

## Devotion - Fire

### The passing of God's Fire

Please stand for opening prayer.

**Opening Prayer:** Dear Heavenly Father, Thank you for bringing us here tonight thank you for your endless love for each of us. We pray Father that you are here with us, guiding our conversation and our thoughts. Please bless this time that we have together.

The fire of God's love within us

**Leader:** Rub your hands together until your hands get warm.

**Then**

**Touch the palms of your hands to your face and feel the warmth.**

**All:** The warmth of God's love and presence touch me.

**All:** I am filled with His spirit.

The fire of God's love within our group

**Leader:** I will model what each of us will do in turn. I will rub my Hands together until I can feel the heat. Then I turn to the person on my right and gently touch my palm to their hand  
**And say:**

**Each:** Feel the warmth of God's love and presence.

The fire of God's love in us responds to God

**Leader:** Again rub your hands together until you can feel the heat from the friction. Then raise your hands, palms upward, toward heaven.

**All:** Lord God, we offer you the heat of our love and presence.

The fire of God's love reaches out to others

**Leader:** One last time, rub your hands until they are warm from the Rubbing. Then extend your hands, palms outward.

**All:** Fill us, Lord with the warmth of your love and presence.

**Leader:** Send us forth to bring the fire of your Spirit to those who do not yet know you. Use us to bring the warmth and light of your love to those who shiver in the cold and lonely places. Make us like Christ to those who struggle, and reach out through us to those who feel far away from you.

**Leader:** Please be seated.

## Scripture

### God's Cleansing Fire

**Leader:** Let me read a passage from Isaiah, Chapter 6.

**"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple.**

**Above hem were seraphs...and they were calling to one another**

**"holy, holy, holy is the Lord almighty;**

**The whole earth is full of his glory."**

**"At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with SMOKE."**

**"Woe to me! I cried. I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty"**

**Leader:** Rub your hands together until you feel the heat, and then touch your lips.

**"Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, 'See his has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for' "then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"**

**All:** And I said, Here am I, Send me.

**Pause 15 seconds - Silence**

**Leader:** God, we wonder: Will we be up to what you want us to do? We have such a heart for this ministry and for what you can accomplish through us in our congregation. Burn away our fears and our doubts with your love. Give us a heart on fire, a brave heart of courage. Purify our vision and actions so that all we do will glorify you. Help us to answer your every call with faith and confidence. "Here I am, send me!"

## God's calling and guiding fire

**Leader: Now A reading from Exodus, Chapter 13,**

**"Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up. So Moses thought, 'I will go over and see this strange sight ...why the bush does not burn up.'**

**"When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, Moses! Moses!"**

**"and Moses said, 'Here I am'."**

**"Do not come any closer,'God said. 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.'"**

**All: The Lord guided them.**

**"By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud nor the pillar of fire left its place in front of the people"**

**Pause 15 seconds**

**Heavenly Father, from the burning bush you called Moses to do great and difficult deeds. At first, he was reluctant to respond to your call .....just as we often are. But just as you promised to be with him, right at his side, through all his trials and difficulties, be with us also. Lord of the burning bush, of cloud and fire, lead the way and give us grace to follow. We know that your grace will give us the strength and courage to overcome every obstacle, every weakness. We know you will guide us and help us to be all that you call us to be.**

We ask for the fire of God's Spirit

**Leader: A reading from Acts, Chapter 2**

**"when the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them."**

**Leader: Now be still. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LISTEN.**

**Feel the Spirit's heat within you. The Holy Spirit is refining fire who burns away everything that is not of God until only God is left in us. Feel the hot presence of God. God is a never-ending flame who make us holy and sends us out on a holy mission. Hear the Spirit, the wind, the invisible presence of God. Surrender to the wind, take your hand off the tiller of your life. Let the Spirit blow you wherever God wants you to go.**

**Let God's fire warm you and his wind direct your way. When you're back home leading your CHRISTCARE Group , rub your hands together now and then, and remember the warm fire of God's presence that is with you at all times. In the coming days, when you hear the wind, remember that God is in control, surrender again to the Spirit's leading.**

**OPEN YOUR EYES**

**All: God we thank you for your spirit**

**Leader: Now let us continue this meditative spirit as we listen to "Go Light your world"**

## Devotion: Wind

**Leader:** Form a circle and ask the person to your right to read this passage from John.

“Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, and no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to the spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, “you must be born again.” The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the spirit.” John 3:5-8.

**Leader asks the person to the right to read this excerpt from Psalm 104.**

“He makes the clouds his chariot and rides on the wings of the wind. He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants...When you send your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.” Psalm 104:3,4 &30

**Leader asks the person to the right to read this passage from Acts.**

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.”

“Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.” Acts 2:1-6

**Leader reads the following:**

Tonight’s symbol is the wind. Wind is a lot like spirit. You can’t see it, define its color, and describe its shape. But you can know the wind by its action, by its results. Watch a windmill spinning or a sail billowing, and you know the power and the energy of the wind.

Often, wind has been part of God’s call to those for whom he had a special mission. The wind implies purpose and direction, creation and power.

In his Foreward to Walter Wangerin’s *WHOLE PRAYER*, Eugene Peterson reflects on an incident involving John Muir that held a special meaning for his understanding of spirituality.

**Leader asks next person in the circle to read this selection from Eugene Peterson.**

*Weather or Not*

In the last half of the nineteenth century, John Muir was our most worshipful explorer of the western extremities of our North American continent. For decades he tramped up and down through our God-created wonders, from the California Sierras to the Alaskan glaciers, observing, reporting, praising and experiencing-entering into whatever he found with childlike delight and mature reverence.

At one period during this time (1874) Muir visited a friend who had a cabin, snug in a valley of one of the tributaries of the Yuba River in the Sierra Mountains—a place from which to venture into the wilderness and then return for a comforting cup of tea.

One December day a storm moved in from the Pacific—a fierce storm that bent the junipers, pines and fir trees as if they were so many blades of grass. It was for just such times that this cabin had been built: cozy protection from the harsh elements. We easily imagined Muir and his host safe and secure in his tightly caulked cabin, a fire blazing against the cruel assault of the elements, wrapped in sheepskins, Muir meditatively rendering the wilderness into his elegant prose. But our imaginations, not trained to cope with Muir, betray us. For Muir, instead of retreating to the coziness of the cabin, pulling the door tight, and throwing another stick of wood on the fire, strode out of the cabin into the storm, climbed a high ridge, picked a giant Douglas fir as the best perch for experiencing the kaleidoscope of color, sound, scent and motion. He scrambled his way to the top, and rode out the storm, lashed by the wind, holding on, relishing Weather, taking it all in—its primal energy.

The story of John Muir, storm-whipped at the top of the Douglas fir in the Yuba River valley, gradually took shape as a kind of icon of Christian spirituality for our family....a standing rebuke against becoming a mere spectator to life, preferring creature comforts to Creator confrontations.

For spirituality has to do with life, lived life. For Christians, “spirituality” is derived (always and exclusively) from Spirit, God’s Holy Spirit. And “spirit,” in the biblical languages of Hebrew and Greek, is the word “wind,” “breeze,” or “breath” an invisibility that has visible force... Spirit, Holy Spirit, in Christian terminology, is God’s life in our lives. God is living in us and thereby making us active participants in life.

We cannot, of course, command Weather. It is there; it happens. There is no question of managing or directing it. The best we can do is to cultivate awareness, alertness, so that when the wind blows we are there, ready to step into it—or not. When the absurd command comes to distribute the meager five loaves and two fish to the crowd we are ready to obey—or not. When the invitation comes to “take.....eat.....drink,” we are ready to come to the supper—or not.

**Leader reads the following.**

Your presence here at this meeting of ChristCare leaders is a step into the unknown, an answer to God’s call. It is giving yourself over to the wind, which blows wherever it wants to, which will carry you to destinations you don’t anticipate. Think for a moment about one way that God is calling you this week to leave behind your secure cabin and venture out into the howling of the storm.

**Pause 15 seconds**

**Leader says: Let us ask the Lord’s blessing and care as we step forward into this New Year of ChristCare Ministry by praying together.**