Pentecost.

Season of Creation – the Sundays after Labour Day to Thanksgiving.

World Communion Sunday – the first Sunday of October.

Thanksgiving Sunday – the Sunday before the second Monday of October.

\*Reformation Day – October 31: the day in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 Theses.

\*All Saints’ Day – November 1: for Protestants, a general commemoration of those who have died. In the Celtic tradition, November 1 is Samhain, marking the end of harvest and beginning of winter.

Remembrance Sunday – Sunday before Remembrance Day (November 11), honouring those in the armed forces who fought and died for their countries in times of war.

\*Reign of Christ – the last Sunday before Advent.

**Meaning of Name**

“Ordinary” comes from the Latin *ordo,* meaning “order.” Ordinary Time is the commonplace, the regular, the everyday time. In between feasts and grand celebrations is the regular time of our lives, the time when faith lives and grows and sustains.

**Liturgical Colour: Green**

Green is a cool colour, evoking nature, growth, vitality, freshness, harmony, endurance, and fertility. It is associated with healing and rest. It is the depth and stability of blue combined with the warmth and joy of yellow.

## June 5 – Pentecost Sunday

*Worship materials for Pentecost Sunday to the Third Sunday after Pentecost were contributed by Keltie van Binsbergen, Joyce Wagland, and Margie van Binsbergen, Comox U.C., Comox, B.C.*

**Acts 2:1–21**

The Spirit comes on the day of Pentecost.

or **Genesis 11:1–9**

Language confused at the tower of Babel.

**Psalm 104:24–34, 35*b*** (VU p. 827 Part Two)

God and Wisdom create together.

**Romans 8:14–17**

A spirit of adoption, not slavery.

**John 14:8-17, (25-27)**

God will send you the Spirit of truth.

### Creation Connection

Acts 2:1–21: The wind brings the experience of the Divine. Be attentive to the other-than-human elements of creation that bring the experience of the Divine. What are they proclaiming?

### Spark

Place a weathervane, a toy sailboat, and a kite at the front of the church. Have a fan nearby so it can blow a breeze on them. Before the date of service, ask the congregation what languages they speak, other than English. Invite them to come to the service prepared to say the Lord’s Prayer in that language. Pick a time when everyone can say the prayer together in those different languages.

### With Children

Bring the story of the first Pentecost to life! Have an older child or adult read the role of Peter. Hold up signs for the congregation so they know when to speak different languages, jeer like the crowd, or cheer like the new believers. Give younger children streamers: blue and white for the Spirit wind and orange and red for the tongues of flame. Then let them move around the congregation.

### Sermon Starter

Wind is a very common image of the Spirit. When that Spirit wind blew through those first disciples, they had no idea where it was going to take them, but they didn’t fight it; they let the Spirit lead. Winds in nature clear out leaves and debris.

Sometimes they are powerful enough to bend and break. Winds can cause damage to our structures, though that is not the wind’s intention. It is just that our human structures get in the way of the wind. How and where has the Spirit been blowing through your church community in the past year? Have you been fighting the wind or letting it lead? What might the Spirit wind be clearing out? How has COVID-19 fit into the picture?

### Hymns

VU 207 “Spirit of God, unleashed on earth”

VU 208 “Veni Sancte Spiritus (Come, Holy Spirit)”

VU 375 “Spirit, Spirit of gentleness”

VU 380 “She comes sailing on the wind”

VU 625 “I feel the winds of God”

MV 5 “Holy Spirit, you’re like the wind”

MV 13 “O let the power fall on me”

MV 23 “Come, O Holy Spirit”

MV 150 “Spirit God, be our breath”

## June 12 – Trinity Sunday

**Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31**

Wisdom’s part in creation.

**Psalm 8** (VU pp. 730–732)

How glorious is God’s name.

**Romans 5:1–5**

Suffering-endurance-character-hope does not disappoint.

**John 16:12–15**

The Spirit of truth.

### Creation Connection

Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31: Wisdom was the first of God’s creations. Wisdom, a.k.a. Sophia, danced with God, drawing a circle on the deep and bringing delight to God’s work. Invite Wisdom to dance and pray with you today.

### Spark

Place images or items at the front of the church that are naturally “trinitarian,” like clover leaves and trilliums (but please don’t pick wild trilliums—it will damage the plant). Choose those related to creation.

### With Children

Share the book *Where Does God Live?* by August Gold and Matthew Perlman (SkyLight Paths, 2001). It has wonderful images of God in creation and in humanity that can also be presented as images of Christ and the Spirit. Ask the children where they think God lives and where and when they experience and feel God with them. Share a story of a time when you experienced God. Invite a couple of others in the congregation to share their stories too.

### Sermon Starter

The readings from Proverbs 8 and Psalm 8 provide a wonderful opportunity to explore the concept of God’s loving, active presence in creation and what that means to our role in creation. There is a clear sense not only of God rejoicing in creation and in humanity but also of humanity’s responsibility to God and creation. For those who want to explore Trinitarian concepts, you could compare the description of Wisdom’s presence at God’s side to descriptions of Christ (a feminine Christ, perhaps?). Where do we see Christ and Spirit in these Old Testament readings?

### Hymns

VU 265 “Creating God, your fingers trace”

VU 287 “Wellspring of wisdom”

VU 315 “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty”

VU 379 “O Holy Spirit, root of life”

VU 514 “God the Spirit, guide and guardian”

MV 10 “Come and seek the ways of Wisdom”

MV 28 “God of the Bible”

MV 30 “It’s a song of praise to the Maker”

MV 43 “The play of the Godhead”

MV 156 “Dance with the Spirit”

## June 19 – Second after Pentecost

***Proper 7***

**1 Kings 19:1–4, (5–7), 8–15a**

Elijah hears God in the sound of silence.

**Psalm 42—43** (VU pp. 766–769)

As a deer longs for the water.

**Galatians 3:23–29**

No longer Jew or Greek, male or female; all one in Christ.

**Luke 8:26–39**

Jesus heals a man filled with demons.

### Creation Connection

1 Kings 19:1—4, (5–7), 8–15a: Today, people often find that they need to get out in nature to experience the silence they do not experience in daily life. Even in our homes, there are so many things buzzing and beeping that we do not know silence. Yet, nature is not totally silent. Why is the sound of nature different and more calming?

### Spark

Post or project photos of leaders who have worked to eliminate discrimination: Martin Luther King Jr. Viola Desmond, Nellie McClung, Marina Nemat, the Stonewall activists, George Hislop, Nelson Mandela, and local people familiar to your congregation. Include a description of each person’s goals and accomplishments.

### With Children

Read *Families, Families, Families* by Suzanne Lang and Max Lang (Random House, 2015). Ask the children what they think Jesus would say to each of the families. Yes, it would be, “I love you!” Talk about Jesus’ words to us through the Bible. He always said that love is more important than anything else. Just as we love the people in our family as they are, no matter how different we may be from each other, when we follow the Way of Jesus, we accept and love other people we meet, just as they are.

### Sermon Starter

Jack Layton once said: “Love is better than anger; hope is better than fear; optimism is better than despair. So let us be loving, hopeful, and optimistic, and we can change the world.” Take this opportunity to talk about injustices in your neighbourhood. Share stories of people who have fought against injustice.

Think of a traumatic experience in your life. What was the “gentle whisper” that got you through? Was it the sound of ocean waves, rustling leaves, a child’s voice, a friend’s hug? This is God. When we feel overwhelmed by anger, fear, and despair, 1 Kings 19 reminds us to listen for the still, quiet voice of God. It is only after listening for that quiet voice that Elijah became a dynamo of activity!

Consider how the scripture passages for today link together. In each passage, we see people overwhelmed by “noise”—thunder and wind, public opinion, discrimination, mental illness. Reflect on how the message to listen for the silence, for that quiet voice, applies to us today.

### Hymns

*1 Kings 19:1–4,(5–7), 8–15a*

VU 286 “If you will trust in God to guide you”

VU 651 “Guide me, O thou great Jehovah”

VU 652 “Be still, my soul”

MV 77 “Be still and know”

MV 84 “In you there is a refuge”

*Psalm 42—43*

VU p. 766 “As the deer pants for the water”

*Galatians 3:23–29*

VU 467 “One bread, one body”

VU 606 “In Christ there is no east or west”

MV 62 “There is room for all”

MV 141 “We are all one people”

MV 178 “Who is my mother”

*Luke 8:26–39*

VU 313 “God, whose almighty word”

VU 608 “Dear God, who loves all humankind”

VU 619 “Healer of our every ill”

VU 620 “Silence, frenzied, unclean spirit”

*Other*

“To young Canadians” in memory of the life and legacy of Jack Layton 1950–2011. Music by James Wright; words adapted from Jack Layton.

## June 26 – Third after Pentecost

***Proper 8***

**2 Kings 2:1–2, 6–14**

Elisha sees Elijah ascend to heaven.

**Psalm 77:1–2, 11–20** (VU p. 791)

I cry to God in my distress.

**Galatians 5:1, 13–25**

Called to freedom; the fruit of the Spirit.

**Luke 9:51–62**

Foxes have holes, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

### Creation Connection

Luke 9:51–62: Think of how often examples from nature are used in the gospels, either by Jesus or to describe something about Jesus. What might we learn from the fox to help us understand Jesus?

### Spark

Place cards on the walls or around the church with goodbye words, such as “So long,” “See ya,” “Farewell,” and “Au revoir.” Find words for goodbye in other languages. Have blank cards nearby for people to write goodbye words in the language or vernacular familiar to them.

### With Children

You might bring a stuffed animal and talk about stuffies or other favourite things that children (and adults) like to take with them everywhere. You can share a story about something of yours and introduce the notion that, at one point, you had to leave your item at home. Perhaps it was hard, but you knew that it was time to move on. You might ask the members of the congregation if they ever had a favourite toy or something that they had to leave behind. Approach this gently, especially with younger children. Sometimes we have to let go of something, or leave it to wait for us at home, but we never have to let go of God (or Jesus). God is always with us, ready to help us, love us, and take care of us. In fact, some people carry objects to remind them that God is with them, something they can tuck in a pocket, purse, or backpack. (You might bring tiny wooden crosses or stones to give to the children.)

### Sermon Starter

Think of a time in your life when you faced changes you were not comfortable with. If it feels appropriate and comfortable, share some of the story and what you learned. Today’s lectionary selections all seem to have an element of letting go and moving on. We have recently faced both a worldwide pandemic and extreme weather that have caused incredible death and destruction. Climate change is pushing us to let go and move on from some ways of living that we have been used to. These events have made us face changes in almost everything we do, changes that must be addressed it seems on a daily basis. How do these ancient writings help us today? Elisha had a mantle, a talisman to hang on to that enabled him to move on to a fulfilling ministry. The psalmist looked to memories for comfort and Paul to his faith, freedom, and trust in the fruits of the Spirit. Jesus simply asked that we follow him above all else.

### Hymns

VU 289 “It only takes a spark”

VU 307 “Touch the earth lightly”

VU 367 “Come down, O love divine”

VU 595 “We are pilgrims”

VU 654 “All my hope is firmly grounded”

VU 657 “He leadeth me”

VU 658 “O Love that wilt not let me go”

VU 664 “What a friend we have in Jesus”

MV 10 “Come and seek the ways of Wisdom”

MV 91 “Cradle me in your arms”

MV 93 “What calls me from the death”

MV 115 “Behold, behold, I make all things new”

MV 144 “Like a healing stream”

## July 3 – Fourth after Pentecost

***Proper 9***

*Worship materials for the Fourth Sunday after Pentecost to the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost were contributed by Elise Feltrin, Chemainus U.C., Chemainus, B.C.*

**2 Kings 5:1–14**

Naaman comes to Elisha for healing from leprosy.

**Psalm 30 (VU p. 757)**

God turns my mourning into dancing.

**Galatians 6:(1–6), 7–16**

You reap what you sow; sow in the Spirit.

**Luke 10:1–11, 16–20**

The mission of the 70 who carried nothing.

### Creation Connection

Galatians 6:(1–6), 7–16: You reap what you sow. While this is absolutely true for farming and gardening, we are also now experiencing how true this is in the whole earth system.

### Spark

This is a great day to have the baptismal font front and centre, and even though it is not the usual day to do so, offer the tradition of asperges, inviting the entire congregation to renew their baptismal vows. What local resources can you use for the sprinkling water? Could you collect some from a local pond or creek, or scoop some up from a nearby ocean or lake? You could even take some from a rain puddle! Make your own sprinkle wand by wrapping short stalks of cut ferns, cedar or pine branches, or wildflowers. Dip the wand in the water and gently sprinkle everyone with refreshing droplets of God’s renewing grace.

### With Children

Who enjoys playing in a splash pad, spray pool, sprinkler, or bathtub? Who has ever danced in the rain or squelched through a mud puddle? Even dogs love romping in water and shaking it all over everybody! Talk about the joy of splashing, about misty mornings, spouting fountains, heavy downpours, and waterfalls. Share examples of what it feels like to be unexpectedly showered or soaked. Can you guess why water is a good symbol of God’s grace? It is because of the delight and wonderful surprise water brings. Think of the blessings of water: it cools us on a hot day, quenches our thirst, and soothes and cleanses us in a hot bath. These describe God.

### Sermon Starter

The rich stories from the Hebrew Scriptures of the next few weeks often get overshadowed by the powerhouse trilogy in Luke. Today, focus on the story of Naaman, the commander of the king of Aram’s army, and how he must humble himself rather than use his power and prestige to meet a difficult challenge. The unassuming voices of servants and the people called “the great unwashed” are filled with unexpected grace and wisdom if only Naaman can let go of his ego and listen. How does this speak to our experiences? Whose voices do we either listen to or ignore? What biases shape these choices? What can we learn from Naaman? What voices is God inviting us to pay attention to?

### Hymns

*2 Kings 5:1–14*

VU 371 “Open my eyes, that I may see”

VU 710 “Shall we gather at the river”

MV 144 “Like a healing stream”

MV 163 “River running in you and me”

*Psalm 30*

VU 658 “O Love that wilt not let me go”

MV 156 “Dance with the Spirit”

MV 187 “We give our thanks”

*Galatians 6:(1–6), 7–16*

VU 510 “We have this ministry”

VU 600 “When I needed a neighbour”

VU 677 “O God of every nation”

*Luke 10:1–11, 16–20*

VU 563 “Jesus, you have come to the lakeshore”

VU 595 “We are pilgrims”

VU 602 “Blest be the tie that binds”

VU 684 “Make me a channel of your peace”

## July 10 – Fifth after Pentecost

***Proper 10***

**Amos 7:7–17**

God holds a plumb line in the midst of God’s people.

**Psalm 82** (VU p. 799)

God judges in the midst of the divine council.

**Colossians 1:1–14**

The word of God is bearing fruit in you.

**Luke 10:25–37**

The parable of the Good Samaritan.

### Creation Connection

Amos 7:7–17: What might be the plumb line that creation is holding up for us today? Where is creation drawing the line for humans?

### Spark

As people arrive, display or project images of a variety of peoples and cultures, along with the question “Who is my neighbour?” These might include radically different images, such as the Taliban, a group of punk rockers, hippies, Mr. Rogers, Mecca pilgrims, Gay Pride marchers, and Tibetan monks. Use your imagination and your search engine to find as vast a display of humanity as possible!

### With Children

Invite the children to explore the neighbour theme. Ask them to name their neighbours. Then ask them to consider the opposite: Is there anyone who is not their neighbour? Instead of labelling who is or is not our neighbour, Jesus wants us to think instead about how neighbours act. What do neighbours do for each other? What kind of neighbourhood would we like to have? What kind of neighbours are we? Share examples of how good neighbours behave. Jesus asks us to be good neighbours, caring for everyone.

### Sermon Starter

Do you dare ignore the classic moral story of the Good Samaritan and preach on the judgment of Amos’s plumb line? The reluctant prophet exposes the hypocrisy of the faithful during a time when the temple was thriving but the poor were suffering. Hollow and meaningless worship was happening without a foundation of compassion and justice. The plumb line showed a dangerous and faulty misalignment between belief and action. Things needed to be rebuilt! Contemporary examples should be easy to identify and the preacher is encouraged to speak truth about hypocritical behaviour. Through Amos, God calls us to account and—surprise—reminds us that we are responsible for the well-being of our neighbours!

### Hymns

*Amos 7:7–17*

VU 266 “Amazing grace”

VU 581 “When we are living”

VU 686 “God of grace and God of glory”

*Psalm 82*

MV 120 “My soul cries out”

*Colossians 1:1–14*

VU 425 “God, dismiss us with your blessing” (Benediction)

MV 42 “Praise God for this holy ground”

*Luke 10:25–37*

VU 271 “There’s a wideness in God’s mercy”

VU 349 “May the Christ who walks” (Benediction)

VU 509 “Here I Am, Lord”

VU 593 “Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love”

VU 600 “When I needed a neighbour”

## July 17 – Sixth after Pentecost

***Proper 11***

**Amos 8:1–12**

God will turn feasts to mourning and songs to lamentation.

**Psalm 52 (VU p. 777)**

Why do you boast of evil?

**Colossians 1:15–28**

Paul, the servant of the gospel.

**Luke 10:38–42**

Jesus visits Mary and Martha.

### Creation Connection

Psalm 52 speaks a warning against those who trust in riches rather than seeking refuge in God. How might this be a warning for us in the midst of what is happening to our climate?

### Spark

Summer fruits should be in season. Have bowls of berries or other sweet local fruit on display instead of flowers. Offer it to people as they arrive, inviting them to eat a piece slowly and savour the sweetness. Homemade jams and preserves could also be displayed. It will help set the tone for the Hebrew Scripture reading about a basket of fruit.

### With Children

Read or tell the gospel story of Martha and Mary. Invite children to talk about their favourite pastimes or display items such as books, musical instruments, sports equipment, puzzles, a deck of cards, or board games. Point out the difference between activities that involve lots of people and are energetic, and those that are quieter and perhaps more solitary. One is not better than another. There is a time for each. Different people prefer different activities. What Jesus is teaching is important. He is reminding us to focus our attention on what we’re actually doing rather than multi-tasking. Using examples from both groups of activities, explore how we might notice God’s presence in some of the activities mentioned. Which ones might appeal more to Martha or to Mary?

### Sermon Starter

Again, rather than trying to find fresh meaning in the well-known gospel story, why not leave it for the Children’s Time and delve into the more obscure passage from Amos? The prophet is lamenting the end of the fruitful days of Israel. The glory days are overripe like last month’s berries, with a time of famine and suffering imminent. How might this relate to our world today? How might this relate to Christianity today? While the selected lectionary verses leave us hanging like grapes on a vine, awaiting a word of hope, the good news is that God cares enough about us to send prophets! And through God’s renewing Spirit, we’re offered the resiliency and resourcefulness to make jam from the bruised fruit of our lives.

### Hymns

*Amos 8:1–12*

VU 227 “For the fruit of all creation”

VU 588 “Many are the lightbeams”

VU 642 “Be thou my vision”

MV 1 “Let us build a house”

*Psalm 52*

MV 104 “Know that God is good”

MV 174 “Soil of God, you and I”

*Colossians 1:15–28*

VU 264 “Immortal, invisible, God only wise”

VU 601 “The church of Christ in every age”

*Luke 10:38–42*

VU 506 “Take my life and let it be”

VU 605 “Jesus, teacher, brave and bold”

MV 12 “Come touch our hearts”

## July 23 – Seventh after Pentecost

***Proper 12***

*Worship materials for the Seventh Sunday after Pentecost to the Ninth Sunday after Pentecost were contributed by Geoff Wilfong-Pritchard, St. Andrew’s U.C., Edmonton, Alta.*

**Hosea 1:2–10**

Hosea’s marriage is a metaphor for Israel’s relationship with God.

**Psalm 85 (VU p. 802)**

God restores fortunes and pardons sin.

**Colossians 2:6–15, (16–19)**

Buried in baptism, raised in faith.

**Luke 11:1–13**

Jesus teaches the disciples to pray.

### Creation Connection

Luke 11:1–13: Have you ever thought about the fact that when Jesus taught the disciples to pray, he was likely outside? Is there a way to take your prayers outside today?

### Spark

We’re in the peak of what is usually vacation season and lots of folks may be finally travelling. You may be receiving summer travellers in your own faith communities. What’s the minimum of necessities you need in order to travel well? What does travelling light look like? In the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus teaches people to pray for their daily bread, rather than enough for a week or a month or a year. Jesus was all about travelling and living lightly in the world.

### With Children

Invite the children to ask other members of the congregation what they would take with them on a trip. Gather up the answers. Remind the children and the congregation that Jesus and his disciples did a lot of travelling. Jesus was also very specific about what his disciples should not take with them on their road trips—nothing extra, and no staff or purse. It looks like they are to get what they need as they travel. And what’s the minimum they need? It shows up in the prayer that Jesus taught them. Bread for today and friends to travel with. You can reduce the prayer of Jesus in Luke’s gospel to these two things. There may be other things we cannot do without (medications, for example), but enough for today and friends to share it with are at the heart of the Jesus’ prayer.

### Sermon Starter

Given that the Lord’s Prayer is offered just about every week in just about every congregation, it’s easy to take it for granted and not experience what we are praying when we pray it. The gospel writer introduces the Jesus prayer with a request from the disciples. “Teach us to pray like John’s disciples.” We can imagine what the prayer life of John’s disciples was like based on how Luke describes John’s ministry at the beginning of the gospel: “Keep us righteous so that God will find us worthy at the end of the age.” Jesus, though, teaches his disciples to pray not for purity until the end, but for just enough of what is needed for the day. It’s a prayer for awareness of both how little we may truly need for ourselves and how much we receive from others.

### Hymns

*Hosea 1:2–10*

VU 266 “Amazing grace”

VU 333 “Love divine, all loves excelling”

*Psalm 85*

VU 517 “Praise God for the harvest”

VU 519 “Sing to the Lord of harvest”

*Colossians 2:6–15*

VU 448 “We know that Christ is raised”

MV 162 “Christ, within us hidden”

*Luke 11:1–13*

VU 292 “Creating God, we give you thanks”

VU 385 “Spirit divine, attend our prayers”

VU 437 “The day you gave us, God, is ended”

VU 960 “Our Father, who art in heaven”

MV 58 “We sing of your glory”

MV 76 “If I have been the source of pain”

## July 31 – Eighth after Pentecost

***Proper 13***

**Hosea 11:1–11**

God cares for Israel like a mother for a child.

**Psalm 107:1–9, 43** (VU p. 831 Part One)

God satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry.

**Colossians 3:1–11**

Set your mind on things that are above.

**Luke 12:13–21**

The rich fool who builds bigger and bigger barns.

### Creation Connection

Psalm 107:1–9, 43: Consider and celebrate all the ways that God satisfies our thirst and fills our hunger with the gifts of creation.

### Spark

Put up “Garage Sale” signs throughout the worship space.

### With Children

Invite the children to ask other members of the congregation about their junk drawer or junk cupboard. You might even bring your own junk drawer to show. What’s in our junk drawers? Why is it hard to let go of things we don’t need? Sometimes it’s the feeling that you might need it someday. Sometimes things remind us of certain people, places, or times. We want to hang on to those memories, and stuff helps us do that. Jesus keeps reminding us that the stuff isn’t as important as the people that stuff reminds us of. The gratitude we have for those people outlives the stuff that reminds us of them. Jesus tells a story about a person who had lots of stuff. But what didn’t they have? Share the gospel story in your own words. Maybe it is time to hold a garage sale and let go of some of the junk.

### Sermon Starter

The gospel parable is often called the parable of the rich fool, and there may be a certain satisfaction that we get in sharing this story. The rich farmer in our estimation gets what he deserves. His life is taken away before he gets to enjoy his windfall. We tell ourselves that we would do it differently. If you ever catch yourself feeling this way, you’re in good company. After all, the parable is told in response to the feelings of envy that one brother holds against another because of an inheritance. There’s a moral on the surface of the story: Don’t succumb to greed. But at a deeper level, you can find a sense of sorrow. The rich man, when deliberating about his wealth, not only seems to have no one to share it with but no one to talk to about it either. Contrast that with other stories Jesus tells about windfalls: a lost and found coin, a lost and found sheep, a lost and found child. All end with celebration. This story ends with death.

A story like this might ask us to contemplate the ways that wealth of all kinds can be a barrier to community, and the ways that other kinds of wealth, for example the wealth of shared experience, help nurture it.

### Hymns

*Hosea 11:1–11*

VU 270 “Dear Mother God”

VU 271 “There’s a wideness in God’s mercy”

*Psalm 107:1–9*

VU 460 “All who hunger”

VU 478 “You satisfy the hungry heart”

*Colossians 3:1–11*

VU 213 “Rejoice, the Lord is King”

VU 627 “Now there is no male or female”

MV 44 “Shadow and substance”

*Luke 12:13–21*

VU 227 “For the fruit of all creation”

VU 506 “Take my life and let it be”

VU 508 “Just as I am”

MV 80 “Beyond the beauty and the awe”

## August 7 – Ninth after Pentecost

***Proper 14***

**Isaiah 1:1, 10–20**

Come, let’s argue it out, says God to Israel.

**Psalm 50:1–8, 22–23 (VU p. 775)**

God the Almighty has spoken.

**Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–16**

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.

**Luke 12:32–40**

Be ready; be dressed for action.

### Creation Connection

Luke 12:32–40: Are you ready for a climate emergency that might come to your area? Discuss disaster preparedness kits and maybe have a “bee” to create them together. What about preparing kits (maybe in backpacks) for those who might need them but can’t make their own?

### Spark

Decorate your worship space with “Back to School” signs. Invite people to ponder: What are you getting ready for in your own life?

### With Children

Ask the children what they have to do to get ready for school. Invite them to ask others in the congregation what they have to do to get ready for fall. How does everyone feel about having to get ready? Listen for the variety of feelings: anticipation, fear, sadness, excitement. Remind everyone that being ready is not just about putting things in place, as important as that is. Being ready is being willing to accept the new and to embrace change, whatever it might be. Being ready to welcome new friends, new learning, and new growth is the heart of this morning’s gospel. And we can welcome the new and embrace change because we know that God is with us.

### Sermon Starter

This gospel really can provoke a lot of anxiety with its admonition to be ready, day or night. The idea of the return of the Son of Man, a.k.a. the Human One, when we least expect it doesn’t help either. What if we’re not ready? What then? The time will come and find us lacking. It’s hard not to read a big element of judgment into this passage.

But on the other hand, you probably know people who always seem to be ready. Unexpected visitors drop by and they turn dinner for two into a meal for six. They intuitively know when to show up, and when to leave. Perhaps we’ve been those people, too, but we don’t want to admit it. It’s not exhaustive preparation that this story demands. It’s the grace of knowing that we’re enough. When the Human One returns, as the Human One does daily, even hourly, we can trust that whatever we show up with will be enough, as long as we have the confidence to show up with our true selves.

### Hymns

*Isaiah 1:1, 10–20*

VU 660 “How firm a foundation”

VU 679 “Let there be light”

MV 79 “Spirit, open my heart”

*Psalm 50*

VU 236 “Now thank we all our God”

VU 589 “Lord, speak to me”

MV 108 “I know your Word”

*Hebrews 11:1–3, 8–16*

VU 580 “Faith of our fathers”

VU 634 “To Abraham and Sarah”

MV 139 “True faith needs no defence”

*Luke 12:32–40*

VU 22 “Wait for the Lord”

VU 33 “Watch and pray”

VU 504 “How clear is our vocation, Lord”

MV 176 “Three things I promise”

MV 199 “When at this table”

## August 14 – Tenth after Pentecost

***Proper 15***

*Worship materials for the Tenth Sunday after Pentecost to the Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost were contributed by John Moses, Aylesford U.C., Aylesford, N.S.*

**Isaiah 5:1–7**

The unfruitful vineyard will be purged.

**Psalm 80:1–2, 8–19** (VU pp. 794–795 Part Two)

Care, O God, for the vine you brought from Egypt.

**Hebrews 11:29—12:2**

The great cloud of witnesses who lived by faith.

**Luke 12:49–56**

Jesus comes to bring fire and division within households.

### Creation Connection

Isaiah 5:1–7: Unfortunately, the modern government practice of putting out all forest fires has unintentionally fuelled even larger fires due to the buildup of underbrush and debris. In fact, the Indigenous practice of more frequent, smaller fires is necessary for new growth. How might that apply to our lives?

### Spark

Display or project pictures of the faithful who have inspired us and who often paid a price for being faithful. There may be people particular to your community you want to include.

When you think about “the great cloud of witnesses” that has influenced your own faith, who comes to mind? Why?

### With Children

This may be an opportunity to talk with children about young people who are making a difference in the world by speaking, singing, drawing, or acting for justice and healing—for example in the movements for climate justice and human rights. Depending on the ages of the children, you might ask who inspires them and why. The word inspire means to have the breath of the Spirit in us. We can invite the Spirit to inspire us and show us how we can make a difference in the world.

### Sermon Starter

These texts are not exactly best suited for a hot summer Sunday when we are supposed to be in relaxation mode, especially the gospel, in which Jesus speaks of bringing fire and division to the earth. Surely, we are experiencing enough division and conflict without receiving scripture readings that seem intended to fan the flames. Nonetheless, there is a reality here that we cannot avoid. Proclaiming and living the gospel imperative to seek justice and resist evil is not always going to be met with understanding and acceptance, even among those closest to us.

Remember old Simeon’s words when Jesus was presented in the temple: “This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed” (Luke 2:34). The text from Hebrews is very clear that being a faithful witness carries a high cost. Our challenge is to discern how we can bring forth the justice (the fruit) that God looks for in the faithful community in the face of inevitable opposition without becoming just another part of the nastiness.

### Hymns

*Isaiah 5:1–7*

VU 227 “For the fruit of all creation”

VU 300 “God, whose farm is all creation”

*Psalm 80:1–2, 8–19*

VU 398 “Great Shepherd of your people”

*Hebrews 11:29—12:2*

VU 675 “Will your anchor hold”

VU 700 “God of freedom, God of justice”

VU 706 “Give thanks for life”

VU 714 “Come, we that love”

*Luke 12:49–56*

VU 421 “Lead on, O cloud of Presence”

VU 679 “Let there be light”

VU 684 “Make me a channel of your peace”

MV 169 “When hands reach out beyond divides”

## August 21 – Eleventh after Pentecost

***Proper 16***

**Jeremiah 1:4–10**

The call of Jeremiah: “But I’m only a boy!”

**Psalm 71:1–6** (VU p. 789 Part One)

A mighty fortress, a sheltering rock is God.

**Hebrews 12:18–29**

Our God is a consuming fire with an unshakeable kingdom.

**Luke 13:10–17**

Jesus heals the bent-over woman on the Sabbath.

### Creation Connection

Jeremiah 1:4–10: The challenges of climate change are so overwhelming that we might want to declare with Jeremiah, “But I’m only one person!” God doesn’t let Jeremiah off because he is young, and we don’t get let off because we feel we can’t make a difference.

### Spark

Post a list of things that need to be done in, for, and through the faith community. Ask people to reflect on whether they feel called to respond. Have they ever felt inadequate to meet a challenge they knew they couldn’t avoid? How and where do we find strength needed for the challenge? Invite people to reflect on the list of needs again and to listen for God’s call.

### With Children

What can a child do? Talk a bit about the idea of “call.” Ask the children to think of how they might answer a call. Jeremiah was “only a boy” but God had work for him to do. Sometimes, just showing up to be part of the faith community can be an answer to God’s call and a blessing to many people. If appropriate for the ages of the children or youth gathered, ask if any of them have felt a call from God to do something. Or share your own call story.

### Sermon Starter

Although it’s not as explicit as last week, conflict and division are still very much in the air. By answering God’s call to be a prophet as the end of the little Kingdom of Judah approached, Jeremiah would become a divisive and much-reviled figure—because he told the truth. The psalm speaks of God as the refuge of the beleaguered righteous but there were times when Jeremiah felt very much alone and exposed to the anger of his opponents. The text from the letter to the Hebrews speaks of God’s kingdom that cannot be shaken, even though we are often shaken and discouraged. In the gospel, when Jesus releases a woman from 18 years of suffering on the Sabbath day, it creates conflict with the tradition of Sabbath-keeping. It is important to be aware of how essential the Sabbath was to Jewish identity and what a blessing it was considered to be. Otherwise, there might be a temptation to glibly dismiss the objections of the synagogue leader. Very often in the faith community, we have to make difficult choices, weighing one good against another.

### Hymns

*Jeremiah 1:4–10*

VU 565 “Love, who made me in your likeness”

MV 157 “I am a child of God”

MV 161 “I have called you by your name”

*Psalm 71:1–6*

VU 262 “A mighty fortress is our God”

MV 84 “In you there is a refuge”

MV 92 “Like a rock”

*Hebrews 12:18–29*

VU 344 “How sweet the name of Jesus sounds”

VU 951 “Santo, santo, santo”

MV 80 “Beyond the beauty and the awe”

MV 146 “The kingdom of God”

*Luke 13:10–17*

VU 338 “Ask me what great thing I know”

VU 608 “Dear God, who loves all humankind”

VU 622 “Your hands, O Christ”

MV 144 “Like a healing stream”

## August 28 – Twelfth after Pentecost

***Proper 17***

**Jeremiah 2:4–13**

The people have forsaken living water and have dug their own cisterns.

**Psalm 81:1, 10–16** (VU pp. 796–797 Part Two)

God will feed you wheat and honey.

**Hebrews 13:1–8, 15–16**

A list of instructions on living mutual love.

**Luke 14:1, 7–14**

Those who exalt themselves will be humbled.

### Creation Connection

Luke 14:1, 7–14: It is time for human beings, especially those of White colonial backgrounds, to have some humility. The assumption of having dominion over the earth has caused destruction and climate change. Now is the time to be humble and to pay attention to those who can show another way.

### Spark

Place a visibly leaky bucket outside near a water hose. Place a sign that says “Fill Me Up.” Observe who takes on the challenge and what they discover. This might lead into a reflection: What are the empty places in your life? How have you tried to fill them? Has it ever been your experience that the more you put in, the emptier you feel?

### With Children

Now, at the end of August, could be an opportunity to have a bit of fun with water and leaky containers (and maybe a wading pool). Get the children to try to fill various cracked or leaky receptacles and then talk about what the problem was. Sometimes we think that having more of something, or something better, will make us happy. Does that work? For example, how many toys would it take to fill up your happiness bucket? God offers us something that will fill us up in a way that toys (and other items) won’t—and that is unconditional love. And we can fill up other people’s leaky buckets by loving them, too.

### Sermon Starter

God provides. God’s people don’t want what God provides; they think they can do better by themselves. As Jeremiah put it, “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living water, and dug out cisterns for themselves, cracked cisterns that can hold no water” (2:13b–14). Compared with the fire and awe elsewhere in the letter to the Hebrews, today’s text seems rather tame. It is a list of what the faith community ought to do on a routine basis: show hospitality to strangers, remember those who are imprisoned and tortured, live faithfully in relationships, try not to obsess about money, try to find contentment in your situation. Surely, it can’t be that simple. And then there is the gospel with a discussion of scrambling for place and influence and Jesus’ warning against it. (“Yeah, Jesus, we’ve heard you going on about this before, but we really would like to be noticed and appreciated, and what’s wrong with inviting someone to dinner who can afford to bring a bottle of really good wine?”) The distance between what God wants to give us and what we want is the crack through which our lives drain away. Let’s try something. Let’s turn our leaky cisterns over to God to fill with living water, in the way that only God can do.

### Hymns

*Jeremiah 2:4–13*

VU 267 “Like a mighty river flowing”

VU 630 “O Christ, in thee my soul”

MV 4 “All who are thirsty”

*Psalm 81:1, 10–16*

VU 478 “You satisfy the hungry heart”

MV 194 “Bread of life, feed my soul”

*Hebrews 13:1–8, 15–16*

VU 31 “O Lord, how shall I meet you”

VU 395 “Come in, come in and sit down”

MV 1 “Let us build a house”

MV 81 “Love us into fullness”

*Luke 14:1, 7–14*

VU 327 “All praise to thee”

VU 382 “Breathe on me, breath of God”

VU 567 “Will you come and follow me”

MV 110 “First-born of Mary”

## September 4 – Thirteenth after Pentecost

***Proper 18***

**Jeremiah 18:1–11**

God is the potter; we are the clay.

**Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18 (VU pp. 861–862)**

God has searched me and known me.

**Philemon 1–21**

A plea for Onesimus, the enslaved runaway.

**Luke 14:25–33**

You must give up your possessions to be my disciples.

### Creation Connection

Jeremiah 18:1–11: Interaction with mud and dirt is good for our health. New studies are showing that more dirt in our lives can be healthy. How about playing with some mud or clay today and reconnecting with the earth?

### Spark

If possible, gather a collection of semi-formed or malformed clays pots (or pictures of such pots) and display them under a sign that says “God at Work.”

### With Children

This could be a time to play with modelling clay, letting the children use their hands. Talk about how things we try to make with the clay don’t always turn out the way we planned. What do we do then? What do we do when other things don’t work out for us? In the Bible, God is described as a potter and we are the clay. God is gently shaping us into something beautiful. Close your eyes. Imagine God’s hands lovingly holding your hands and helping you shape your life.

### Sermon Starter

Who likes the idea of being clay in God’s hands, especially since Jeremiah’s potter has no reservations about discarding the flawed pots and devising evil against a faithless people? Are we really prepared to yield to God’s hand on our lives, or would we rather God be more “hands off”? Psalm 139 may be good news or bad news. Yes, there is the affirmation of God’s intimate knowledge of us no matter where we go or what our circumstances may be, but if we really think about it, are any of us entirely comfortable with God knowing us that well? Paul does not, as we might wish, attack the institution of slavery. He is, however, asking Philemon to reimagine and reshape his entire relationship with Onesimus and receive him back as a beloved brother rather than as an enslaved servant. We are left to wonder how either Philemon or Onesimus responded to so radical a reworking of their lives and world views. The reading from the Gospel of Luke is one that preachers have spent centuries trying to tame or explain away. And yet, Jesus is very clear about this: following him comes with a cost. Very often, church life is about trying not to scare people off and explaining how little will be required of them. How well has that worked for us? Beyond what we place on the offering plate or contribute through PAR, has being a disciple of Jesus ever truly cost us anything? What would we be prepared to give up for Jesus? These texts pose major challenges but they also point to a way forward if we dare to go in that direction.

### Hymns

*Jeremiah 18:1–11*

VU 376 “Spirit of the living God”

MV 85 “Take, O take me as I am”

MV 106 “I am the dream”

*Psalm 139:1–6, 13–18*

VU 384 “The lone, wild bird”

VU 565 “Love, who made me in your likeness”

VU p. 862 “You are before me, God”

*Philemon 1–21*

VU 575 “I’m gonna live so God can use me”

VU 602 “Blest be the tie that binds”

MV 156 “Dance with the Spirit”

*Luke 14:25–33*

VU 561 “Take up your cross”

VU 562 “Jesus calls us”

VU 567 “Will you come and follow me”

VU 642 “Be thou my vision”