

PENTECOST

Pentecost - worshipping with joy; inviting the Spirit to be poured out on you.

Devotionals for 4 – 11 September 2021

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth. During Jesus's last days on earth, He promised His followers that "the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things" (John 14:26)

Peacemakers for the New Church Year

"Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." Matthew 5:9

What Is a Peacemaker? We are a reflection of our Father in heaven when we keep the peace. One of the root words of the original Greek word for Peacekeepers means both *to make* and *to do*. God makes peace. We can't "do" peace without Him. The very first step in becoming a Peacekeeper is upgrading our status to **"Children of the One True God."**

To produce true peace, we need Peace. Our belief and acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice and forgiveness activates the peace that surpasses all understanding. It doesn't leave us when we don't feel peaceful, nor does it leave our situations and relationships when they don't feel good. It remains.

A Peacemaker Uses The Mouth to Bless, Not Curse. ~ *"Don't let any evil talk come out of your mouths. Say only what will help to build others up and meet their needs. Then what you say will help those who listen."* Ephesians 4:29

Cynicism or suspicion rules society's conversation. One day, a child said to her parent who was laughing at her misfortune with, "You think that's funny!?" she demanded. "Well, yes was the reply, "I think it's HILARIOUS." And the parent continued to laugh.

The youth crossed their arms, shifted their weight, and closed the parent off. Close to that time, a sermon boomed into the parent's heart about the scars of sarcasm. The youth was right. It wasn't funny. Just because the parent thought it was didn't wound the child less. An apology was offered, and the parent started to pray for forgiveness for what they had always considered to be a strength - humor and sarcasm, is actually just a safety net and a coping mechanism. We can be funny without wounding people.

A Peacemaker Knows the Needs of Their Neighbors and Community and Work to Help Meet Those Needs. ~ *"Here are the beliefs and the way of life that God our Father accepts as pure and without fault. When widows are in trouble, take care of them. Do the same for children who have no parents. And don't let the world make you impure."* James 1:26-27

Like the old saying goes, if we don't stand for something, we stand for nothing.

- Are we willing to gracefully bow out of conversations that don't paint others in a kind light?
- Can we courageously call others out for injustice when the Holy Spirit stirs us to say something because we've seen acts of injustice?
- Or, are we guarding our rights to be whatever we want to be, without paying attention to what the people around us and the world are lacking?

There are people within arm's reach who need our help. The world is full of people who don't have clean water to drink. So many children are growing up without anyone to love or care for them. We are called to lay down personal agendas and pursue peace on someone else's behalf. The local church is a great place to start, as it connects us with many ongoing missions around the world, and right next door.

Be Prepared to Share the Gospel and How It Has Transformed You. ~ *"But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."* 1 Peter 3:15
NIV

The way we prepare our hearts shows in the life we live. Our conversations reflect the amount of time we've spent with our heavenly Father. We can't expect to have the answers to questions when we're lacking in our preparation.

Holy Scripture is alive and active. It's the way God prepares our hearts for each day. Our caring God goes before us every day and provides all our needs. When we keep in touch with Him daily, we can trust we are ready to walk out into the world and honor Him in all we do and say. It all starts in our hearts.

Study the Fruit You Are Bearing: Is It Good or Bad? ~ *"Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me."* John 15:4 NIV

The key to keeping the peace is staying attached to the vine. People can and will press our patience. We will test our own patience with repetitive mistakes and unsolved problems. We'll say things we shouldn't and expect others not to. **But the vine always bears good fruit.** The difference in a Christ-led heart is the presence of conviction and our reaction to it. God's forgiveness of us leaves us no room not to forgive others. Staying attached to the Vine, our Savior who sacrificed everything to give each of us everything, keeps us in check and helps keep the peace.

A Peacemaker Uses Their Blessings to Bless Others. ~ *"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."* Acts 2:42-47 NIV

The early believers obeyed God. They took what they had and helped others in need around them. That's all He asks us to do. No single person is solely in charge of making sure everyone has clean water to drink around the world, or curing cancer or solving poverty. There will always be sick, poor, orphaned, widowed, and starving people. Our job is to do what we can to be the extended arms of love of Christ Jesus.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can. John Wesley.

In our communities, the most peaceful scenes consist of volunteers and those blessed by their sacrifice and time. Peace. When we take food to those who are hungry, water to those who are thirsty, company to those in prison, encouragement to those fighting addiction, when we simply do what we can, the peace of Christ prevails. Even if for a moment just long enough for others to see Him through us which then, in turn, activates the peace in our hearts.

Use Your Gifts and Talents to Pursue Peace. ~ *"We work hard with our own hands. When we are cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure it; when we are slandered, we answer kindly."* 1 Corinthians 4:12-13a NIV

God calls us to work hard with what we've been called to do. Christians talk about being called and having callings a lot. But a call has two sides of the conversation. We are to pursue our God-planted dreams and visions with the gifts and talents that He has blessed us with to complete them. It takes hard work.

Where the Holy Spirit meets our hard work is where the stuff of miracles happen. Things we are unable to accomplish on our own, She accomplishes through us. We give our everything, and She blows it out of the water in faithfulness to finish what God promised to complete through us. How does this keep the peace? It fights entitlement. No person can get in the way of what God will accomplish. When we peaceably work hard with what we're given, the end product honors Him.

A Peacemaker Leads and Listens to Others with Humility and Patience. ~ *"Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life, but whoever ignores correction leads others astray."* Proverbs 10:17 NIV

When we humbly consider criticism from trusted people in our lives and God, we promote peace. Everything in our humanity will fight against correction and insult. It's like we were born fighting, like Jacob grabbing the heel of his brother in the womb

so he could breathe the first breath of fresh air. We have to fight entitlement or privilege, and patiently wait for the peaceful path to become evident.

Waiting for this path doesn't mean doing the right thing won't be difficult, or involve a fight. Both will be true, at times. Following Christ takes endurance and perseverance, but all these things produce peace when we walk through trials and hardships gracefully. Often, when we strive to live a life in line with God's Word and Christ's example, we will find ourselves leading the way, even in some seemingly small way.

A Peacemaker Approaches Everyone They Meet with Empathy and Compassion. ~ "All authority in heaven and on earth has been giving to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:16-20 NIV

We are put on earth to honor God and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. When we strive to keep the peace, in all areas of our lives, it's reflected in the one life we have to live. It's important to share the Gospel with people, verbally and literally by how we live our daily lives. Words fall flat if we're unable to live out what we talk about.

Sharing our faith doesn't come easy, but it should come peaceably. We're not meant to argue or blame, or lord our level of intelligence over anyone else's. Sharing the Gospel is coming alongside others peacefully, knowing we're all going through the same battering ram in this world. When we approach others with the compassion and empathy that Jesus did, the conviction of curiosity will follow close behind. We're not solely responsible for anyone's salvation, but we're made to crave the conversation.

Find the Broken Thing in Your Community that Breaks Your Heart, and Work Toward Fixing It. ~ "So God created humanity in His own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them." Genesis 1:27 NIV

The creativity of the One True God is in us. We are all individually crafted and designed with specific purposes in mind. This is why following the ways of the world is dangerous. We lose the unique mark of our Maker when we immerse it with conformity. There is something in us that isn't like anyone else. Find it and cherish it. Grow it, love it, and water it with the words of the One who formed all of us so specifically and masterfully. When we are operating in our God given individuality, our peace is palpable. God is the source of our peace. Sharing our gifts and talents with the world and to help others is a way to spread peace around our homes and our communities.

Work Diligently, Escape Laziness and Avoid Drama. ~ "And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone." 1 Thessalonians 5:14 NIV

Andy Stanley once preached that if we want to avoid drama we should get busy doing important things. Drama is the opposite of peace. When we are busy doing things to help others, the result is peace and purpose. Sitting idly is talked about a lot in the Bible.

When we're bored, we want to reach for the remote and binge watch television or indulge in food. But who could we be helping, instead? Not that it's bad to relax, watch television and enjoy comfort foods now and then, but the peace in our hearts and the peace we are able to be a part of when we're out in the world helping the real and actual people with real and actual problems in our lives surpasses all understanding.

Prayer: With a grateful heart, I give you thanks and praise Heavenly Father, and that I have peace with You through the death of Jesus, my Savior. I humbly pray I may be a peace-maker in the places that You have put me, by maintaining sweet fellowship with You and by sharing the gospel of grace with all I may meet. May I be used as Your instrument of godly reconciliation and peace-making in this distressed world. In Jesus' name I pray, amen.

In other words, let's have a blessed new Church Year through the Grace of our Lord.

Talking to Our Heavenly Father - *If we have faith, our prayers will be answered.*

You're Not Alone, Let Us Pray with You & For You

- Mr. Ethan Schnell, Ms. Dot Edison's daughter-in-law's nephew. Ethan has gone through his last chemotherapy. He is doing well and hopes future tests will reveal he has been cured. Continue to keep him in your prayers. We give God thanks and praise for miraculous healing. Ethan's wife is doing well. Cards and notes of continued prayer and encouragement can be mailed to: Ethan Schnell, 500 Melrose Street, Morgan Town West Virginia 26505
- Mr. Martin Martinelli, knee replacement surgery, 2 September 2021. Martin extends his heartfelt and sincerest gratitude for your continued prayers, support, and encouragement. THANK YOU ISN'T REALLY ENOUGH TO EXPRESS HOW GRATEFUL AND BLESSED YOU'VE MADE US! Each of you have been a source of hope and faithfulness during these many months of health challenges. Please know that your care, support, and especially prayers have seen me through this season of illness and pain. *Thank you so much is all I want to say.* Mr. Martin Martinelli, 659 South 14th Ave. West Bend WI 53095
- Fifth Avenue UMC, I humbly ask that we begin a season of unceasing prayer for Ms. Irina Johnson, daughter (in-law) of Ms. Barb Johnson. Ms. Irina has been invasive breast cancer. She will have a surgical procedure on 16 September 2021. Ms. Irina believes in the power and healing of sincere and passionate prayer and ask that we journey with her and her family as God see her through this medical challenge. Cards and notes of healing, strength and comfort can be mailed C/O Ms. Barb Johnson, Ms. Irina Johnson, 190 Mayer Street, West Bend, WI 53090
- Mr. Ted Meilahn, return of his strength and courage as he continues to have medical concerns; Cards and notes of care and prayer can be mailed to: 1085 Fondu du Lac Ave., Box 23, Kewaskum, WI 53040
- Our deepest and warmest comforts to the family of Ms. Julia Stettler, on her passing, 16 August 2021. Cards and notes of sympathies and comfort can be sent to Mr. Don Stettler, 107 Cedar Ridge Dr. #N313, West Bend, WI 53095
- Ms. Marilyn Liepert, continued prayers of healing and renewing of strength. Ms. Marilyn Liepert, 656 Wolcott St. West Bend WI 53090
- Ms. Trisha Funke, daughter of Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel. Cards of encouragement and prayers for miraculous healing can be sent to her parents. Mr. Ralph & Ms. Bonnie Hensel, 629 Highland View Drive, West Bend WI 53095
- Mr. Roger Sacia, is requesting prayers for healing; Mrs. Nobi Sacia words of encouragement and prayers for healing. Mr. Roger and Ms. Nobi have permanently relocated to Madison with their daughter. Their new address is: 1626 Jefferson Street, Madison WI 53711
- Mr. William (Bill) & Mrs. Ginger Hornung would love to hear from you! Cards or notes of encouragement or "just thinking of you" can be mailed to: W194N16744 Eagle Dr. Room 3, Jackson, WI 53037
- Prayers of encouragement and steadfastness for Ms. Jennifer Cechvala, as she beings her Spiritual Guidance ministry ~ a place to ...breathe, be still, become. 5th Ave. UMC (lower level of the church in the former children's library area).
- Mrs. Janice Liepert-Kempf, continued healing; alankempf33@gmail.com; 414B. South Pleasantview Road, Plymouth, WI 53073; phone number: 920.838.1830.
- 5th Avenue UMC's Laity, Laity Leadership, Pastor & Bro. Martin – Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.
- Bro. Bob Krell, continued prayer for healing; 804 Lenora Drive, West Bend, WI 53090
- Ms. Nancy Whitson, healing and strength; 922 Hickory Street, West Bend, WI 53095

"Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul." 3 John 1:2

Prayer: Dear God, we confess our need for you today. We need your healing and your grace. We need hope restored. We need to be reminded that you work on behalf of those you love, constantly, powerfully, completely. Forgive us for trying to fix our situations all on our own. Forgive us for running all different directions and spinning our wheels to find help, when true help and healing must be found first in You. Forgive us for forgetting how much we need you, above everyone and everything else. We come to you and bring you the places we are hurting. You see where no one else is able to fully see or understand. You know the pain we've carried. The burdens. The cares. You know where we need to be set free. We ask for your healing and grace to cover every broken place in our life. Every wound. Every heartache. Thank you that you are able to do far more than we could ever imagine. Thank you for your Mighty Power that acts on behalf of your children. We reach out to you, and know that you are restoring and redeeming every place of difficulty, every battle, for your greater glory. Thank you that you will never waste our pain and suffering. We love you. We need you today. In Jesus' precious and healing Name, we humbly pray, amen . Adapted from Debbie McDaniel

Your humble Pastor & Servant Leaders, Pastor Clarissa & Bro. Martin