

Day of Pentecost

Sunday, May 19, 2024

Introduction to the day

Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Crossing all boundaries that would separate us, the Spirit brings the wideness of God's mercy to places we least expect it—to a crowd of strangers of different lands and tongues, to dry bones, to our weak hearts. Jesus promises his disciples that they will be accompanied by the Holy Spirit, and that this Spirit reveals the truth. We celebrate that we too have been visited with this same Spirit. Guided by the truth, we join together in worship, and then disperse to share the fullness of Christ's love with the world.

FIRST READING: Acts 2:1-21

A reading from Acts.

Originally Pentecost was a Jewish thanksgiving-type festival celebrated seven weeks after Passover. On this particular Pentecost, however, the Holy Spirit is poured out upon the entire community of believers just as Jesus had promised and the scriptures had prophesied. Empowered by the Spirit, the entire community bears witness to God's activity in multiple languages.

PSALM: Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth. (Ps. 104:30)

SECOND READING: Romans 8:22-27

A reading from Romans.

By pouring the Holy Spirit into our hearts, God gives us the promised first fruit of eternal life so that we await God's future in hope. In the meantime, the Spirit also intercedes for us by carrying the prayers of our weak human hearts to God.

GOSPEL: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

While speaking to his disciples before his death, Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit as "the Helper" and describes the difference the Spirit will make in their lives and in the world.

GOSPEL MESSAGE

After the Wind and Fire

Jesus had his own way of urging hearers to "not miss the forest for the trees." Recall some of his familiar lines: "You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24), "Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear?" (Mark 8:18), or "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?" (Luke 6:41). Look deeply. Listen carefully. Then pay attention to what is most important.

Attention-grabbing as the wonders on the Day of Pentecost may be—a house filled with rushing wind, tongues of fire alighting on the heads of apostles, and the whirling of alien languages from

stupefied mouths—take care to not let their bewildering extraordinariness blunt the true and greater wonder of this gospel event: the Advocate comes.

All the times and events of Jesus' life—among close followers, watchers from afar, believers as well as doubters; the astounding miracles, puzzling parables, curious teachings, and scandalous associations—were for one purpose only: to open to all of them, to the whole world, the mercy and love of God.

But Jesus will not be at hand for long in the room, at the table, on the road and hillside, at the temple or synagogue, in the boat. The sound of his voice will become a memory; the image of his face will fade from sight. So, what happens when the hopeful days with Jesus end?

The Advocate comes! Yes, we retell the story now of an extraordinary moment of one ancient day on Pentecost, but oh, the greater, true gospel wonder is the ever-extraordinary presence of Jesus' Spirit bringing us hope and the way of God's mercy and love meant for, given to, and enduring in the world forever. Pray that we have eyes to see it and ears to hear of it.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Rejoicing that Jesus is risen and love has triumphed over fear, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need of good news.

We pray for the church universal, for its ministries, and for the spread of the gospel. Shower your Spirit upon Sunday school students, confirmands, and the newly baptized Bedivere Hass. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the earth, our precious home. We give thanks for the diversity of plant and animal life on our planet. Empower us by your Spirit to be wise and faithful stewards of all you have made. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and those who govern. Give those in authority understanding hearts, that they work together to bring justice and peace on earth. Grant all who vote in elections wisdom and discernment. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For those in need around the world: for victims of crimes, for victims of sexual abuse and exploitation, for those who are incarcerated. For all who suffer in any way *especially* Sandra Gagnon, Karen Weigold, Keith Weckwerth, Karen O'Day, Shirley Glickman, Marilyn Schneider, Denita Wolfram, Stephanie Yourth, Christopher Yourth, Linda Boland, Glenda Panke, Harold Yourth, Debbie Thom, Donna L Hoffman, Walter Hobden, Gary Churchill and those in long term care facilities and senior residences. In this moment of silence we name out loud or in the quiet of our hearts those who need your healing touch. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For this congregation and its ministries: for those who plan and lead worship, for acolytes and communion servers, for readers and assisting ministers, for all who prepare and clean our worship space. May our worship be pleasing in your sight. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We remember the faithful departed. Give us thankful hearts for those who have gone before us in the faith. At the last day, breathe new life into our dry bones, that we might feast forever with all the saints in light. God of grace,

hear our prayer.

Into your hands, most merciful God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your abiding love; through Jesus Christ, our resurrected and living Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

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