

AUGUSTANA

where Lutherans and Anglicans worship together

PENTECOST SUNDAY May 31, 2020

WOV Service of Word & Prayer

Thank you to today's worship assistant Jayce Galaura

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

GATHERING HYMN "O Holy spirit, root of life" ELW # 399

O Holy Spirit, root of life,
creator, cleanser of all things,
anoint our wounds; awaken us
with lustrous movement of your wings.

Eternal vigour, saving one,
you free us by your living Word,
becoming flesh to wear our pain,
and all creation is restored.

O Holy Wisdom, soaring power,
encompass us with wings unfurled,
and carry us, encircling all,
above, below and through the world.

CHILDREN'S TIME

When we met in the virtual world this week I asked the kids about special occasions and about what it is that makes those occasions special. What is the message that goes along with the occasion? Things like Mother's Day and Father's Day and Birthdays.

For instance Birthdays – we light candles and we celebrate. The message is that "we're so happy you were born." And "we love you"

Pentecost is sometimes called the birthday of the church. And there was a lot more lit than just one candle ...there was wind and fire and voices in a bunch of language.

There is a phrase – and you've probably heard or even used it before – "To light a fire under someone". It means to get a reluctant worker working. It comes from the time

when chimney sweeps – young children -- were afraid to climb up the chimney and so someone would light a fire in the hearth to make them to keep climbing.

Well Pentecost is the time when God lit a fire under the disciples and blew them out the door. I'm not sure that they were reluctant, but they were hesitant to leave their place of safety.

We have been blown out the door too – not by fire or by the wind – but by a pandemic. Perhaps while we are here outside our comfortable upper room we too will be given the words to tell others what we believe ... to share our faith in the language of the people around us.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray: God of rushing wind and chaos, we celebrate the gift of your Holy Spirit today. We welcome the birth of your church. From a small household to today's global village, we celebrate your church. May we be mindful today of the ways your winds of change blow through us all. May we be inspired by your spirit to hear you and to follow you. Amen.

SCRIPTURE SONG

Refrain: Salvation belongs to our God and to Christ the Lamb forever and ever.

Great and wonderful are your deeds, O God of the universe
 Just and true are your ways, O Ruler of all the nations.
 Who can fail to honor you, Lord, and sing the glory of your name? /refrain

For you alone are the Holy One.
 All nations will draw near and worship before you,
 For your just and holy works have been revealed. /refrain

SCRIPTURE READING:

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a

tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

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

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. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

"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.

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

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

The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,

before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Word of God, Word of life **thanks be to God**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!
Word of life Jesus Christ, all praise to you!
Our hearts burn within us while you open to us the Scriptures.
Word of life, Jesus Christ, all glory to you!
Word of life, Jesus Christ, all praise to you!

GOSPEL:

The Holy Gospel according to St. John chapter 7:37-39 **Glory to you, O Lord**

On the last day of the festival [of Booths], the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."' Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

The Gospel of our Lord, **Praise to you, O Christ**

MEDITATION

Our gospel reading today is probably not a very familiar one. It is a seldom used alternate reading for Pentecost Sunday. It stood out for me initially because of the wonderful image of rivers of living water – the work of the Holy Spirit flowing out of our hearts like rivers of living water. A beautiful live-giving image. On closer reading there was something else that became even more significant. Something one could almost miss: "on the last day of the festival" which given the context of the reading means the festival of Booths. The Jewish festival of Sukkot. Now that's when things clicked for me and I thought this is definitely the reading for Pentecost 2020. Let me explain

During Sukkot – the festival of booths – Jews built and lived in a small shelter made of branches for a number of days. Kind of like a family camping trip in your own

backyard. It is a fun family time, but there is a serious message within the festival. It is a reminder of the 40 years of wandering and camping in the wilderness. A time when the people of God were very vulnerable. It was a time when the people of God were dependent on God's daily care. The festival reminded God's people every year how life can be unpredictable ... how they needed God's care every day.

What a powerful message for God's people today. We are so vulnerable. We need God's care every single day.

I attended a national meeting today – by zoom of course – offering some information on how best return to worship within church buildings. The main presenter was Dr. Robert Strang, the Chief Medical Officer of Health in Nova Scotia. I appreciated how he began his presentation acknowledging that the church is a community of faith not a building ... that church is happening already. And then he began to offer some good advice – based on current knowledge -- about how to make plans to meet together.

Dr. Strang's presentation was in no way a negative spin on our current situation, but it was not very encouraging that life and church life will return to normal anytime soon. Not here and not anywhere else in the world either. The phrase "a new normal" was repeated a number of times. That and the importance of washing your hands (I lost count of the number of times we were reminded of the importance of hand washing!).

I had also been reading an essay that had been recommended to me about worship in our new normal. Pastor Erik Parker in his blog "the Millennial Pastor" offers a fictional *picture of what "going back to church" might look like in these COVID-19 days.* (https://millennialpastor.ca/2020/05/26/so-your-church-is-opening-up-after-covid-19-closures-it-wont-be-what-you-are-hoping-for/?fbclid=IwAR0X02I2Tin0RAZ6inEjmxX2pM5YpnBPBJQ0WvWKJdm8ixAC_6CMsVXF7zA)

Not a comfortable read. Both it and the zoom meeting revealed just how vulnerable and in need of God's care we are. It is as if we are living within the festival of booths or have joined God's people in their years of wandering in the wilderness. Our human fragility has been exposed.

This is no new fragility ... the wandering Hebrews Jesus' disciples shut away in that upper room. Wondering amongst themselves, "What to do? what to do?"

And then there is fire and wind and rivers of living water flowing out. The power of wind, water, and fire that cannot be stopped ... power given to a people who are so powerless, so very vulnerable.

We are vulnerable Our vulnerability is our thirst. But Jesus speaks to us: 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water."' And the rivers of living water are God's strength in our lives. The wind and fire push us out of our places of comfort and give us the language to speak our faith. To speak our faith in the language of those in our lives. AMEN.

SONG "Crashing Waters at Creation"

ELW # 455 v. 1, 3, 4

Crashing waters at creation,
ordered by the spirit's breath,
First to witness day's beginning
from the brightness of night's death.

Cleansing water once at Jordan
closed around the one fore-told,
Opened to reveal the glory
ever new and ever old.

Living water, never ending,
quench the thirst and flood the soul.
Well-spring, Source of life eternal,
drench our dryness, make us whole."

OUR RESPONSE TO THE WORD

- Prayer of Confession

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, let us be reconciled to God and to one another. Gracious God, have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

GOD'S RESPONSE TO US

Hear then God's response: God who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In

the name of + Jesus Christ our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith. **AMEN.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each short prayer will end with the words “Lord in your mercy” and you can make the prayer your own by responding “**hear our prayer.**”

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

We call on your spirit of unity, giving thanks for our different vocations. Activate and utilize the diverse gifts present in your church, that they reveal your love for all. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We call on your spirit of life, present in air, wind, humidity, storms, and oxygen in our atmosphere, breathing energy into all things. Heal with your breath the whole creation, especially those who struggle to breathe due to air pollution. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We call on your spirit of righteousness. Wherever we as a people are divided, unite us. Wherever we are prideful, humble us. Give each one of us a heart for justice and empathy. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We call on your spirit of healing. Bless nurses, doctors, midwives, chaplains, counselors, and hospice workers as they care for those in need. We pray for all who long for comfort especially Clayton, Jennie, Logan, William, Marcus, Brody, Karin, Anthony, Robert, Curtis, Linda, Marci, Earl, Janet, Gayle, Evelyn, Lisa, Danielle, Inger, Deanna, Carol, Wilma, Mary, and all who we name aloud or in the silence of our hearts*(pause so people listening from home can add names)* May God’s loving care bring healing. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We call on your comforting Spirit. Comfort all who grieve especially Kevin Ogilvie and Jann Boyd on the death of Kevin’s son Hery, Georgina Krenn’s family, and the family of Caron Parke. Hold them in your care Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We call on your spirit of friendship. Give us a spirit of welcome to those we know through this congregation and those we meet outside our doors. Surprise us daily with unexpected grace, that we rejoice in every blessing you send. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

We call on your spirit of hope. As you have led your saints in all times and places, stir in us the desire to follow their example, leading us from death to new life in you. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Pastor Marilyn: Knowing how God loves us as a Mother and Father we pray in the words Jesus taught us:

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 forever. 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.

SENDING SONG "God of tempest, God of whirlwind" ELW # 400

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!

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!

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!

Dismissal: the wind and flame tell us – force us -- to get out there ... out of our
places of comfort ... and we have words that tell us that as well

Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord!
Thanks be to God. Alleluia!