



Leura Uniting Church

24th May, 2021

Welcome: Whether this is your 'home-place' for worship, or if you are new or a visitor here, it is good to be together to worship.

Pentecost

Coming Together To Worship

Welcome: To each Other. (Announcements)

Call to Worship - Video

Acts 2:1-11

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. **6** And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. **7** Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" **8** And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? **9** Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10** Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11** Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." **12** All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" **13** But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. **15** Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. **16** No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

L: The Day of Pentecost is here:

**P: the day when the flames of faith
dance in our hearts.**

L: The Day of Pentecost is here:

**P: the day when our babbling speech
becomes the Good News for the world.**

L: The Day of Pentecost is here:

**P: the day when compassion
is seared into our souls.**

L: The Day of Pentecost is here:

P: let the people of God rejoice. Alleluia!

L: Spirit of life, Holy Spirit of saving love,
you are most welcome here!

Come to us in our dullness
so we might remember and live with radiance.

Come to us in our brokenness
so we might recollect and live in unity.

We reach for you because we yearn for wholeness;
a truly spirited humanity,
alive to respect, inclusion, creativity,
daring imagination and compassion for all.

Amen.

Hymn 412 God sends us his spirit

1. God sends us the Spirit to befriend and help us,
recreate and guide us, Spirit friend:
Spirit who enlivens, sanctifies, enlightens,
sets us free, is now our Spirit friend.

*Spirit of our Maker, Spirit friend,
Spirit of our Jesus, Spirit friend,
Spirit of God's people, Spirit friend.*

2. Darkened roads are clearer, heavy burdens lighter
when we're walking with our Spirit friend:
now we need not fear the powers of the darkness:
none can overcome our Spirit friend.
3. Now we are God's people, bonded by his presence,
agents of his purpose, Spirit friend:
lead us forward ever, slipping backward never,
to your remade world, our Spirit friend.

Tom Colvin 1925
and people of Ghana

Words & Music: Tom Colvin. Harmony: Lawrence Francis Bartlett
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Prayer of Praise and Confession

L: May the God of Pentecost be with you.

P: And also with you.

L: People of Pentecost, open your hearts to the Spirit moving in our midst.

P: We open them to the Breath of God which fills us with hope and grace.

L: Daughters and sons of the Most Holy, offer your joy to our God.

P: We sing the song of Pentecost in the language of every heart - praise and thanksgiving to our God!

In the shadows of chaos
you breathed, Creator God,
your Spirit moving over the waters of life.
You opened your hands,
filling all creation with goodness and beauty.
You gathered up earth's dust,
shaping us in your image,
filling our lungs with Spirit's life.

L: Spirit of the Living God,
dance with us on this day.

P: Come, Whirlwind of Wonder!

Sing to the groaning of creation.

P: Come, still small voice of Hope!

L: Enflame us with your passion for justice.

P: Come, Liberator of the Least!

L: Purify us of our grasping greediness.

P: Come, Advocate of selfless living!

L: Silence our gossiping tongues.

P: Come, Harmony of God's Heart!

Wind of God, blow through us;
Fire of God, burn within us;
Tongue of God, speak to us
on this day of renewal and birth.

Call to Reconciliation

Feel the Spirit of God moving in your soul. Listen to the Spirit speaking to you of hope and wholeness. Trust the promises God has made that new life is our inheritance. Join me as we open ourselves to God's healing Spirit, as we pray, saying,

Unison Prayer for Forgiveness

Spirit of God:

**you come, aflame with new life,
but our apathy threatens to douse your passion;
you come, on fire with love,
yet we limit our affections to a select few;
you come, surging with new dreams and new hopes,
but we still cling to the old ways of living;
you come, glowing with the vision of the kingdom,
yet we close our eyes to your future.**

Forgive us, Spirit of Truth, forgive us.

Come to us, anew, this day:

**to shatter our hardened hearts with your tenderness;
to set our souls on fire with your love;
to send us into a world which aches
for the new joy, the new hope, the new life offered in Jesus
Christ, our Lord and Saviour.**

Silence is kept

Assurance of Pardon

With a gentle breeze God enflames our spirits; with a strong wind, God reminds us of our need to forgive and be forgiven. Like a cleansing storm, God takes away our past, revealing our fresh, new life.

Awakened, refreshed, renewed, made whole: now we can dance with the wind, singing our praises to the One who gives life to all. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Video Spirit of God in the clear running water

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=chGgBZl2Kyg>

We Listen For The "Word" Of God

The Story from the Hebrew Scriptures:

Ezekiel prophesied during the Exile in Babylon. 593 – 571 BCE. He recounts a series of visions. In today's vision, he sees what is left of the people of Israel, following their defeat and exile. They appear as bones instead of people, not only dry, but sere, utterly lifeless and hopeless. Let us listen as the vision is told. As we listen, we may silently sing along: "dem Bones," and ponder present challenges and problems.:

Ezekiel 37:1–14

37 The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ² He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵ Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶ I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷ So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸ I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them.

⁹ Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰ I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹ Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹² Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves,

O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³ And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. ¹⁴ I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act,” says the LORD.

L: May we hear the message of the possibilities and hope with God’s Spirit!

ALL: Amen

(Simply Can’t resist)

Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYb8Wm6-QfA>

Ezekiel connected dem dry bones
Ezekiel connected dem dry bones
Ezekiel connected dem dry bones
Now hear the word of the Lord.

Your toe bone connected to your foot bone
Your foot bone connected to your heel bone
Your heel bone connected to your ankle bone
Your ankle bone connected to your leg bone
Your leg bone connected to your knee bone
Your knee bone connected to your thigh bone
Your thigh bone connected to your hip bone
Your hip bone connected to your back bone
Your back bone connected to your shoulder bone
Your shoulder bone connected to your neck bone
Your neck bone connected to your head bone
Now hear the word of the Lord!

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around
Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around
Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around
Now hear the word of the Lord!

Disconnect dem bones, dem dry bones
Disconnect dem bones, dem dry bones
Disconnect dem bones, dem dry bones
Now hear the word of the Lord!

Your head bone connected from your neck bone
Your neck bone connected from your shoulder bone
Your shoulder bone connected from your back bone
Your back bone connected from your hip bone
Your hip bone connected from your thigh bone
Your thigh bone connected from your knee bone
Your knee bone connected from your leg bone
Your leg bone connected from your ankle bone
Your Ankle bone connected to your heel bone
Your heel bone connected from your foot bone
Your foot bone connected from your toe bone
Now hear the word of the Lord!

Dem bones, dem bones gonna walk around
Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around
Dem bones, dem bones, gonna walk around
Now hear the word of the Lord!

Dem bones, dem bones dem dry bones Dem bones,
dem bones dem dry bones Dem bones,
dem bones dem dry bones
Now hear the word of the Lord!

Reading from the Good News of Jesus Christ:

In the Gospel, Jesus is pictured as encouraging his disciples, soon to be apostles. He will no longer be with them, but he entrusts them to the care of the "Spirit" or "Breath." Because of the Spirit, Jesus followers will do his kind of work just as Jesus has done God's kind of work.

Let's listen carefully for the Good News for us in:

John 15:26–27, 16:4b–15

²⁶ “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. ²⁷ You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

⁴ But I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them.

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷ Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹² “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴ He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

L: May we see, in the story, the faith of Jesus’ followers and the drive of the Spirit.

ALL: Amen.

Hymn 418 She sits like a bird

1. She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
she sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.
2. She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
she nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.
3. She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;
she weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
nor can she be captured, silenced or restrained.
4. For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
she is the key opening the scriptures,
enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

John L. Bell 1949–
and Graham Maule 1958–

Words and music from Wild Goose Songs 2, Enemy of Apathy
by permission Wild Goose Publications

Address: Rev Paul Cameron

When you buy IKEA furniture, do you take the time to see if you have all the right parts before trying to assemble it? And what would you do if you found you were missing a few essential parts to that swing set you just bought the kids? Or had some wrong parts?

I think Christians today often approach church with this "do we have all the right parts?" mind-set. Why else would we hear so much lament about not having enough kids, not having enough young families, not having a parking lot, having the wrong mix of people, not having enough

of the right music, or the right technology ... as though things like these are the problem, and we can't put together a good church without all the right parts?

When Ezekiel looked at the valley of dry bones that were the people of Israel, what a jumble of discarded, disconnected, dis-organized bits of body and bone he saw.

With no parts list to compare the contents of the valley against.

"Hey God," he might have asked, "You're sure we have all the right pieces to rebuild the people?"

To which God replies, "Stop worrying about the parts list. Each people I build is different anyway. As long as the Word and the Spirit are there, the parts that are here will be just what's needed."

One of my favourite spirituals for as long as I can remember is "Dem Dry Bones." I enjoy the rhythm and the beat of it. It makes even my dry bones want to move and to get into the action of the music. I also like the imagery of the song in its lesson of anatomy, "the toe bone connected to the foot bone, the foot bone connected to the ankle bone, ..." and so on until "the neck bone connected to the head bone and we hear the Word of the Lord." God said he could do it and he did, so we sing the Word of the Lord.

Ezekiel was a prophet with more imagination than most. He was a man whom God had called and sent to live in the midst of the people of Israel to be a spokesperson for God. He was not a casual bystander in the history of their lives. He was a full participant in the trials, tests and calamities which befell the people. He had told them that their prosperity would not

continue and their joys in the land would not last unless they were faithful to God; but they had not heard him. Now the Babylonians had come, had devastated them and their land. Jerusalem had fallen and the people had been taken into exile.

Ezekiel was standing, either in memory or in reality, in the midst of one of the battle fields where many had fallen. He said he was brought out by the Spirit of the Lord and set down in the midst of this valley full of dry bones. "There were many bones," he said, "and they were very dry." What Ezekiel wants us to hear and to see is the utter devastation, the desolation, the hopelessness, which had gripped the lives of the people of Israel. What word could this man of God possibly speak which could bring any hope to their desperate situation?

Imagine yourself standing in the midst of one of the great military cemeteries in Europe. All you can see is marker after marker, reminding you of the remains of what once was a person who fought, died and was buried there. Imagine, as you stand there, you hear a voice - perhaps it simply comes to your mind, and the question is asked: "Can these bones live?" What would you say? What would you do?

There is a story of a man who was walking through a dark cemetery one night and fell into an open grave, which had been prepared for a funeral the next day. He screamed and yelled but no one responded. He jumped and tried to reach the top, but could not reach it. He clawed and tried to make steps so he could climb out, but to no avail. Finally, he sat down in the corner and decided he would wait until the morning. It was not long until another man came walking along the same way and fell into the same grave. The first man simply sat in the corner and listened while the second man yelled and yelled. He reached for the top and could not reach it. He clawed and tried to climb out. Finally, in sympathy, the first man said to the second, "You can't get out of here" but he did.

"Can these bones live?" the Lord asked Ezekiel. Notice that Ezekiel did not respond out of logic and reason and say, "No way, Lord. These are bones of dead men. They are not connected. How could they possibly live?" Instead, Ezekiel responded in faith, "O Lord God you know." If I may paraphrase, he said, "I do not see any way, God. Maybe you know a way?" Having responded in faith, the Lord said to Ezekiel, "Then prophesy to these dead bones and say, 'O dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord.'"

I have preached to some pretty dry, dead congregations but that is not something I have been challenged to do! Ezekiel, however, did not question the Lord. He did not say, "Lord, these are just bones; they do not have ears. How can they hear? Why should I preach?" Do you suppose he looked around to see if anyone was listening? I can imagine what might have happened to me if I stood in the midst of a cemetery and said, "The Lord told me to tell you you are going to breathe again," but not Ezekiel. Ezekiel said, "Thus says the Lord 'I will breathe into you and you will come to life.' "

While Ezekiel was prophesying to these dry bones, he heard a great noise and a rattling. The bones started to move. They started getting connected, not only to one another, but they got connected in the right way. Where there had once been just a valley of many dry bones now stood many bodies. Still there was something missing - "there was no breath in them." So the Lord God said to Ezekiel, " Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." and the breath came and they came to life. They stood on their feet and there was a host of them. Hear the Word of the Lord!

What does that story say to you? Is it just the story of an ancient miraculous happening? Is it a myth - an allegory, which says one thing but is meant to imply something else? .

Israel had experienced joy and prosperity in their land. They had thought that this would go on forever, that they could celebrate and enjoy life, that they could plan and do whatever they wanted. They were the people of God and believed they would be blessed forever; but then the Babylonians came.

Who of us, as persons, has not at one time or another stood beside the grave of some of our highest hopes? Who of us, at one time or another, has not stood amidst the ruins and remnants of dreams, which have been dashed to the ground? One of the most devastating parts of such an experience is not simply that we have fallen, or that we have been broken; it is the fear that we will never revive and recover. Whatever the question, it is still the same: "Can these bones live?"

I think Ezekiel did three very important things. First, he was bluntly realistic about his true situation. He did not look at life through rose-colored glasses. He did not say, "This is a dream, one day it will pass," or "This is a nightmare, this cannot happen." He said, "I am in the midst of a valley of dry, bleached bones. Death has been here." The only thing humanly possible for Ezekiel, in the midst of his situation, would have been to have gathered up the bones and buried them. Or he could have made a monument to those who had fallen.

The reality of the human situation is that no amount of grief, no amount of wishing it had not happened or that it was not so, can change the reality of things which have passed. There are opportunities of being and of doing which, when they are not taken, lie among the dry, bleached bones of a day which has passed.

Ezekiel was honest about his reality. He did not sit around wishing it had not happened. The Israelites believed that their bones had been dried up. There was no hope.

Second, Ezekiel, being aware of the immediate reality of the human condition, acknowledged the ultimate reality of a God who was faithful; he listened to what God had to say. "Can these bones live? O Lord GOD, you know ." " You know something I do not know. You can do things I cannot do. You can see things I cannot see. I am listening.

Third, Ezekiel was a willing and ready instrument in the hands of God. He was willing to do and to say whatever God wanted him to do or say. Regardless of how farfetched it may have appeared to him at the time.

Some people say, "God helps those who help themselves." I think, "God helps those who help God help them." That is what Ezekiel did. He had done all he could do, was doing all he could do to help God help them. And the Spirit of the Lord revived the people. They were renewed and there is an Israel today.

Jesus said that is how the Spirit of the Lord is: "It is like the wind. You do not know whence it comes or where it goes, but you hear the sound of it and you cannot deny the evidence of it."

Wind, spirit, breath - these are words which come from the same Greek word. They are used interchangeably. We use them that way also. We talk about a "second wind." When we run and run and we need the "second wind" to keep on running. We talk about being inspired. We talk about a "breath" of fresh air. What we are saying is that in the midst of our experiences, no matter how devastated and desolate we may feel, there comes a breath from whence we know not, unless we are persons of faith. Then we know it is from God and that God has been faithful. We are not destroyed, we live.

An old sailor was standing on a dock with a little boy, looking out over the lake. They were watching sailboats. The little boy said, "Sir, what is the

wind?" The old sailor said, "Son, I can't tell you what the wind is. I can't explain it, but I know how to hoist a sail to catch its power so it can take me where I want to go."

I believe it is present for us. Regardless of the circumstances in which we may find ourselves, God is with us. So, hoist a sail and catch the wind. Open your heart and take a deep breath and God's Spirit will be with you. That is the Word of the Lord. You can trust it. There is still breath for dry bones.

Let us pray:

Come Holy Spirit fall afresh upon us that we may be refreshed. Grant that we, trusting in you, may see beyond that which is immediate to that which is ultimate and especially to you, the Ultimate One, who gives us life eternal. Grant us then courage to continue, grace to trust and love which gives life. Amen

Our Response To The "Word" ..

Hymn: **TiS 414 There's a spirit in the air**

1. There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.'
2. Lose your shyness, find your tongue,
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today.

3. When believers break the bread,
when a hungry child is fed,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.
4. Still the Spirit gives us light,
seeing wrong and setting right:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today.
5. When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.
6. May the Spirit fill our praise,
guide our thoughts and change our ways:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today.
7. There's a Spirit in the air,
calling people everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world.'

Brian Arthur Wren
1936–

Words: Brian Wren

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Offering - money, selves, and our prayers.

Prayers of Intercession

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymn "God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind"

Herman Stuempfle, Jr.
Evangelical Lutheran Worship, #400
CWM RHONDDA (*Guide me O great redeemer*)

1. God of tempest, God of whirlwind,
as on Pentecost descend!
Drive us out from sheltered comfort;
past these walls your people send!
Sweep us into costly service,
there with Christ to bear the cross,
there with Christ to bear the cross!
2. God of blazing, God of burning,
all that blocks your purpose, purge!
Through your church, Christ's living Body,
let your flaming Spirit surge!
Where deceit conceals injustice,

kindle us to speak your truth,
kindle us to speak your truth!

3. God of earthquake, God of thunder,
shake us loose from lethargy!
Break the chains of sin asunder,
for earth's healing set us free!
Crumble walls that still divide us;
make us one in Christ our Lord,
make us one in Christ our Lord!

4. God of passion, God unsleeping,
stir in us love's restlessness!
Where the people cry in anguish,
may we share your heart's distress.
Rouse us from content with evil;
claim us for your kingdom's work,
claim us for your kingdom's work!

Benediction

Hymn 711

Wa wa wa Emimimo.
Emi oloye.
Wa wa wa Alagbara.
Alagbara meta.
Wao, wao, wao.
Emimimo.

Come, O Holy Spirit, come.
O wise Spirit, come.
Come, almighty Spirit, come.
Almighty Trinity.
Come, come, come.
O Spirit, come.

his may be sung in the original Yoruba language or in the English version.

Leura Uniting Church

Yoruba traditional hymn
paraphrase by I-to Loh
1936-

Words and music from *In Spirit and In Truth* by permission the World Council of Churches, Geneva



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1. Sharing the Pentecost Story

God's blanket for us – an all age interactive story



Read the promise given in Joel 2:28a.

Have a large blanket. Spread the blanket on the floor.

Invite the children to stand around the edges of the blanket.

Remind them, *God says: "I will pour out My Spirit on all people." The Holy Spirit is God.*

To pour out His Spirit is a way of saying God is with us in a powerful way. Let's imagine what that might be like by imagining this blanket is the Holy Spirit.

Ask the children to pick up the blanket and raise it over their heads as they imagine God pouring His Spirit out on all of them.

Now let's wrap God's Spirit around us.

Let the children duck under the blanket and pull it tight around them.

God wants you to know that He is as close to you as this blanket. That's why He gives you His Spirit – so you can be close with Him!