

Church of the Divine Love

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

WHITSUNDAY

MAY 23, 2021

10:15 A.M.

HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II

THE WORD OF GOD

Processional Hymn #225 – Hail thee, festival day!

Opening Acclamation for Easter page 355

Collect for Purity page 355

Gloria (S-280 in hymnal) page 356

Collect of the Day - lectionary sheet insert

First Lesson: **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

Second Lesson: **Romans 8:22-27**

Gradual Hymn #516 – Come down, O Love divine

Gospel: **John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

Sermon – The Rev. Jean Lenord Quatorze

Nicene Creed page 358

Prayers of the People, Form VI page 392

The Peace

Welcome and Announcements

THE HOLY COMMUNION

Offertory Hymn – #531 – O Spirit of the living God

The Great Thanksgiving:

Eucharistic Prayer A page 361

Sanctus (S-130 in hymnal) page 362

The Lord's Prayer page 364

The Breaking of the Bread page 364

The Communion of the People

Communion Hymn – #508 – **Breathe on me, Breath of God**

Post Communion Prayer

page 365

Dismissal Hymn #511 – **Holy Spirit, ever living**

Dismissal

Sermon Sunday May 23, 2021

Ezekiel 37: 1-14; Psalm 104: 25-25-35, 37; Romans 8: 22-27; John 15: 26-27; 16: 4b-15

Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need: Hebrews 4: 16.

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today is Pentecost, a day when we celebrate the birth of the church by the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is also a day that launched the church's participation in Jesus' mission to the world. While these things are true, Pentecost was started well before the disciples gathered in the upper room. The disciples of Jesus each had a life-changing experience when they met Jesus and began to follow him. But their hearts and souls were devastated by his tragic suffering, crucifixion, and death. Yet, just three days later, they were shaken again with his risen presence. And then after 40 days, Jesus, seemingly, left them, once again. No doubt, the disciples were terribly unsettled, had unanswered questions, and were completely confused. Nevertheless, they stayed together and waited in the city as Jesus asked them to do. It was then that the Holy Spirit came, the power of God in a roaring wind that shook everything, a divine fire that burned into their deepest selves, into their souls and spirits.

There is a lot of symbolism in Pentecost, a day that celebrated bringing in the first harvest of crops. Viewed through the historic meaning of Pentecost, what happened in Jerusalem was supposed to spread and signal an abundant harvest of people who are born of the Spirit. The wind is significant. The wind is a manifestation of the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit who hovered over the disciples on this day hovered over the void at the dawn of creation. In both cases, it was almost like the Holy Spirit was anxiously and joyously anticipating the new thing God was getting ready to do. The wind signaled that the Spirit was there, and he was about to bring about a new creation, a new type of human made in the new humanity forged by Jesus Christ.

The speaking in different languages is also significant. Pentecost was the great undoing of the Tower of Babel. Back then, humans wanted to advance themselves and create a world apart from God. If left unchecked, the entire world would be united in evil and determined to reject and ignore the redemptive plans God had for humanity. In his mercy, God confused their languages to disrupt their ill-fated plans. At Pentecost, God used languages to bring people to himself. No longer would languages be used to divide people. Now, God would use language to bring people together. Finally, the fire is vital. This fire burned on the disciples signaling that the age of God dwelling in a physical location like the tabernacle and the temple was over. At the inauguration of both the tabernacle and the temple, fire was a symbol God used to signal his presence. So, when the tongues of fire settled upon the disciples, God was announcing a new era. No longer would God's presence rest in a house made of leather or stone. Now, God's dwelling place would be in the hearts of his people. We are his temple, the place where heaven and earth meet, the place where God interacts with humanity.

To properly address the topic of the fire, we need to go back to the spark that caused the fire. Pentecost did not just happen rather; it was ignited years prior. Before he began his ministry, John the Baptist foretold of a coming Fire Starter, and he told us the kind of ministry he would have. Luke writes: John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. (Luke 3:16). As John predicted, the Fire Starter did come, and his ministry was as John predicted. During his ministry, this Fire Starter spoke of his work and how anxious he was for his fire to be lit. In Luke, he states: I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! (Luke 12:49)

As you have likely already guessed, Jesus Christ is the Fire Starter. He is the origin of the fire that blazed on the disciples on the day of Pentecost. It was Jesus' fire that burned in the upper room and signaled the beginning of a new age. Peter, in his message, echoed the voices of the Old Testament writers and called this new era the Day of the Lord, and this new age was ushered in by wind and fire. But what does this mean? Is not fire destructive? Does Jesus' fire bring punishment, judgment, and death? If you listen to how some portray the gospel today, you might conclude the answer would be "yes." There are some who believe and preach that the gospel is about fear. They portray God as angry and vengeful, and we are to obey him to avoid harsh judgment. They teach we should be afraid to disobey. To those with this view, the gospel is not good news but rather a warning of impending doom. Thankfully, this view of the gospel and the Fire Starter do not line up with what we find in Scripture. They don't realize our obedience is a byproduct of our love for him. In the Bible, the qualities of fire are purification, presence, and power. Understanding these three aspects of fire from a biblical perspective will help us understand what the Holy Spirit unleashed on the day of Pentecost.

The fire of Jesus is a purifying fire because it cleanses us of sin. The cross dealt with humanity's sin once for all time. However, because sin still causes pain, God works in each of us to help us turn away from the things that hurt us or cause us to turn away from him. The fire is not violent, burning our sin away and harming us in the process. Rather, Jesus is a warm hearth fire inviting us to shed our sin like someone in the Northern Hemisphere would shed a heavy winter coat when sitting in front of a cozy fireplace. We gladly give up the parts of us oriented away from God in response to his goodness. We lose our taste for sin as we experience God's love, mercy, and grace. The fire of Jesus symbolizes the enduring presence of God. When God called Moses to shepherd his people out of Egyptian slavery, he appeared to him as a burning bush. Later, when the Israelites were leaving Egypt and did not know where to go, God appeared in a cloud by day and fire in the sky at night. When they arrived at the place in the desert where God wanted to interact with them, God revealed himself as a mountain on fire. From the earliest seeds of our faith, God has used fire to symbolize his presence. The fire that appeared on Pentecost signaled that God was with his disciples now and forever. The qualities of Jesus' fire work together in everyone who follows Christ. When God gives us faith in Jesus, he purifies and burns away the things that are not him so we can see him clearly. Then, he kindles the fire of his enduring presence, drawing us nearer to him and reminding us continually that we are children of light.

Living our faith means that we, like the first apostles, must have the humility to allow God to give us some knowledge beyond the grasp of the human mind. Living our faith means that we be willing to leave that safe place, our own Upper Rooms. Living our faith means trusting in the dynamism of God that is the Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit! Give us the courage we need to proclaim Christ. Come Holy Spirit! Give us the ability to speak to peoples' hearts with powerful words, mystical words, words we might not know but words that come from you. Come Holy Spirit! Be the dynamism of God within us.

May we be people of Pentecost. May God bless us to burn as brightly. May he cause us to spread that fire in our communities. May that fire purify us, remind us of his presence, and fill us with his power all for his glory. **Amen!**

THE DAY OF PENTECOST/WHITSUNDAY

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
(also on zoom)

11:15 AM VESTRY MEETING
(also on zoom)

MONDAY

8:00 AM AA MEETING

WEDNESDAY

7:00 PM AL-ANON MEETING

THURSDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

8:00 PM AA MEETING

SATURDAY

10AM-2PM THRIFT SHOP

TRINITY SUNDAY/FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

10:15 AM HOLY EUCHARIST, RITE II
(also on zoom)

SUPPORT THE FOOD DRIVE DROP-OFF IN THE KITCHEN

SAVE THE DATE OUTDOOR THRIFT SHOP SALE

10AM-2PM SATURDAY, JUNE 12TH

Prayer for Grace and Favor :

Dear God, we ask that you provide for our needs, we ask for your grace and favor. We pray for your blessings to cover us; we pray that you would help us to prosper and make every plan that you have birthed in our heart to succeed.

We pray that others would take notice of your goodness and could not help but say, "these are the ones that the Lord has blessed." Shine your light in us, through us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us.

May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing. In Jesus Name, Amen.

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Barbara Curran	Girard Bishop
Arlene Goodenough	Margaret
Frances & Donna Mongelli	Bernie Walther
Nathan Treadwell	Irene
Tyler Gorman	Kim
Chris Dickson	Mo 'Rachael'
Michael Echevarria	Warren
Andy	Bill Conklin
Michael & Family	Anthony Paribello
Martinisi Family	Edward Lent
Lois Kessler	Kate Jones
Kathleen	Del
John Loubengeiger	

Children who are ill:

Franklin Tenesaca	Christopher and his family
Aidan	Ciara
	Gabriel