

Sunday, May 19, 2024 – Pentecost Sunday

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Introduction

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.

Prayer of the Day

Mighty God, you breathe life into our bones, and your Spirit brings truth to the world. Send us this Spirit, transform us by your truth, and give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

First Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

¹The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. ²He led me all around them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. ³He said to me, "Mortal, can these bones live?" I answered, "O Lord GOD, you know." ⁴Then he said to me, "Prophecy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. ⁵Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. ⁶I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD."

⁷So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. ⁸I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. ⁹Then he said to me, "Prophecy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live." ¹⁰I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

¹¹Then he said to me, "Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, 'Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely.' ¹²Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. ¹³And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my

people. ¹⁴I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.”

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

²⁴How manifold are your works, O LORD!

In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

²⁵**Yonder is the sea, great and wide, with its swarms too many to number,
living things both small and great.**

²⁶There go the ships to and fro,
and Leviathan, which you made for the sport of it.

²⁷**All of them look to you
to give them their food in due season.**

²⁸You give it to them; they gather it;
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.

²⁹**When you hide your face, they are terrified;
when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.**

³⁰You send forth your Spirit, and they are created;
and so you renew the face of the earth.

³¹**May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
O LORD, rejoice in all your works.**

³²You look at the earth and it trembles;
you touch the mountains and they smoke.

³³**I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;
I will praise my God while I have my being.**

³⁴May these words of mine please God.
I will rejoice in the LORD.

^{35b}**Bless the LORD, O my soul.
Hallelujah!**

Second Reading: Acts 2:1-21

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? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene,

and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in 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, 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. 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 men shall see visions,
and your old men 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.’ ”

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

[Jesus said,] ²⁶“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. ²⁷You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

^{16:4b}“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹²“I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. ¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.”

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.

A brief silence.

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. 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. 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 tech 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.

A reflection for this Day of Pentecost

The Holy Spirit's Groaning

Few sounds capture a groan like birth pangs. It is the raw sound of life and birth as well as of pain. It is the guttural desire for the end of the waiting for what has been anticipated and desired. For any who have been present through such an event, it is difficult to ever forget. It is in equal parts beautiful, stunning, and holy, as well as raw, painful, and horrific. "Creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves . . . groan inwardly while we wait for adoption," writes Paul to the church in Rome. He describes aptly that painful wail of our souls for the redemption we know so well, the restoration of all things promised in Christ. As Lutherans we know this all too well as the "now but not yet" proposition of our faith. We have been told of the return of the Messiah. We prepare for this coming and see how the whole of creation groans for her own restoration. We join this creation waiting for our own hearts, souls, and bodies to be restored. We know this is coming and as in pains of labor groan for this reality. While we wait, we are given a midwife, a Spirit of God to join us in our waiting for the birth of a new world and a new reality. This gift is given this day, the day of Pentecost. May the Spirit join us in our cry to God, eagerly awaiting the begotten, the Son of God, Jesus.



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