

Penn West Conference Annual Gathering & Meeting, 2022
Opening Worship

Welcome: David Ackerman

***Call to Worship:**

Leader: We are gathered today by the Spirit of God, seeking to be transformed as a people.

People: We gather as the people of the Penn West Conference, confessing that change isn't easy.

Leader: We gather after two years of meeting remotely, with some joining us remotely today and others joining us here in person.

People: We are gathered, celebrating the truth that no matter how we come together, God comes to us and fills us with the Holy Spirit!

***Opening Hymn: "There's a Sweet, Sweet Spirit" - #293 NCH**

Sweet, Sweet Spirit

Doris Akers, 1962; alt.

Slowly

1 There's a sweet, sweet Spir - it in this place, and I
2 There are bless - ings you can - not re - ceive till you

The first system of musical notation is in 4/4 time, key of G major. It features a treble and bass staff. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass line is in the bass staff. The tempo is marked 'Slowly'.

know that it's the Spir - it of the Lord; there are
know that Spir - it's full - ness and be - lieve; you're the

The second system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line from the first system.

sweet ex - pres - sions on each face, and I
one to prof - it when you say, "I am

The third system of musical notation continues the melody and bass line.

to Refrain

know they feel the pres - ence of the Lord.
going to stay with Je - sus all the way."

The fourth system of musical notation concludes the hymn with a double bar line. The tempo remains 'Slowly'.

Refrain



Sweet Ho - ly Spir - it, sweet heav-en-ly Dove, stay right here
 with us, fill-ing us with your love; And for these bless-ings we
 lift our hearts in praise. With-out a doubt we'll know that we have
 been re - vived when we shall leave this place.

Invocation:

As we celebrate the opening of the 60th Annual Gathering & Meeting of the Penn West Conference of the United Church of Christ, we pray that we might feel the presence of your Spirit moving among us. We are praying that we might be transformed during our time together, recognizing that we don't desire change simply for change's sake. Rather, we pray that you would change us so that together, we might discern your will, what is good and acceptable and perfect. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

Confession:

We confess, God, that we have not been the church or the Conference that we should be. The sins of our past come back to haunt us, and our hearts ache when we look back at past wrongs that we have done. We turn to you today and ask your forgiveness. (*Silent confession.*) Help us to turn away from evil and allow your grace to overcome it with good. May we be so inspired by your Gospel of love that we are moved to confess a living faith in you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Assurance:

God has heard our confession this day, and the message of the Gospel we proclaim is one of grace, mercy, forgiveness, and love. The message of God's love for us is genuine and real, and God calls us to embrace that good news this day, that we may serve God as a people who are ardent in spirit, rejoicing in hope, patient in suffering, persevering in prayer, generous toward others, and hospitable to all. May it be so. Amen.

Hymn: "Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness" - #286 NCH

Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness
James K. Manley, 1978; alt.

Unison, brightly
Refrain

The musical score is written for a single voice and piano accompaniment. It features a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The score is divided into five systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "Spir - it, spir - it of gen - tle-ness, blow through the wil - der-ness, call - ing and free, Spir - it, spir - it of rest - less-ness, stir me from plac - id-ness, wind, wind on the sea." The piano accompaniment includes various chords such as D, G, A, Dsus4, Bm, E7, Asus7, and A7. The score concludes with a double bar line and the instruction "Last time, end".

Spir - it, spir - it of gen - tle-ness, blow through the
wil - der-ness, call - ing and free,
Spir - it, spir - it of rest - less-ness, stir me from
plac - id-ness, wind, wind on the sea.

1 You moved on the wa - ters, you called to the
2 You swept through the des - ert, you stung with the
3 You sang in a sta - ble, you cried from a
4 You call from to - mor - row, you break an - cient

**Reduced-size notes may be played with organ pedals in lieu of or in combination with the other notes.*

deep, then you coaxed up the moun - tains from the
sand, and you goad - ed your peo - ple with a
hill, then you whis - pered in si - lence when the
schemes, from the bond - age of sor - row the

val - leys of sleep; And o - ver the e - ons you
law and a land; When they were con - found - ed by their
whole world was still; And down in the cit - y you
cap - tives dream dreams; Our wom - en see vi - sions, our

called to each thing, "A - wake from your slum -
i - dols and lies, then you spoke through your proph -
called once a - gain, when you blew through your peo -
men clear their eyes. With bold new de - ci -

bers and rise on your wings."
ets to o - pen their eyes.
ple on the rush of the wind.
sions your peo - ple a - rise.

This popular hymn by songwriter James K. Manley grew out of a sabbatical leave at the School of Theology at Claremont, California. It was first sung at Waikeola Congregational Church in Honolulu, after which Manley added the fourth stanza at the suggestion of a church member.

Tune: SPIRIT Irr.
James K. Manley, 1978
Arr. The New Century Hymnal, 1993

Scripture: Romans 12:1-21

Sermon: "Be Transformed" – David Ackerman

Pastoral Prayer and the Prayer of Our Savior

Our Offering: Lancaster Theological Seminary

<https://www.lancasterseminary.edu/give/>

***Closing Hymn: “Every Time I Feel the Spirit” - #282 NCH**

Every Time I Feel the Spirit

2 Sam. 22:9; Ps. 18:8

African-American spiritual

Refrain

Ev - ery time I feel the Spir - it mov - ing in my heart I will

pray. Yes, ev - ery time I feel the Spir - it mov - ing

Last time, end

in my heart I will pray. 1 Up - on the moun - tain my God
2 Oh, Jor - dan riv - er, chil - ly and

spoke, out of God's mouth came fire and smoke. Looked all a -
cold, it chills the bod - y, not the soul. There's on - ly

to Refrain

round me; looked so fine; I asked my God if all were mine.
one train on this track; it runs to heav - en, then right back.

Among the thousands of spirituals that exist today are songs of gladness and songs of sorrow. This well-known spiritual is a song of joy, captured not only in the words, but in the lively rhythms.

Tune: African-American spiritual
Arr. Joyce Finch Johnson, 1992

***Benediction**

*Those who are present and comfortably able, please rise.