Draw the Circle Wide

Easter Season Series
(Narrative Lectionary 2015)

This series is collaboration with Darkwood brew, led by Dr. Eric Elnes. Visit www.darkwoodbrew.org for a live web broadcast each Wednesday evening during the original series or view the archived videos at anytime.
“I really am learning that God doesn’t show partiality to one group of people over another.” - Acts 10: 34

The astounding event on that first Easter morning has sent “ripples that make waves” throughout all of human history. In this post-resurrection season, we will explore what it meant for the early church to draw the circle wider and wider as they spread the Gospel Good News of liberation from death through Jesus, the Christ. What could it mean for us to continue to draw the circle wide in order to offer the world a vision of the rippling affects of grace and peace, reconciliation and joy?
Music Arts
“Draw the Circle Wide” W&S 3154
Words by Gordon Light & Music by Mark A. Miller

Draw the circle wide, draw it wider still. Let this be our song: no one stands alone.
Standing side by side, draw the circle, draw the circle wide.

The story of the birth of this version: I (Marcia) knew the Gordon Light version of it and wanted to do it for United Methodist General Conference 2008 (for worship on a day that was particularly tension-filled), but wasn’t enamored with the tune. So when Mark Miller was at my house for a 3-day planning retreat for GC worship, I showed it to him and he fell in love with the words of the refrain. He promptly sat down at my piano and wrote this version. We sang it arm-in-arm with Bishop Martin McLee, who was part of that GC service (before he was a Bishop). It was one of the most powerful moments of GC 2008. It was sung at Martin’s funeral recently (see the links below). So, needless to say, this song and its message (and therefore this series material) are near and dear to my heart.

Consider introducing the song with the choir singing it as they surround the congregation on Easter Sunday. In future weeks, you could use it as a prayer song by lifting petitions between choruses as the musicians continue to play. Or use it as a benediction response as the congregation stands in a circle around the congregation.

Song Resources:
• The Worship & Song congregational version can be downloaded from Cokesbury.
• Order the anthem HERE.
• Here’s one YOUTUBE version.
• Here is another version of Mark leading it for the recessional Bishop McLee’s funeral. It includes a new verse. (starts at 4:50)
• Read Marcia’s blog about it HERE.
Visual Arts

Circle Art
Visit the Worship Design Studio Pinterest Page for a board specifically created for this series. There are lots of great visual ideas, but one of our favorites for the Easter season is a circle mosaic with a cross that cuts through. Create something similar in your congregation with four square canvasses or blocks of wood and some old CD’s or small pieces of colorful scrapbook paper. Modify CD/DVD techniques or paper techniques to create a couple concentric circles when the four pieces of wood are together, a quarter circle on each piece of wood. We suggest modge podge over the top of a paper project. Another option is to create the 1/4 circles with this melted crayon technique. When hung on a solid background with some space between them, a cross will form between the panels.

Dramatic Arts

Worship in the Round
One of the aspects of dramatic arts is changing the space and place from the norm. If your space allows, worship in the round for the series! If you can’t move the seating to accommodate this, consider closing worship by standing in the round to sing “Draw the Circle Wide.”
“Don’t be afraid. I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He isn’t here, because he’s been raised from the dead, just as he said. Come, see the place where they laid him. Now hurry, go and tell his disciples, ‘He’s been raised from the dead. He’s going on ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there.’ I’ve given the message to you.” - Matthew 28:1-10

On this most holy day in the Christian church, the message is not just about happy endings or finding and regaining something. The message is about a continued going and looking and searching for Jesus beyond the confines! The women go to the tomb to keep vigil but discover in a series of dramatic happenings that he is not there. He has risen and has “gone on ahead of you.” This day we praise the Risen Jesus and remember that he is always inviting us, not to conclusions, but to the next chapter!

Music Arts

Hymns and Songs

“Gather Us In” FWS 2236

Here in this place, new light is streaming; now is the darkness vanished away. See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day. Gather us in—the lost and forsaken, gather us in—the blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

“Shout to the North” CCLI #1562261  GTG 319

Men of faith, rise up and sing of our great and glorious king. You are strong when you feel weak, in your brokenness complete. Shout to the north and the south! Sing to the east and the west! Jesus is saviour to all, Lord of heaven and earth. Rise up, women of the truth. Stand and sing to broken hearts who can know the healing power of our awesome king of love…

“In the Midst of New Dimensions” GTG 315

God of rainbow, fiery pillar, leading where the eagle’s soar, we your people, ours the journey now and ever, now and eve, now and ever more.

“Open the Eyes of My Heart, Lord” CCLI #2298355

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord; open the eyes of my heart. I want to see you, I want to see you. To see you high and lifted up, shining in the light of your glory! Pour out your power and love as we sing holy, holy, holy…

“At the Font We Start Our Journey” FWS 2114

At the pulpit we are fashioned by the Easter tale retold into witnesses and prophets, by the power of Christ made bold.
Media Arts
New Day Video

Today you are here, yesterday is old news, last week is forgiven, last year is ancient history…
  but today is a new day!

Check out this video from sermonspice.com that emphasizes the past is the past and today is a new day. The energetic short video could be used as a call to worship or closing to inspire people beyond Easter Sunday and into a new chapter of life, as forgiven and loved people of God.

Visual Arts/Dramatic Arts
Writing the Next Chapter

A blank page visual like this one alludes to the idea of a “new chapter” and a new story just beginning! Consider leaving blank journals throughout the seating area for people to write in during the service. Be sure to give direction, perhaps asking questions at several times in the service and reminding them to write their thoughts in the journals.

Here’s another idea related to the idea of writing the next chapter: Invite the congregation to participate in writing a story. Each person adds another word to the tale. One by one, the congregation literally writes the next chapter about their lives with Christ. Consider planting the first few words to get things started and let the creativity develop from there. This traditional drama exercise usually starts with “once - upon - a - time,” but what if this story started with “He - is - risen”? You could even have a scribe up front writing it as the congregation creates the story word by word.
Verbal Arts

Call to Worship
This call to worship was written by Jenna Johnson, a ritual artist from Michigan. These words capture the spirit of beginning a new chapter in the continuing Easter story:

Christ the Lord is risen today!
Hallelujah! He is risen indeed!

Throw off your cloaks of mourning and wash your faces with living water.

We join in the resurrection celebration with glad hearts and much-relieved spirits.

Today is not the end of the story, but the beginning of a new age. Get out your papers and pencils! It’s our job now to continue the story of the Risen Christ.

O God, guide us as we prepare our hearts and minds for continuing Jesus’ ministry.

ALL: What happens next?
Jesus came near and spoke to them, “I’ve received all authority in heaven and on earth. 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, teaching them to obey everything that I’ve commanded you. - Matthew 28:16-20

In this post-resurrection road trip, Jesus takes the disciples to a mountain—a place on earth, but in some ways a place where they can also sense the heaven of which he speaks or perhaps a place where they can see the lands to which he calls them. It is here that he commissions them to go and continue his teachings—to be his presence on this earth even though the scriptures say they are “worshipers” and “doubters.” No matter our doubts about our abilities, we too are called beyond what we think we can do into what God can empower us to do.
**Music Arts**  
*Hymns and Songs*

**“Step by Step” CCLI #696994**  
Oh God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you. Oh God, you are my God, and I will ever praise you. I will seek you in the morning, and I will learn to walk in your ways, and step by step, you’ll lead me, and I will follow you all of my days.

**“The Summons” FWS 2130**  
Will you come and follow me if I but call your name? Will you go where you don’t know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown; will you let me name be known; will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

**“Light the Fire Again” CCLI #1346920**  
Don’t let my love grow cold; I’m calling out: Light the fire again! Don’t let my vision die; I’m calling out: Light the fire again…I am here to buy gold, refined in the fire. Naked and poor, wretched and blind I come. Clothe me in white so I won’t be ashamed; Lord, light the fire again.

**“Shout to the North” CCLI #1562261**  
Men of faith, rise up and sing of our great and glorious king. You are strong when you feel weak, in your brokenness complete. Shout to the north and the south! Sing to the east and the west! Jesus is saviour to all, Lord of heaven and earth. Rise up, women of the truth. Stand and sing to broken hearts who can know the healing power of our awesome king of love…

**“God of Justice” CCLI #4447128**  
God of justice, savior to all, came to rescue the weak and the poor, chose to serve and not be served. Jesus, you have called us. Freely we’ve received, now freely we will give. We must go, live to feed the hungry, stand beside the broken; we must go, stepping forward, keep us from just singing, move us into action. We must go.

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**Dramatic Arts**  
*Empowered Circles*

As a response to the message, invite the members of your congregation to share with a neighbor what God empowers them to do on a daily basis—essentially giving thanks for all the good in our lives that we are able to participate in. Then ask: What new things is God empowering you to do this season?

Provide long and thin slips of paper to write these words on and make a paper chain of these circles of empowerment.
Visual Arts

Empowerment happens in the everyday things that people do. Here are some images that illuminate the power of the ordinary and how daily life can be a faithful and fruitful response to God’s blessings of empowerment! Let these images inspire you to find images of empowerment in our own congregation. Ask your photographers to take some shots in the weeks prior to this service. Use them in a photomontage, on the cover of the worship guide or in a variety of other ways throughout the service. For more info on empowering your worship photographers, check our THIS article on "Spirituality and Photography for Worship" by Rev. Valerie Isenhower in our WDS resources.
Three Part Liturgy

This litany is from an article compiled by Steve Van Zanen, Diane Dykgraaf, Ben Van Houten based on Acts 1:8, and the message works quite well for this week’s scripture and theme. The three parts would help frame and reinforce the central message throughout your service.

Part A
O God, you sent your Son to take upon himself our suffering, to teach us your ways, and to bear the penalty of our sin.

We are amazed by the wonder of your grace.
On the cross, Jesus made a way of salvation for all who put their trust in him.

We declare our trust in the one name that saves.
From the cross comes a message of forgiveness and new life for all kinds of people.

Help us who have received this good news not to keep it to ourselves.

Part B
We are your church, O God.

May we be your hands and feet in this world.
Many in our own workplaces, communities, and families have not yet experienced the fullness of your grace.

May we be your voice in calling others to trust in your Son.
Jesus declared, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria.”

In this community, help us to give witness to your grace in Jesus.
You called your church, both then and now, to cross boundaries for witness.

Help us to witness to those within our country who are geographically or culturally at a distance.
From the cross, through the church, to the world

your grace must flow. Help us to be agents of your mission.

O God, you sent your Son to take upon himself our suffering, to teach us your ways, and to bear the penalty of our sin.

We are amazed by the wonder of your grace.
On the cross, Jesus made a way of salvation for all who put their trust in him.

We declare our trust in the one name that saves.
From the cross comes a message of forgiveness and new life for all kinds of people.

Help us, who have received this good news, not to keep it to ourselves.

Part C
We are your church, O God.

May we be your hands and feet in this world.
Many around the world have not yet experienced the fullness of your grace.

May we be your voice in calling others to trust in your Son.
Jesus declared, “You will be my witnesses in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

To those who have come from distant lands to live among us, help us to give witness to your grace in Jesus.
You called your church, both then and now, to cross national and cultural boundaries to be your witness.
Help us to witness also through those who are sent to people who have never heard the good news, as well as to support the ministries of those giving witness to their own community about Christ.
From the cross, through the church, to the world

your grace must flow. Help us to be agents of your mission.
“Peter said, ‘I really am learning that God doesn’t show partiality to one group of people over another. Rather, in every nation, whoever worships him and does what is right is acceptable to him.’” - Acts 10:1-17, 34-35

This week, we encounter a story that is a pivotal point in the expansion of the “church”—Peter has a vision of food that Jewish law says is “unclean” yet God tells him to “never consider unclean what God has made pure.” Peter realizes when faced with Cornelius, a Gentile who is full of faith, that the message is not just about food, but about people. God is working in powerful ways among those often considered “other.” What are we missing if we don’t let ripples of God’s grace and love flow, drawing the circle wide to include them?
Verbal Arts

Not By Race, But By God's Grace

This poem by M. S. Lowndes is a beautiful reminder of how to extend God’s grace to all of God’s people.

We’ve been joined as family together
Through God’s unmerited grace
A union beyond nationality,
Beyond culture, creed and race

United together through Jesus Christ,
No matter where we come from,
For the grace of God has no limit,
Nor boundaries we can’t go beyond

But it extends right across the world
To every corner of the globe
The light of God must reach out toward
The ones that do not know

That they will believe in Jesus Christ
And be filled with God’s own light,
For Jesus accepts all that would come,
No one will He ever deny

For we were once in darkness too,
Dying and lost in our sin,
But in God’s love, He saved our souls
And placed His love within

We’ve come from different walks of life
And so many different lands
But it shouldn’t matter in the family of God
And we must come to understand

That when our Lord looks upon us,
He does not see our race,
But looks straight into our open hearts
Where He’s filled us with His grace

For this is what truly binds us
Together in His love,
Brothers and sisters in the Lord,
Washed clean by Jesus blood

For when we come together in love,
We are truly unified
It shouldn’t matter where we’ve come from,
For Jesus will be glorified!

© By M.S.Lowndes
**Dramatic Arts**

*Little Blue and Little Yellow*

This classic children’s book could be used in several ways. It’s an obvious choice to simply read the story, but what if children or youth were dressed in the appropriate colors and acted out the story as a narrator reads?

Or, take an artistic spin on this and have an artist illustrate the dots as the narrator reads. Eventually, blue and yellow make green!

Check your local library or order the book [HERE](https://www.amazon.com) from amazon.

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**Music Arts**

*Hymns and Songs*

**“Gather Us In” FWS 2236**

Here in this place, new light is streaming; now is the darkness vanished away. See in this space our fears and our dreamings, brought here to you in the light of this day. Gather us in—the lost and forsaken, gather us in—the blind and the lame; call to us now, and we shall awaken; we shall arise at the sound of our name.

**“Come, Share The Lord” FWS/STF 2269**

We gather here in Jesus name, his love is burning in our hearts like living flame; for through his loving Son the father makes us one: Come, take the bread; come, share the wine; come, share the Lord. No one is a stranger here everyone belongs…

**“If You Believe and I Believe” W&S 3121**

This song from Zimbabwe could be a great option about offering grace to others.

If you believe and I believe and together we pray, the Holy Spirit must come down and set God’ people free…

**“Here is Peace” W&S 3123**

Here is peace, when grace astounds us, quelling all our wild pretense. Here is peace, shalom and kindness, passion ruled by reasoned sense.
[God] made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and everything in them. In the past, he permitted every nation to go its own way. Nevertheless, he hasn’t left himself without a witness. He has blessed you by giving you rain from above as well as seasonal harvests, and satisfying you with food and happiness.” - Acts 13:1-3; 14:8-18

As the followers of Jesus continue to build the church, they also continue to move out into a world that was much like our own—full of diversity in language, beliefs and world-views. Paul and Barnabas find themselves in many places—most with synagogues and people for whom the message of the One Holy Living God was familiar. But this week we find them in Lystra—a city that only knew the many gods of the Gentiles and Paul and Barnabas are mistaken for these gods. But they firmly offer the message “we are humans like you.” No matter the names given to the holy, we are all connected by the One who created us all in God’s likeness.
Music Arts

Hymns and Songs

“Lord, Be Glorified” CCLI #26368
In my life, Lord, be glorified; be glorified today.

“More Like You” FWS 2176
More like you, Jesus, more like you. Fill my heart with your desire to make me more like you… Lord, you are my mercy. Lord, you are my grace, and Lord my deepest sins have forever been erased…

“Make Us One” SP&P 101
Make us one, Lord, make us one; Holy Spirit, make us one. Let your love flow so the world will know we are one in you.

Visual/Media Arts

The image below parallels the idea of “God as the artist”—the one who creatively and wonderfully designed each person. This would be a great week to get out the paints, markers, colored pencils for self portraits in Sunday School or as a prayer station following worship.

More accessible in worship itself: SELFIES! Encourage your congregation to post selfies to your church twitter or Facebook throughout the service and show the images on screen. If the “on the spot” technology seems difficult in your setting, you can encourage people to post selfies throughout the week and pre-load them to your presentation software.
(Soloist Sings)
El Shaddai, El Shaddai, El Elyon na Adonai
Age to age your still the same
By the power of the name
El Shaddai, El Shaddai, Erkamka na Adonai
We will praise and lift you high, El Shaddai

(piano continues)
Voice 1: El Shaddai
Voice 2: Elohim
Voice 3: Jehovah
Voice 4: Abba

(Congregation sings refrain, piano continues)
Voice 1: Allah
Voice 2: All Mighty
Voice 3: Supreme Being
Voice 4: Divine Source

(Congregation sings refrain, piano continues)
Voice 1: The Light
Voice 2: The Redeemer
Voice 3: The Creator
Voice 4: The Sustainer

(Congregation sings refrain, piano continues)
Voice 1: Yaweh
Voice 2: Lord
Voice 3: Christ
Voice 4: God

(Congregation sings refrain)
“I have a responsibility both to Greeks and to those who don’t speak Greek, both to the wise and to the foolish. God’s righteousness is revealed. That’s why I’m ready to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome. I’m not ashamed of the gospel: it is God’s own power for salvation to all who have faith in God, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”  
- Romans 1:1-17

Paul’s openness to spreading the Gospel of Jesus among Jews and Gentiles alike is probably one of the most important catalysts in the spread of Christianity and the growth of the early church. Paul was not only a Jew but also inherited Roman citizenship from his father. Adopting his Roman name, “Paul” for his writing and ministry to the Gentiles no doubt helped to put them at ease as he preached the liberating word of Jesus’ grace available to all. Are we willing to open ourselves to others for the sake of embodying a gracious and hospitable presence?

Music Arts

**Hymns and Songs**

“Walk Right In” by The Rooftop Singers  
This classic piece could make a great prelude or gathering song!

“Welcome” W&S 3152  
Let’s walk together for a while and ask where we begin to build a world where love can grow and hope can enter in, to be the hands of healing and to plant the seed of peace, singing welcome, welcome to this place. You’re invited to come and know God’s grace. All are welcome, the love of God to share, ‘cause all of us are welcome here, all are welcome in this place.

“There Is Room for All” SP&P 76  
There is room for all in the shadow of God’s wing; there is room for all, sheltered in God’s love. And I rejoice and sing, “My refuge and my rock, in whom I trust.” There is room for all, there is room for all!

“You Are Welcome Here” SP&P 26  
You are welcome here, no matter who you are, no matter where you are on life’s journey. You are welcome here, no matter who you are. Come and join with us; we’re united in the church of Christ! Come now all people, join in the song, come be a part of the family of God. We are God’s people and you belong, share in the joy of Christ.

“Welcome to This House” SP&P 7  
Welcome to this house, open and affirming. In God’s Son we are all one. Hand in hand we stand. Welcome to this house, caring and accepting. In God’s Son we are all one. Welcome to this house of God.

“Come On In!” SP&P 11  
Our door is always open, so won’t you come on in? You are always welcome, no matter where you’ve been. When you seek Christ in fellowship, community begins. Our door is always open, so won’t you come on in? Come on in! Come on in! Our door is always open, so won’t you come on in?
Media Arts

LipDub Ideas
One really cool way to display all the opportunities and resources your church has to offer is through a video lip dub! Grand Valley State University came out with this one, and Clark Retirement Community did this. Lip dubs can take a lot of coordination and planning, so a video like this may be a great long-term project for your tech team or youth to start planning well in advance. Try a song that evokes themes of hospitality and inclusion. “Be Our Guest” from Beauty and the Beast is a great choice. Classic songs like “Hello, Goodbye” by the Beatles or something more recent like “Make this Place Your Home” by Phillip Phillips could be fun and work well, depending on your setting. The sky’s the limit!

Dramatic/Visual Arts

Welcome Signs
Invite the kids (or young at heart!) in your congregation to decorate the church sidewalk with a huge “Welcome” sign in chalk before the service. Or, if space allows, create the sidewalk chalk “welcome” sign as part of the closing liturgy by having everyone leave the worship space together and watch it be created outside. Carry this theme into the service with welcome mats and welcome signs throughout the worship space.
“[The] love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us…If we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son while we were still enemies, now that we have been reconciled, how much more certain is it that we will be saved by his life? And not only that: we even take pride in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, the one through whom we now have a restored relationship with God.” - Romans 5:1-11

God’s love has been poured out upon us through Jesus’ passion and witness, standing for the oppressed even until death on a cross. Our scriptures this day describe the love that continues to be poured out by the Holy Spirit upon us and through us as we seek reconciliation and peace among all people. Let us explore what it means to live in right relationship with neighbors and with God.
**Music Arts**

“At the Cross” CCLI #1312246
I know a place, a wonderful place where accused and condemned find mercy and grace; where the wrongs we have done and the wrongs done to us were nailed there with him, there on that cross. At the cross (at the cross), you died for our sin. At the cross (at the cross), you gave us life again.

“Mighty to Save” W&S 3038
Everyone needs compassion, love that’s never failing. Let mercy fall on me. Everyone needs forgiveness, the kindness of a savior; the hope of nations. Savior, he can move the mountains. My God is mighty to save, he is mighty to save! Forever, author of salvation, he rose and conquered the grave; Jesus conquered the grave.

“Come Now O Prince of Peace” GTG 103 FWS/STF 2232
Come now, O Prince of Peace; make us one body. Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.

“Christ Has Broken Down the Wall” W&S 3122
Christ has broken down the wall, Christ has broken down he wall. Let us join our hearts as one. Christ has broken down he wall.

**Verbal Arts**

Call to Worship
This call to worship was written by Jenna Johnson, a ritual artist from Michigan.

Christ is risen!

Alleluia! Christ is risen indeed!

Christ is risen, and yet we still live in the grave.

Help us, O Lord, to join you as Easter people!

To truly be Easter people, we must live in right relationship with our neighbours.

Give us strength and courage, Lord!

However, Lord, we know that reconciliation does not mean staying in abusive relationships.

Give us wisdom and gentleness, Lord!

All: Lord, bring us into new life with you and new life with our friends and families.

**Media Arts**

Beyond Throwing Stones

THIS powerful video from www.theworkofthepeople.com features Fr. Emmanuel Katongole speaking about the making space for storytelling and reconciliation. Fr. Emmanuele is currently teaching at the University of Notre Dame. For more on his ministry and life visit: http://emmanuelkatongole.com/
“Should we continue sinning so grace will multiply? Absolutely not! All of us died to sin. How can we still live in it? Or don’t you know that all who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? Therefore, we were buried together with him through baptism into his death, so that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too can walk in newness of life. If we were united together in a death like his, we will also be united together in a resurrection like his.” - Romans 6:1-14

What would it be like to live as if you could never die? Actually, this is the message in the scriptures for today—through baptism into Christ, we have already risen to new life and death has no hold. We don’t just go on doing whatever we want to do, but rather we live like people who know the beauty and power and compassion and peace of living in the reign of God. On this day when the church celebrates the Ascension of Jesus—the end of his “earthly” physical appearances—we also celebrate that the glory of resurrection lives on through the spiritual presence of Christ—the Holy Spirit—expanding our joy!

Music Arts

Hymns and Songs

“Halle, Halle, Hallelujah” FWS 2026

“The Happy Song” CCLI #1043209
Oh, I could sing unending songs of you saved my soul! And I could dance a thousand miles because of your great love…Everybody’s singing now, ’cause we’re so happy! Everybody’s dancing now, ’cause we’re so happy! If only we could see your face, and see you smiling over us, and unseen angels celebrate, for joy is in this place!

“Your Everlasting Love” CCLI #1184247
Your everlasting love is higher, higher, higher than the sky. Your everlasting love is higher, higher, higher than the sky, higher than the sky. O the wonder of your everlasting love is higher than the sky. Higher than the heavens above is the glory of your wonderful love. I’m lost in the mystery of your everlasting love…

“The Trees of the Field” FWS 2279
You shall go out with joy and be led forth with peace. The mountains and the hills will break forth before you. There’ll be shouts of joy, and the trees of the field will clap, will clap their hands. And the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands, the trees of the field will clap their hands while you go out with joy.
Verbal Arts

*Poem of Joys*

Walt Whitman writes several poems about joy in his magnificent book, *Leaves of Grass*. The selection below truly speaks to the spirit of joy and the wonder of creation.

O to make the most jubilant poem!
Even to set off these, and merge with these, the carols of Death.
O full of music! full of manhood, womanhood, infancy!
   Full of common employments! full of grain and trees.

O for the voices of animals! O for the swiftness and balance of fishes!
   O for the dropping of rain-drops in a poem!
O for the sunshine, and motion of waves in a poem.

O the joy of my spirit! it is uncaged!...


Dramatic Arts

*Ripples of Baptism*

This service seems to call for a joyous renewal of baptism experience. Invite your congregation to come forward and drop a pebble into a baptismal font, silver bowl, or any other water vessel. Ask people to come forward with a prayer for growth for a specific area in your church, and to drop the pebble into the water with that growth area in mind. Ask them to stay at the altar long enough to watch ripples from the pebble spread out expand, and invite folks to consider what ways in which they can be the ripples of growth in the area of ministry they want to expand and develop. Choose some upbeat music like “Wade in the Water” (FWS???) to emphasize the joy of the moment. Provide multiple stations for a larger congregation so people don’t feel rushed and can really watch the ripples of their pebble.

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“They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them to speak... the Spirit comes to help our weakness. We don’t know what we should pray, but the Spirit pleads our case with unexpressed groans... I’m convinced that nothing can separate us from God’s love in Christ Jesus our Lord.” - Acts 2:1-4; Romans 8:18-38

On this day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit is the star–front and center! People who speak different languages understand each other through the Spirit. The wind blows and the fire dances, testifying to the continuing mighty work of God through the Spirit in all people. Our exploration through the letter to the Romans highlights the work of the Spirit who intercedes for us when we have no words to express the ups and the downs of life. It is the work of the Spirit, born in and through the witness of Jesus Christ, that continues to spread a love that will be with us always—for nothing can separate us from this love!

Music Arts
“Lord, Light the Fire Again” CCLI #1346920
Don’t let my love grow cold; I’m calling out: Light the fire again! Don’t let my vision die; I’m calling out: Light the fire again...I am here to buy gold, refined in the fire. Naked and poor, wretched and blind I come. Clothe me in white so I won’t be ashamed; Lord, light the fire again.

“If We Are the Body” CCLI #4196589
It’s crowded in worship today as she slips in, trying to fade into the back row. The girls’ teasing laughter is carrying farther than they know, farther than they know. But if we are the body, why aren’t his arms reaching? Why aren’t his hands healing? Why aren’t his words teaching? And if we are the body, why aren’t his feet going? Why is his love not showing them there is a way?

“Fire” SP&P 142
Fire! Holy Spirit, Fire! Fill us with desire to know You More.

“Living Spirit, Holy Fire” W&S 3109
Living Spirit, Holy fire, burning bright to light our way, blaze among us and inspire lives that praise you day by day.
Visual Arts

*Spin Art*

There are a variety of ways to do spin art circles for this worship service. Paint might get messy, but there are other alternatives! Some of the best options use an electronic spin art machine (or even a homemade one!) and sharpie markers. One idea is to set up several stations around the for people to create a simple marker spin art design a they enter the worship space, then use them to create a larger display later in the service. If you build your own, larger machine and perhaps have a smaller congregation, it might be possible to create a corporate spin art design. Each person would add one ring to the piece. Pieces could also be made in advance to display or send home with people. Check out these links to spark your imagination for your setting:

(image at left)

(image at right)


Verbal Arts

Poem by Christina Rossetti

taken from Imaging the Word, Volume 2 (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995)

Consider adding a line: “As the circle, draw us close.” Be sure to note the addition in your worship notes.

As the Wind is your symbol, so forward our goings.
   As the dove, so launch us heavenward.
   As water, so purify our spirits.
   As a cloud, so abate our temptations.
   As dew, so revive our languor.
   As fire, so purge out our dross. Amen.

Call to Worship by Ruth C. Duck
(paraphrases parts of the United Church of Christ Statement of Faith)
from Flames of the Spirit (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1985)

Leader: The Spirit of God moves among us, binding us in covenant with faithful people of every time and place.
People: The Spirit moves within us, empowering us to proclaim the gospel to all people.
Leader: The Spirit moves through us making us channels of God’s love.
ALL: As we gather to worship, we open ourselves to the Spirit of the living God made know to us in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Dramatic Arts

Threshold Moment

Create dance props from embroidery hoops. Loop red, yellow and orange (flame colors) ribbons around the hoop like the ‘ribbon chandelier’ at THIS LINK. To use these as a dance streamer, simply skip the cord for hanging. (But they could also be made and hung as a visual art!) The series theme lends itself to drum circles. If you have a local drum circle group, invite them to come and surround the congregation while they play and the dancers enter. Continue the drumming and dancing during the above call to worship, followed by singing the Nigerian song “Come, O Holy Spirit Come” (FWS/SFT 2124, GTG 283) accompanied by the drum circle. If you want to learn more about doing drum circles, I (Marcia) studied with Arthur Hull and his techniques are wonderful: http://www.drumcircle.com/books-products/index.html
Photo Sources not found on websites referenced in document:

Cover:
Colored Pencils http://mrg.bz/EbL5b7
Water http://mrg.bz/i4IYFM
Line circles http://mrg.bz/YN9GdQ

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Threads Background: Ripples on Pond http://mrg.bz/ZVHIdR

Easter Sunday Background: Multi-Colored Circles http://mrg.bz/Fuj4LZ
Books (p 7) http://mrg.bz/fbaApY
Blank book (p 7) http://mrg.bz/DEh9Jd

Circles of empowerment (p 9) Paper chain http://mrg.bz/y1ggKh

Easter 3 background http://mrg.bz/0E2yQR
Reflection of face in water http://mrg.bz/82o4s5

Easter 5 Background http://mrg.bz/A3jFWY
Trees reflecting on lake (p 20) http://mrg.bz/MIHqJf

Easter 7 Background http://mrg.bz/L80kOc

Pentecost Red circle (sunlight through bottle) http://mrg.bz/Pf2TOs