

PENTECOST NEWSLETTER



The time of Pentecost has arrived for us yet again.

During Pentecost, we reflect on the timeless message of unity, diversity, and empowerment that this sacred day brings. Amid a world filled with division and discord, the spirit of Pentecost calls us to embrace our differences and celebrate the rich tapestry of humanity.

We experience the living Spirit of God in our lives in the season of Pentecost. This Spirit transcends barriers of language, culture, and ideology, uniting us in a common purpose and vision and making us feel connected and engaged in the present context. The Spirit surrounds us now and always with love and guidance as we live out our call as disciples of faith.

As followers of Jesus, we are not just passive observers, but we are called to be active agents of change and transformation in the world. We are called to challenge injustice, advocate for the marginalized, and work towards a more just and equitable society. This is the true essence of Pentecost—not simply a celebration of the past but a commitment to building a better future for all, making us feel empowered and responsible.

Therefore, let us be inspired by the example of the early disciples, who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, fearlessly proclaimed God's love to all people. Let us continue to open our hearts, minds, and arms to the guiding presence of the Spirit, who leads us forward in faith and hope.

During this time may you be filled with the courage and conviction to live out one's calling as a follower of Jesus. On your path may you seek justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

Blessings,
Rev. Pamela & Rev. Rebecca

GROWING RELATIONSHIPS

The Children, Education, and Families Committee hosted a Pysanky workshop again this year on Good Friday, March 29, 2024. We welcomed forty people to the lecture hall to learn and create together. Pysanky means to write, in this case, the word refers to the writing on the eggs. Ukrainian Easter eggs often feature complex geometric and floral designs.

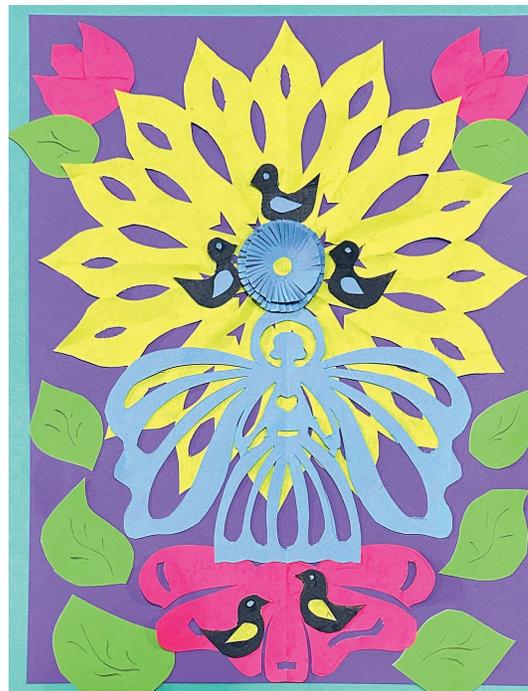
For this event this year the committee partnered with artist Hanna Furs and the newly formed Ukrainian National Federation-Avalon. This is the beginning of what we hope is going to be an ongoing partnership.

On April 13, 2024 we welcomed Hanna and the UNF-Avalon again into our space where an group of about twenty people learned and created together in a Vytynanka Workshop. Vytynanka is the art of paper cutting.

We look forward to hopefully sharing more events together in the future.







NEWCOMER CHOIR

The St. John's Newcomer Choir - the third group of the Newcomer Choir Association - has begun regular rehearsals at Gower. The group meets Tuesday evenings from 6:00pm to 8:00pm, and all are welcome. The Newcomer Choir Association - Canada is a group that combines music making, English lessons, and community building for folks who are new to Canada, but folks who have lived here for a long time are also invited. No previous singing experience is required, and while the choir plans to perform in casual settings in the future, for now it's all about fun, friendship, and making music together.



TELLING MY STORY

Ashley Keeping of National Indigenous Council and Wesley United Church in Port Aux Basques, NL and Sophie Fitzgerald of Gower Street United Church in St. John's, NL participated in the Center for Minority Issues and Mission's Youth Forum on Miyako Island in Japan. With youth from Japan, Taiwan and Philippines, Sophie and Ashley learned about militarism, peace and environmental issues. They examined the history and intersectionality of discrimination, to better recognize marginalized prejudices and systems that divide “majority” against “minority” in any place, and to be agents of the love and reconciliation that God calls us in every situation. Sophie shares about her experiences with the Gower community in this piece.



As a young woman in her twenties that has lived and grown up in the United Church of Canada, I have always felt the call by God to spread God’s love and peace in any way that I can. Being involved with many organizations and missions within the church I’ve had the privilege to do this many times in many provinces across Canada, but never internationally until this past March where God called me to travel to Miyakojima Island.

At the beginning of the year, I prayed heavily over what I wanted God to pursue in my life in the New Year. One was being a voice for people that feel like their voice isn't being heard. God heard my prayer and answered as I received an email about attending a Youth Forum in Miyakojima, Japan. Not only did this trip to the other side of the world become a life changing experience, but it would also start an incredible shift in the way I felt God's presence move in ways I have never felt before.



As soon as we stepped foot off the airplane in Miyakojima, Japan I felt the presence of God instantly and new God was looking over me and would be moving through me and the other participants of the youth conference. Here we would begin to understand the Minority Issues that are present in Miyakojima.

The first morning we woke up in Miyakojima I was still jet lagged from the time difference and decided to get up, make a coffee, go out on the terrace of the guest house of the church and spend time doing devotionals and reading my bible. I was reading the story of Psalms verse 34:14 that says, “turn away from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.” This instantly became the verse that I held close to my heart the rest of the trip. Because amidst all the evil happening in the world with war and injustice, we need to turn to our God, our Creator and seek peace. But we cannot only seek peace in situations, we need to pursue peace every single day. We need to always strive for change, to always strive to be the people God has called us to be, to seek peace in a world of war and hatred.



God’s presence was very evident to me that morning but also through discussions with people of the church as they told us their stories about how they found the church and God, and why they continue to attend. As each story was extremely different to the individual, they all shared the same feeling of that sense of community. One story that stood out to me was from a woman named Tokunaga Masako. Tokunaga had to move around 10-12 years old due to the second world war, while her late husband lived through the Hiroshima bombing.

She expressed how scared she was in those moments and often cried herself to sleep. She wants to live out the remainder of her life in peace but feels as though that won't happen with the increased military forces on the island.

This sense of community here is brought by God. We are all God's children. We were all called by God to be together in this church in Japan to discuss issues that are very important to each of us. God's presence was also felt heavily in the conversations between the other youth participants.

One day we took a tour of the island and saw exactly what the military is doing to Miyakojima. They are taking the beautiful beaches and using them as training camps, putting up missile bunkers in the middle of town next to peoples' homes and so much more. The participants sat and talked about how our generation can help the people of Miyakojima have peace once again. We also discussed how peace cannot be created with military and military weapons. Throughout these conversations and visits to these sites we felt an overwhelming presence of our Creator. Our Creator must be saddened as everything beautiful that was created is being destroyed and will be destroyed if war does occur.

We all need to come together to be a community, a community of God's children striving to seek peace in the world. All people of compassion, wisdom and belief are called to come together to take care of one another, to take care of our beautiful world that the Creator has made for us. Systems of injustice can only be resolved with community and partnership with one another. I am blessed that I get to bring the partnership and stories of the people of Miyakojima Island back to my island of Newfoundland.



“THE VOYAGE OF THE BRONZE SHOES”

Rev. Pamela joined the Irish Ambassador, Eamonn McKee at the Roman Catholic Basilica of St. John the Baptist, May 10, 2024 during the Public Liturgy of Thanksgiving for the Voyage of the Bronze Shoes and the launch of the Global Irish Famine Way, Canada. The events were sponsored by the Irish Ambassador to Canada in cooperation with the Basilica Heritage Foundation to commemorate the great Irish famines of the 1840s, which resulted in the emigration of up to a quarter of the Irish population to other nations. St. John’s is the first landing place for the “Voyage” as it travels across Canada. It was recorded in the newspapers of the day that the Gower Street Wesleyan congregation was one of the largest local contributors to the funds collected “for the Relief of the Destitute in Ireland”.

For more background:

<https://www.rte.ie/news/regional/2024/0501/1446832-famine-shoes/>

<https://ntv.ca/ambassador-of-ireland-to-canada-event-comes-to-st-johns-in-may/>



PERSIAN NEW YEAR

On March 24, 2024 Gower hosted a family party for Persian New Year. This event was organized by the local Iranian community, with MusicNL, through Play on Gower. There was no charge, and they had a great time.



SAVE THE DATE

Sunday, June 2:

Rainbow Melodies: Celebrating Pride, Community, and Summer Harmony

Join us at 10:45 for worship to celebrate Pride Sunday, PIE Day, Summer Kick-off Social with the Gower Community Band and Stella's Circle Inclusion Choir. Following worship, we will have a hot dog lunch with Pie Dessert and games as we welcome summer.

Sunday, June 30:

Worship Remembering Beaumont Hamel.



Sunday, July 21:

St. John's Pride Parade. Join us for a special worship and light lunch before we walk in or watch the St. John's Pride Parade.



Saturday, July 27 - Sunday, August 5:

GO Beyond: Youth Mission Project at Gower

We will welcome a group of youth to our building and host them while they live together, grow in faith and experience various community engagement projects.

Sunday, September 8:

Welcome Back Sunday

Sunday, October 6:

Worldwide Communion Sunday



Saturday, September 21:

Gower Service and Social Club Take -Out Flipper Dinner.



Gower on the Move:

Starting Thursday May 30th and continuing weekly on Thursdays in June, join Rev. Rebecca for a weekly community walk around Kenny's Pond. We will meet by the Sir Admiral John's Adventure Mini Golf at 6:00 p.m.

Connecting with Creation:

Throughout the Summer Rev. Rebecca and the Children, Education and Families committee will be hosting beach fires with snacks for the community. weather permitting. Our first event is planned for late June. Details will be shared closer to the date.

