

Service for Sunday, May 31, 2020

Since many of you are unable to view today's worship service, lessons, a short message, and prayers for this day are provided for your devotion.



Greeting

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

The Word

The 1st reading is from the Book of Acts, the 1st Chapter.

¹When the day of Pentecost had come, [the apostles] were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? I our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

¹⁴But Peter 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. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was

spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷'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 shall see visions,
and your old shall dream dreams.

¹⁸Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' " (Acts:1-3, 5-6, 11b-21)



Today's second reading is from the 12th Chapter of 1st Corinthians.

^{3b}No one can say “Jesus is Lord” except by the Holy Spirit. ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

¹²For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free, women and men—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3b-13)

Today’s Gospel is from the 20th Chapter of John. **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Alleluia. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love. *Alleluia.*

¹⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” ²⁰After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As Abba God has sent me, so I send you.” ²²When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (John 20:19-23)

The Word of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

The Message

In the very first semester of my seminary studies my first course was Greek. This course was extremely challenging, and there were days I said that I needed to quit, because I couldn’t do the Greek. I was encouraged by my husband, Scott, and friends, and especially by my Greek professor, Dr. Eric Barreto. Dr. Barreto said this to me, “Not all people have the same gifts. Some have gifts of preaching, or teaching, or caring, or

serving. And there are those whose gift is the study and understanding of Greek. You cannot possibly have every single gift God has made.” That was the exact thing I needed to hear at that time. Those words, I’d heard several times, but they were never more important to me than at that time. And by the way, I passed Greek and do use it when I prepare sermons and enjoy it – sometimes!

In Sundays and Seasons, a church leader reference, we read:

Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the Holy Spirit as God’s presence within and among us. In Acts the Spirit arrives in rushing wind and flame, bringing God’s presence to all people. Paul reminds us that though we each have different gifts and abilities, we are unified in the Spirit that equips us with these gifts. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples, empowering them to forgive sin. We celebrate that we too are given the breath of the Holy Spirit and sent out to proclaim God’s redeeming love to all the world.

The Bible is filled with stories of the Holy Spirit, both in the Old and New Testaments. The Spirit was given to the early followers of Christ in different ways. Some Scripture tells us the Spirit was sent through the rush of wind, or tongues of fire upon the followers’ heads, by Jesus’ breath upon them as the Lord entered through a closed door, or the hearing and understanding of prayers in multiple languages. No matter how she came to Christ’s first disciples, we can be sure the Holy Spirit is a leader and guide and a protector and refuge. The Spirit is also known in your life, for she is not only a gift to those of present during the early years of Christianity. She has come to us in the promise and life of the same baptism through which all others have been washed and renewed.

Whether the Spirit is the breath of the Lord, or a tongue of fire upon you, it really doesn’t matter how we received these gifts. It’s important to be aware that these gifts are not for “getting in good” with others. Please remember that because of the Spirit, we are empowered to do the work of God through these abilities given to us. The power of the Holy Spirit is what allows us to be like Jesus Christ, as much a humanly possible, and to give to others with grace and mercy according to OUR gifts and according to THEIR needs. Our gifts and their needs!!!

There's something else that is our link to Spirit; we are interconnected – interconnected with all other members of the church. Not just Elim, nor Fargo, or the United States, but with the whole Christian church on earth. Connected as various parts of the church, as preachers, teachers, music directors, custodians, those involved with food prep, office administrations, altar people, singers, readers, students, outreach – the list of our abilities is long and the lists of our neighbors' needs are even longer. Just as an arm is part of your body, reaching out to others with love, we are also reaching out and doing the work of the church. Just as a leg is part of your body, we are walking to one another where help is needed. Just as you have lips, tongues, and vocal cords, we use these to share the Word of Christ with those who need to hear the message of love and service.

Every single part of our bodies is united within us in order to live and function as our bodies were meant to. Wouldn't it be strange if our teeth were unable to process food that went into our digestive systems? What if our hearts pumped but that very pumping didn't work together with our lungs to accomplish life giving breath? We'd be a mess if all the parts of our bodies were not in sync with one another.

Each of our body parts work together giving us life and breath. And we, as individuals, work together as one within the body of Christ. We are one by the Spirit's power. We must work together as the one body of Christ for the love of the whole church universal and for the well-being of all. May the message of Pentecost be rooted in your hearts and in your minds and souls. May the tongues of fire and the winds of God in the Spirit send you forth to a world where there are needs too numerous to count. May you recognize your gifts as a means of loving your neighbor. And may you know that your gifts, unique to you, are to be used to share the same love as the Holy Christ who came to save the world. Amen.



Hymn

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah they'll know we are Christians by our love

We will work with each other, we will work side by side
We will work with each other, we will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity and save each man's pride
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah, they'll know we are Christians by our love.

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity will one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love
Yeah they'll know we are Christians by our love

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Prayers of the People

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, hospice workers, and all other essential workers, as they care for those in need, especially during this time of a global pandemic. We pray for all who long for comfort, especially Daniel Strand – nephew of Scott and Pastor Carol Strand, Sarah VanRaden, Bonnie Duggan, Jeanne Roen, Hazel Spiering – Kerri Spiering’s mother, Edna Mae Lewis, Judy - Curt Meyer’s sister, Doug Nordland - family/friend of Derek Miller, Rose – Lenora Scheer’s niece, Greg Turner, Fern Softing, Brandon - Victoria Savanh’s cousin, and all others who need our care. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We call on your spirit of friendship. As Elizabeth welcomed Mary to her home, give us a spirit of welcome to those whom we meet in this congregation and outside these 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.

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together the prayer that Jesus teaches us.

Our Father, who art in heaven hallowed by thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread and

forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

Blessing and Sending

May the One who brought forth Jesus from the dead
raise you to new life every day, fill you with hope,
and turn your mourning into dancing.

Almighty God, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit,
bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Christ is risen. Christ is beside us. Christ is with us,
through the power of the Spirit. Go in peace.

Now send us forth to share with all in need the gifts we've each been given

Thanks be to God.

