



The Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit

Sunday 10th May 2026

Theme "In whom we live and move and have our being"

Prepared by Revd. Neil Vels



Opening Words

Easter people, no matter the bends and curves in our path, Jesus does not leave us alone on this journey of faith.

God gives us the Spirit, our Advocate and Helper.

The Spirit lives in and among us, pointing us all toward the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus.

God gives us the Spirit, our Guide and Guardian.

The Spirit draws us into God's story, showing us how to cooperate in writing God's dream into reality.

God gives us the Spirit, our Dream-Giver and Story-Keeper.

Easter people, God's story abides in you, calling you to live as co-creators of love and abundant life.

We come to worship God and listen for the Spirit who inspires, guides, and helps us join in God's story, until God's kingdom comes on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

(Written by Dr. Lisa Hancock, Discipleship Ministries, October 2025. <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/worship-planning/stories-that-matter/week-5-sixth-sunday-of-easter-year-a/week-5-sixth-sunday-of-easter-year-a-liturgical-resources>)

Opening Prayer

As we gather for worship today we celebrate and remember your presence, Jesus.

A presence which came to us

And remains with us, even today.

May we be open to that presence through your Spirit of truth

Invoked through our prayers

Remembered through our readings

And celebrated through our song.

Amen.

Song 20 Be Still for the Presence of the Lord

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOCfPiLOvC4>

Be still for the presence of the Lord,

the Holy One is here;

Come bow before him now

With reverence and fear:

In him no sin is found-

We stand on holy ground.

Be still for the presence of the Lord

the Holy one is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord

is shining all around;

He burns with holy fire,

With splendour he is crowned:

How awesome is the sight –

our radiant King of light!

Be still for the glory of the Lord

Is shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord

is moving in this place;

He comes to cleanse and heal,

to minister his grace:

No work too hard for him-

in faith receive from him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord

is moving in this place.

Prayers of Adoration and Confession

Eternal God, Creator of all that is, in you, we live and move and have our being.

And your Spirit still moves among us in presence, glory and power.

As we gather today help us to be aware of that presence that we may be transformed and may be witnesses of your presence in the world.

Yet we confess that all too often we have not been witnesses to your grace we have reinforced a belief that God is absent: that the world is hard and unkind and it is best to respond in kind. We have done this through our thoughts, words and deeds in what we have done and in what we have left undone. Forgive us Lord, and teach us not just to hear, but to live the good news: that our sins are forgiven.

Amen.

Song 74 For the music of creation

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqqF-c1mqkw&list=RDYqqF-c1mqkw&start_radio=1

For the music of creation
for the song your Spirit sings,
for your sound's divine expression,
burst of joy in living things:
God, our God, the world's composer,
hear us, echoes of your voice –
music is your art, your glory,
let the human heart rejoice!

All the voices of the ages
in transcendent chorus meet,
worship lifting up the senses,
hands that praise and dancing feet;
over discord and division
music speaks your joy and peace,
harmony of earth and heaven,
song of God that cannot cease!

Psalms and symphonies exalt you,
drum and trumpet, string and reed,
simple melodies acclaim you,
tunes that rise from deepest need,
hymns of longing and belonging,
carols from a cheerful throat,
list of lullaby and love song
catching heaven in a note.

Scripture: Acts 17:22-31 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21

Hymn 372 Come Down O Love Divine

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edK3Vv7Qwo4&list=RDedK3Vv7Qwo4&start_radio=1

Come down, O Love divine
Seek thou this soul of mine,
And visit it with thine own ardour glowing:
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes, in its heat consuming:
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he becomes the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

Prayer

Living and gracious God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ you have brought us out to a spacious place where we are called to live as those redeemed.

Empower us by your spirit to keep your commandments, that we may show forth your love with gentle word and reverent deed to all your people. Amen.

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayer/?y=17134&season=easter&d=easter7>

Reflection

I'm currently engaged in a conversation with a friend on the relevance of Jesus today.

She's clear on who Jesus was two thousand years ago, and on how the Holy Spirit moves in her life, but what role does Jesus play now?

Indeed, that is a fairly profound struggle and I've not been able to give an easy answer as I (now) wrestle with it in my own life. I guess our readings for this morning invite us into a similar question. As we have journeyed through Eastertide we have moved from a place of remembering the appearances of the resurrected Jesus to his disciples – a time when Jesus was very much present with them in different ways - to the expectation of the Spirit in the absence of Jesus. We will remember the Ascension on Thursday and ten days later the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost (and, this year, Aldersgate Sunday).

Perhaps Paul engages with a similar question in Athens. There is a recognition of the search for the Divine in the many different idols in the city, and in the philosophy that there is one in whom all creature 'live and move and have their being', but what does that look like? I think our context today is similar as we find people everywhere searching for a spirituality that meets their needs and answers their questions. John records Jesus as promising us the Spirit of truth – the one who will lead us and teach us and be with us. We look forward to remembering the gift of God's Spirit poured out on those first followers – and on us – in two weeks' time. Often, though, the Spirit is difficult to perceive, especially in the midst of the noise of the market place, and the many gods demanding our attention.

It is the role then of the follower of Jesus, Paul in the Areopagus - and us today – to focus the desire for a deeper spirituality on the historical person of Jesus and the promise of the Spirit. We haven't spoken recently, but my current answer to my friend would be this: Jesus is physically present today whenever the followers of Jesus act as Jesus to those around us. When, to use Peter's words, we do good works. When we make love and care visible in a world of hatred and love. When we reveal the presence of God to a people longing to find it.

Remember, you are the only Jesus some people will meet!

Prayer of response and Intercession

O God, your Son remained with his disciples after his resurrection, teaching them to love all people as neighbours.

As his disciples in this age, we offer our prayers on behalf of the universe in which we are privileged to live and our neighbours with whom we share it.

Prayers of the People, concluding with:

Open our hearts to your power moving around us and between us and within us, until your glory is revealed in our love of both friend and enemy, in communities transformed by justice and compassion, and in the healing of all that is broken. Amen.

<https://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/prayer/?y=17134&season=easter&d=easter7>

Hymn 404 God's Spirit is in my Heart

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9VTQvYG-bl4&list=RD9VTQvYG-bl4&start_radio=1

God's Spirit is in my heart;
He has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do,
What I have to do

*He sent me to give the good news to the poor,
Tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more
Tell blind people that they can see,
And set the downtrodden free,
And go tell everyone
The news that the kingdom of God has come;
And go tell everyone
The news that God's kingdom has come*

Just as the Father sent me,
So I'm sending you out to be
My witness throughout the world-
The whole of the world:

Closing Blessing

Now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us now and evermore. **Amen**

He sent me to give the good news to the poor...

Don't carry a load on your pack;
You don't need two shirts on your back;
God's workers can earn their own keep-
Can earn their own keep:

He sent me to give the good news to the poor...

Don't worry what you have to say;
Don't worry because on that day
God's spirit will speak in your heart,
Will speak in your heart

He sent me to give the good news to the poor...