

PENTECOST SUNDAY

TO DO JUSTICE, LOVE
KINDNESS, AND WALK
HUMBLY WITH YOUR
GOD. -MICAH 6:8

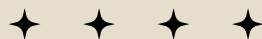


BECAUSE FAITH
WITHOUT
JUSTICE IS
EMPTY-
AND JUSTICE, AT
ITS HEART, IS
LOVE IN ACTION.

2026 PENTECOST OFFERING SUNDAYS MAY 17 AND MAY 24



THE 2026 PENTECOST OFFERING IS A SPECIAL OFFERING IN
SUPPORT OF THE NEW CHURCH MOVEMENT IN YOUR REGION AND
ACROSS THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST).



We are grateful to Rev. Beth Pattillo for
creating this year's worship materials.

Call to Worship

Leader:

"With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high?"

People: Dear one, God has already told you what true worship requires.

Leader: "Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?"

People: Before we come into God's house, God calls us to first act with fairness and equity.

Leader: "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?"

People: In God's house and outside of it, God prefers integrity in our dealings with one another.

Leader: "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

People:

Beloved, God first wants us to live in opposition to power that exploits others.

All: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good;

And what does the Lord require of you
But to do justice, and to love kindness,
And to walk humbly with your God?"



OPENING PRAYER

Gracious God, as we gather to be your church on this Pentecost Sunday, we come seeking to honor you with the whole of our lives. We praise you for the ways in which you still speak your living Spirit into our church, and we open ourselves to the wind and the flames that first gave birth to your people.

We know, Lord God, that even as we seek to bring our whole lives to you this day, we come not as we would like to be, but as we are. Our will to do the good often conflicts with our struggles to preserve our lives and the things that we love.

God, we know we have fallen short, but we also come this day to rest in your mercy. We know that your Holy Spirit brings grace, and that you still invite us to follow the call of the prophet Micah to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with you.

Help us to meet you now in this hour of worship. In the name of your child, Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Benediction

God, you lit your church on fire with the flames of Pentecost. Send us now into this world as a movement for wholeness, that we may encourage all human flourishing.

Make us people of the verb, that we would do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with you into every place where your children are hurting. In the name of your child, Jesus, and through the sustaining presence of the Holy Spirit, amen.

Sermon Helps

Micah 6:6-8 for Pentecost Sunday 2026



Topline Takeaway: The day the church was born was the day the church became prophetic. A deeper understanding of Micah 6:8 empowers today's church to enact its own prophetic witness, which works for all human flourishing.

At First Glance

We might find it difficult to recoup a first impression of this familiar passage since it may feel well-worn. Placing Micah 6:8 in context may help us. If we look at the entire pericope, v.1-8, we can spot that the first few verses sound as if the speaker is approaching the Temple for worship, giving us the context for v.8. The speaker comes to bow before God and to make a sacrificial offering. We can't help but notice the escalating ideas for what God might find to be a suitable offering – first burnt offerings, then valuable calves, thousands of rams that only a king might offer, or oil beyond anyone's measure. This escalation continues even to the point of sacrificing one's child. But in v.6, the literary voice seems to change. The worshipper(s) are told that God does not want any of these sacrifices but rather requires justice, kindness, and a humble way of life.

QUESTIONS:

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Some interesting questions arise from a reading of this passage in preparation for sermon writing. For example:

1. Verse 8 declares that God has told mortal humans what is good. Where else in the Jewish Bible (or Old Testament) has God declared something to be good? This reference harkens back to the creation story in Genesis 1. In addition, the preacher can help the audience to trace God's good work through Israel's history. These saving acts are briefly recounted in v.4-5. Surely, then, it should come as no surprise what God requires of human beings. Why do we ask what is good when God has already both told and shown us?

2. Another interesting question centers on the prophet Micah himself.

To whom was he speaking and why?

We know that Micah was a rough contemporary of Isaiah, placing him in the latter part of the 8th century B.C.E., and that he prophesied around the time of the kings Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The book that bears his name is a kind of anthology, intermingling passages of both divine judgment and comforting hope. This passage is one of judgment, and it declares in the early verses of Chapter 6 as God having a “controversy,” or legal case against Israel. The looming threat of the Assyrian empire stands as a visible sign of the people’s departure from their worship of Yahweh. “The Micah book has already provided a number of examples of the failure to do justice: The powerful oppress the powerless (2:1-2, 8-9; 3:1-3, 9-10), laborers are exploited (3:10), courts are corrupt (3:11).” (Limburg, p. 270) What might Micah say to us today? What would he declare to be the charges against us that God might bring?

Where is God in this passage?



The central theme of Micah 6 is a reversal of the people’s understanding of God’s expectations. “God does not want a specific type of offering. God wants a specific type of person.” (Mayfield, 2017.)

God’s grace appears in this passage in the form of clear instructions. Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God. We do not often think of grace as instructive, but these three admonitions provide throughlines for daily living. These practices are a way to encounter God wherever we may find ourselves.

PARALLELS FOR PREACHING:

How then does this passage from Micah help us better understand the Pentecost story that we celebrate? Micah speaks to those who were preparing to go to the Temple for worship. Our Pentecost story echoes this approach to God both figuratively and literally. Acts 2 gives us the story of Jesus's followers gathered in a home when the Spirit descends with fire and wind. This draws a crowd, and suddenly each person hears the disciples speaking in their own tongue. A consult of the Jewish Annotated New Testament opens a new understanding. At Pentecost, God replaces an ethnic distinction with a theological one. God's people now include those from all the ends of the earth who have heard the disciples speaking. (Levine & Brettler, p.224) The people of God are now the church, and they will not be known by their keeping of the law but rather by the indwelling of the Spirit.

The passage also echoes our own questions about preparing for worship, especially as a Pentecost people. How, then, should we enter God's presence? We can easily draw parallels from Micah's escalating litany of potential sacrifices to our own attempts to bargain with God. What is our equivalent of burnt offerings, calves, flocks of rams, rivers of oil, and even our firstborn? The answer to this question, though, does not materially change from the time of Micah to the day of Pentecost to our own Sunday worship. God does not require any of the material objects we can give. In every age, God seeks a change in human behavior as our most acceptable offering.



Call to Action:

This passage helps us to understand that the church is called to live prophetically by becoming people of the verb. When we do justice, we practice fairness and equity entailed in the Hebrew word, mishpat. When we love kindness, we live out the 'love loyalty' implied in the Hebrew word hesed. And when we walk humbly, we enter into hatsnea' lekhet, or a way of life that opposes exploitive power. (Limburg, p.271-272)

This is the life as the risen body of Christ that we see in the first part of the Book of Acts, especially in chapter 4:32-35. When the early church was holding all things in common, caring for the widows and orphans, giving testimony, and breaking bread in their homes, they were taking the first steps toward forming a church that echoed the call of the prophet to justice, kindness, and humble whole-life dedication to God.

Using this passage, we can challenge our congregations, and ourselves, to use the prophet's words as a kind of examen, a spiritual practice in the Ignatian tradition whereby we take time to examine God's presence in our lives and our response to it. Whether we do this on an individual level, or in the middle of a church board meeting, Micah 6:6-8 is a yardstick by which we can measure our faithfulness to God's prophetic imperative. Are we doing justice? Are we loving kindness? And are we walking humbly with God? These practices, lived out in our particular contexts, will move us closer each day to the fulfillment of God's great calling for all of God's people.

REFERENCES

Limburg, James. Hosea-Micah (Interpretation: A Biblical Commentary for Preaching and Teaching). Westminster John Knox Press, 1988.

Levine, Amy-Jill and Marc Zvi Brettler, eds. The Jewish Annotated New Testament (Second Edition) NRSV Translation. Oxford University Press, 2017.

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