

# ALKI UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

May 23, 2021

## Pentecost Sunday



**We are a church where Jesus the healer meets Jesus the revolutionary,  
and where together, we grow a just and peaceful world.**

<b>Gathering Music</b>	Betsy Stelzer, Accompanist
<b>Welcome</b>	Rev. Louis Mitchell
<b>Call to Worship</b>	Julia P, Liturgist
<b>Sung Response</b>	<i>Sanctuary</i> Led by Rev. Louis <b>Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true; With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.</b>

**Contemporary Voice** “Christians have no business thinking that the good life consists mainly in not doing bad things. We have no business thinking that to do evil in this world you have to be a Bengal tiger, when, in fact, it is enough to be a tame tabby – a nice person but not a good one. In short, Pentecost makes it clear that nothing is so fatal to Christianity as indifference.”  
— *William Sloane Coffin*

**Opening Song** TBA

**Scripture Readings** **Ezekiel 37:1-10** (*The Message*)

God grabbed me. God’s Spirit took me up and set me down in the middle of an open plain strewn with bones. He led me around and among them—a lot of bones! There were bones all over the plain—dry bones, bleached by the sun.

He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?”

I said, “Master God, only you know that.”

He said to me, “Prophecy over these bones: ‘Dry bones, listen to the Message of God!’”

God, the Master, told the dry bones, “Watch this: I’m bringing the breath of life to you and you’ll come to life. I’ll attach sinews to you, put meat on your bones, cover you with skin, and breathe life into you. You’ll come alive and you’ll realize that I am God!”

I prophesied just as I'd been commanded. As I prophesied, there was a sound and, oh, rustling! The bones moved and came together, bone to bone. I kept watching. Sinews formed, then muscles on the bones, then skin stretched over them. But they had no breath in them.

He said to me, "Prophecy to the breath. Prophecy, son of man. Tell the breath, 'God, the Master, says, Come from the four winds. Come, breath. Breathe on these slain bodies. Breathe life!'"

So I prophesied, just as he commanded me. The breath entered them and they came alive! They stood up on their feet, a huge army.

**James 5:13-16 (NRSV) Acts 2:1-21 (The Message)**

When the Feast of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Without warning there was a sound like a strong wind, gale force—no one could tell where it came from. It filled the whole building. Then, like a wildfire, the Holy Spirit spread through their ranks, and they started speaking in a number of different languages as the Spirit prompted them.

There were many Jews staying in Jerusalem just then, devout pilgrims from all over the world. When they heard the sound, they came on the run. Then when they heard, one after another, their own mother tongues being spoken, they were blown away. They couldn't for the life of them figure out what was going on, and kept saying, "Aren't these all Galileans? How come we're hearing them talk in our various mother tongues?"

Parthians, Medes, and Elamites;

Visitors from Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia,

Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia,

Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene;

Immigrants from Rome, both Jews and proselytes;

Even Cretans and Arabs!

"They're speaking our languages, describing God's mighty works!"

Their heads were spinning; they couldn't make head or tail of any of it. They talked back and forth, confused: "What's going on here?"

**Sermon**

"A Pentecost Story — I Can't Breathe!"

Rev. Louis Mitchell

**Prayers of the People**

*(We invite you to stay muted or unmute as you desire. Please be respectful of the privacy of those names you lift in prayer — this is the internet and by its nature not completely private.)*

Loving God, we lift our voices in prayer. We come to share our gratitude, our fears, our deepest hopes, and our unanswerable questions. We open our hearts to let you in to our most tender places and to share all that we hold most dear. We trust that we will be held, that we will be loved. In times of trial, help us hold on to that trust.

**God, hear our prayers!**

God of abundant grace, you have blessed us with unconditional love. We offer ourselves in all of our brokenness, knowing that in you, all things are whole. When we stray from your ways of justice and compassion, call us back. Have mercy on us, and help us to begin again in love.

**We are imperfect, and yet, we are beloved. We are forgiven. Thanks be to God!**

Holy One, there are many among us who suffer today, whether in mind, body or spirit. We lift up the names of our loved ones, and we pray for the healing of all who suffer.

*(Please say the names, aloud or in your heart, of anyone who is in need of healing.)*

We pray, too, for those who have financial needs, who are in need of employment, and who are in need of economic justice. We lift up the names of our loved ones, and we pray for a world in which no one's needs will go unmet.

*(Please say the names, aloud or in your heart, of anyone who is experiencing such need.)*

Gathered together in love, we gather also in remembrance. We remember those who have come before us, whose love and whose sacrifices have touched our lives, making it possible for us to be as we are. As we speak the names of our departed loved ones, we offer a prayer of thanks for these precious memories and we pray that you will comfort all who mourn.

*(Please speak the names of anyone you wish to remember today.)*

As our world is filled with suffering, need and grief, it is also filled with blessing and abundance. Mindful of the abundance in our own lives, we offer thanks!

*(Please name aloud those blessings for which you are thankful.)*

In our hearts, we carry many individual prayers. Knowing that we are all connected, one in the body of Christ, we lift up these prayers together. The prayer of one among us is the prayer of all.

*(Please take a moment to offer your prayer silently)*

**God, in your mercy, hear our prayers!**

Creator God, you have called us into being and given us purposes to fulfill. Each of us has unique gifts, and all our gifts are needed in your world.

**Help us to hear and to heed our callings.**

This church, too, has a calling. We come together to discern our purpose and to live into it together. Fill our hearts with love for you and your world. Strengthen us for the service ahead. Give us the courage to let go of all that holds us back from fulfilling your desires. Give us the wisdom and the creativity to discover new ways of being. God, you have called us here.

**What are you calling us to do? Speak, for your servants are listening**

*(Let us remain in silent prayer as we listen for God.)*

**Amen.**

*Adapted from a prayer by the Rev. Jamez Terry*

**Call to Offering/Offering Prayer**

Please donate generously through [alkiucc.org](http://alkiucc.org), through a mailed donation to the church office or through text-to-give by texting the word "AlkiUCC" to 44321 and a donation link will come back to you. Your support for Alki is more important now than ever as the church seeks to be a prophetic voice for all people in the year ahead.

**Musical Offering**            TBA

**Announcements**

**Moment of Ministry**      Worship and Music                      Joe Mitter

**Third Hymn**                      TBA

**Benediction**                      Rev. Louis Mitchell

**Postlude****Hospitality Hour**

*Alki UCC Sunday worship is recorded for posting on YouTube.*

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Please join us after worship for our Congregational Budget Review and Stewardship Kick-off.

Just stay on Zoom, and we'll reconvene after a brief break.