



THE SECOND SUNDAY IN PENTECOST WORSHIP

Lester Ruth

Christians begin at different places in preparing worship. One classic approach is to begin with a Scripture connected to an occasion of the year, in this case, Acts 2:1-21 and Pentecost. This approach is memory-based planning. The New Testament Scriptures give us apostolic memory or, to use an ancient phrase, the “memoirs of the apostles.” The goal is to allow apostolic scriptural remembrance of God’s activity on the first Pentecost to inform how we worship God on Pentecost today.

The specific worship service chosen to demonstrate this principle here is the service of morning prayer as found in *The United Methodist Hymnal* (pages 876-878) or in *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (pages 569-571). This service highlights two essential aspects of worship: Scripture-inspired memory and prayer.

What does it mean to have Scripture shape prayer? We are more used to asking that with respect to preaching as we consider how scriptural exegesis should be expressed in a sermon. But how do we pray scripturally? One way is to allow scriptural memory to bleed through into prayer and inform its intent and content. We absorb the scriptural memory and allow it mold the cry of our hearts toward God. The service below offers one example. Although it has neither preaching nor sacraments, the principle seen here could be applied to services containing sermons, sacraments, and other acts of worship.

This service offers a variety of prayers informed by the Scriptural memory in Acts 2:1-21. Where possible, the prayers are sung or, at least, a sung congregational response is provided. The service does not presume a choir; it expects a congregation comfortable singing an eclectic range of music. It uses *The United Methodist Book of Worship* (UMBOW), *The United Methodist Hymnal* (UMH), and the new supplement called *The Faith We Sing*.

The space should facilitate worshipers seeing each other if possible. It should reinforce a common voice in the congregation’s prayer. Provide a prominent spot for the Paschal candle used at Easter. Flame red is the appropriate color, along with other bright colors like gold. Give care to an easily accessible location for the reader(s) of Scripture and the leader(s) of prayers, spoken and sung. It is appropriate for the congregation to stand to pray for the entire service. If seating is required, do so after the prayer of thanksgiving, standing again for the intercessory prayer.

Morning Prayer

Call to Praise and Prayer: UMBOW 569 or UMH 876

Morning hymn: UMH 93 Let All the World in Every Corner Sing or UMH 98 To God Be the Glory

(The first hymn calls the whole earth to sing the praises of God. If the congregation is able to alternate between singing in unison and in harmony, this variation reinforces notions of unity and diversity. The second possible hymn calls for universal praise based on God’s activity in Jesus Christ.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving: UMBOW 408

Scripture: Acts 2:1-21

(To establish the commemoration, the Scripture is read toward the beginning of the service. During the reading of this Scripture, an individual could bring in the Paschal candle, placing it appropriately.)

Prayers of Praise and Petition: Psalm 104:1-13, 24-35 (UMH 826) with sung congregational response (#2118 from *The Faith We Sing*)

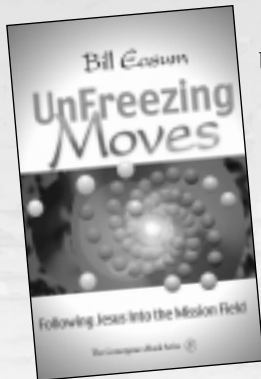
(The congregation begins to sing #2118. Proper performance suggests singing it repeatedly. After several times, congregation can begin to hum the tune as a single reader prays Psalm 104, breaking as indicated in the hymnal so that the congregation can re-enter with singing. This rhythm is repeated as needed until completion. If feasible, have the congregation alternate between the English and Latin. Notice how the juxtaposition of congregational response and prayed Psalm places a petition for the Holy Spirit to come as a backdrop to praising God for mighty deeds and provision. Notice, too, the Psalm’s emphasis on renewal by God’s Spirit.)

Silence

Prayer of Praise: Psalm 65 (UMH 789) with sung congregational response (#2077 from *The Faith We Sing*)

(As with the previous Psalm, a sung congregational response alternates with a reader praying Psalm 65. Notice how the themes of the Psalm and the sung response play off of one another so that adoration of God, remembrance of Christ’s saving passion, and a plea for the Holy Spirit become intertwined. As alternative ways of praying the Psalm, one might consider having the Psalm prayed in various languages with vernacular translation provided on a screen or bul-

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Abingdon Press

letin. Similarly, readers, one in the people’s vernacular and others in different languages, could alternate praying the Psalm.)

Silence

Intercessory Prayers of the People: UMBOW 495, perhaps amplified or modified by the following intercessions:

Favor those who preach, teach, and translate the Scriptures that they might be filled with your Holy Spirit, enabled to bring interpretation full of wisdom.

Enable those learning your Word to receive it with power and discernment.

May your Holy Spirit work within those who anticipate baptism that they may share in our common ministry of witness, worship, and love in Christ.

Grant your Holy Spirit to those facing times when it is difficult to testify of you that they might know the proper word to give.

Baptize your whole church in the Holy Spirit so that we might truly see your working among us; may our praise be worthy of you and our testimony in the world be with power so that all peoples might call on the name of the Lord and know the salvation of God.

(Each intercession may be concluded as suggested on page 495 of the UMBOW: Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. For possibilities of sung responses, see page 571. Consider using again #2118 from *The Faith We Sing*, sung two or three times after each intercession, as the congregational response.)

The Lord’s Prayer

(See page 571 of the UMBOW or page 878 of the UMH for suggestions on settings, both spoken and sung.)

Blessing: UMBOW 571 or UMH 878

The Peace of Christ

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