



GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

OF SOUTH BURNABY, BC

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN CANADA

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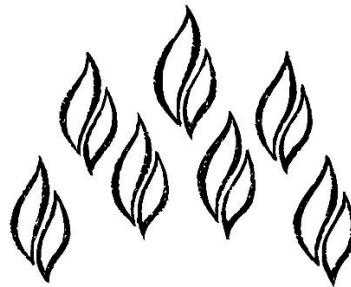
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Day of Pentecost

May 19, 2024

Now the Feast and Celebration

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.

We at Grace Lutheran Church strive to reflect and proclaim the love of God shown to us by Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit by providing an inclusive and supportive environment through loving care and community service.

A warm welcome to all who are worshipping with us in person or online! We appreciate your contribution to the community today: with your voice, your presence, and just the blessing that you are. May you be nurtured by God's Word, empowered by the love of Christ, and stirred by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit in this service this day, for the sake of God's mission in the world.

Grace Lutheran Church worships, prays, and serves on the traditional and unceded lands and territories of the hə́nqəmíñəm (Musqueam) and Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) speaking peoples.

GATHERING

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL TO WORSHIP

We gather this day in awe and wonder of the wisdom and works of God. All of creation marvels at all that God has made, all lands, seas, and creatures great and small. God gracious provides and breathes life and love into us all. So we join together in worship and rejoicing of this awesome God, we sing to the Lord of hosts, and we will praise and bless God's holy name, Hallelujah!

Amen. Thanks be to God.

GATHERING HYMN: Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading (#401)

GREETING

The unifying grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the uniting love of God, and the ubiquitous communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

NOW THE FEAST (p. 4)

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Gracious God, you enter the world and reside among us and lead us through your Spirit, your Son, and your very self. Continue to reveal your wisdom and justice to us, that assurance and hope can be found in your name. And may we find your love in community and peace, allowing us to live in thanksgiving and gratitude, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 37:1-14

A reading from Ezekiel.

The Hebrew word rendered as ruach means "spirit," "wind," or "breath." This reading plays on the different meanings of the word. Just as the dry bones in Ezekiel's vision are given new life, flesh, and breath (or spirit), so God will give the exiles God's own spirit and will bring them home to the land of Israel.

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.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: 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

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.

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.’ ”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (p. 8)

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

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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.

[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.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

Holy God, send again your Spirit upon us, upon this place, and upon our hearts, that we might see and accept your wisdom, your love, and your hope revealed to us all, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

So our younger two kids had their Sports Day this last Friday, and before the day I was a little worried about a rumour that I heard about around the changes that were going to make. What I heard was they were going to take away the points that the teams would receive for the different events, so instead of Sports Day being a friendly competition to win, it was going to just be fun and games. No first-place winners, no recognition for athletic prowess, no accolades for the victors of the day.

Now, that might not sound like a big deal to the general populace, and it technically doesn't affect me whatsoever, but I just didn't like this change. I felt like something would be missing from the day with this change. Well, maybe not for that three quarters of the student body weren't going to win, this change would be great for them. But for that one quarter that would win, well this change kind of sucks.

And maybe that's why I don't like this change, because for most of my elementary school life, I was in that one quarter that usually came in first. Not to brag or anything, and I know that team effort and all, but it didn't hurt that I was extremely good at sports. I was fast, agile, and freakishly strong. Puberty and an untimely growth spurt eventually took all that away from me, but in elementary school I was a force to be reckoned with.

So I loved Sports Day back then, because to me, I was on top, the cream of the crop so to speak, the bee's knees. At the time, it was just my area of expertise, my niche, where I had the most power and respect. But I get it, the school wants to make sure that the kids feel the joy in just playing with each other in general, not just feel the extremes in the thrill of victory or the sting of defeat. They want to take away that competitive spirit that seems to turn people into these nasty annoying braggarts, and teach them that kids aren't defined by their athletic ability or lack thereof. They want to do away with that systemic hierarchy of power that comes from competition, and lift up the equality and equity of the whole student body.

Still, the change stings a little. Because now in one of the few areas that I excelled in, I'm made to look mediocre. With this new way, we who were good at these pseudo sports games are now basically told that we aren't really that good. We who had power and might, now have it taken away by this change.

Then I showed up for Sports Day and it turned out that they didn't make that change at all. Crisis averted, I guess.

But that visceral reaction I had to a rumour that didn't even come to pass made me think about change and why it is so hard for us. And don't you tell me that change isn't hard. This is a Lutheran church after

all, I know how resistant we are to change with the exception of that initial change that happened just over 500 years ago... Change has always been difficult for us, not just Lutherans but people in general. Especially when that change means that we won't have what we had before. Be it possessions, privilege, or power. Change is just hard.

When things change in unfavourable ways, when things result in a loss for us, when we feel less than we were, we just want to change it back. We want to hold onto what was. We want to preserve what we know, what we like, and what works well for us. We hear about mid-life crises and people trying to recapture their youth. We see people jumping into rebound relationships soon after a break up. We read about the disciples even, working to replace Judas to keep their magic number of 12.

I know, that story happened last week, but it still applies to today, Pentecost Sunday. See all the readings that we get for today, which are very similar to the readings we get every Pentecost Sunday, are about change and loss. And while it might seem like everyone is trying to get things back to the way they were, with Ezekiel bringing life back to those dry bones, to the disciples trying to recapture Jesus in their lives, and Jesus reassuring them that things will be ok when he's gone, it sounds like change is inevitable, unavoidable, and uncomfortable. Granted, these are pretty big changes, from the death of a mentor, the death of a movement, the death of a nation and institution. Death is the big change that affects us all, takes away from us all, and will happen to us all.

That's what Jesus was preparing his disciples for with this other portion of the "Farewell Discourse," similar to what we had last week. Jesus knows that he is about to leave, he knows that things will change for his disciples, he knows that it'll be uncomfortable. So he promises them that while things will be different, they will be better because good things will still come to them, they will still grow and learn and become stronger, they will still have Jesus with them, present in the Spirit.

And that is the promise we get in these readings, this is the hope that we have in Christ, this is the result of the Spirit entering our lives on Pentecost and beyond. In everyone's hopes of recapturing what was, in the attempts of reliving the past, in the want of resurrecting the life that we had before death, we are given the Spirit that joins us all, past, present, and future, into the same community and kingdom of God that lasts forever.

I know, this doesn't really help in the discomfort of change. But it does remind us that just because there is change, that doesn't mean it's bad. Just because there is loss, that doesn't mean we are less. Just because things are different, that doesn't necessarily mean that we are. Not in who we are, not in whose we are, not in our identity and belonging as God's people.

See the thing that we might not really get in the Acts reading at first glance is how timeless this message and promise of the Spirit is. As the text tells us of the groups represented in that upper room, all those difficult to pronounce places that had people visiting from, what we might not have known is that even at this time, those places were difficult to pronounce... because many of them would have been largely unknown and actually already long gone. They listed some dead cultures, some ancient-to-them-even-in-these-ancient-times places, regions that they themselves may have never heard of.

What does this mean then?

It means that the Spirit isn't limited to certain times. It means that who we are in God's promises of community and inclusion spans throughout and past any boundary that we might have set up for ourselves. It means that even in the midst of change and death, who we are as God's people, our regard in God's love, the good news of God's grace and salvation remains the same.

So as I think about the change that that we face, when I see the difficulties and discomforts that life continually brings, when I look at the death that will inevitably come, whether it be something as

frivolous as Sports Day or something more life altering like the actual death of a loved one, I am graciously and divinely reminded that who I am as a child of God is unchanging, unfaltering, and will last as long as God's love for me will, which is forever.

As it is with all of us. We all will face change both welcome and not. We all will feel discomfort around losing power and privilege and things being different. We all will eventually come to the point of death, either of a loved one or ourselves. But in all of that we can be reassured in the promise of the Spirit, the Spirit that joins us together in all times and places, calling us joint-heirs of the gospel and the body of Christ in the world. Our story doesn't end when we do. Our identities don't change when the world does. The message of the gospel and salvation remains steadfast for all time, reassuring us, securing us, and bringing us all peace in the midst of discomfort and death.

So as we move into this season after Pentecost, the time of church growth and church change, may we be strengthened by the unchanging promises of God in the Spirit, that we might always know of the presence of Christ in and around our lives. Thanks be to God. Amen.

HYMN OF THE DAY: O Holy Spirit, Root of Life (#399)

CREED (p. 9)

Together with all those joined by the Spirit, let us confess the Christian faith with the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.*
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Led into community peace, let us pray for the church, the world, and all those in need. Each petition will end with, "God, by your gracious Spirit," and you may respond with **hear our prayer**. God, by your gracious Spirit, **hear our prayer**.

God of life, by your works and through your wisdom you have made and provided for us all we need for community and relationship, allowing us to gather and praise your name. At the same time, we find joy in our diversity and multifaceted gifts. Continue to instill your Spirit in all congregations and churches, empowering us all to love you and neighbour for the sake of your gospel. We lift up in prayer this day our neighbouring faith communities; those that use this

building for worship, work, and play; our full communion partners: the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Moravian Church in Canada; and our bishops, rostered ministers, congregations, and ministries of the ELCIC. In particular, we pray for Grace Lutheran Church in Dawson Creek and their interim pastor Marilyn Carroll of the United Church; and for Deo Lutheran Church in Salmon Arm and their pastor Erik Bjorgan. God, by your gracious Spirit, **hear our prayer.**

God of love, you created this earth and filled it with creatures both great and small, and you show us how to live together in harmony and mutual respect. May our care for this planet as its stewards reflect the love that you have first showed us, and may its beauty always reveal to all your wondrous face and presence among us. God, by your gracious Spirit, **hear our prayer.**

God of community, your glory endures forever and we rejoice in your works of justice and peace. Be with all world leaders, politicians, and people of influence, that your wisdom reign throughout the nations. We pray especially for the continued support of those that we've sponsored to come into this country: Abraham Barhane; and Solyana Amanuel; as well as for those that have not yet arrived: Maekele Kiflu, Selam Haile, and their children; and Filimon Abraha. God, by your gracious Spirit, **hear our prayer.**

God of wholeness, you give us our being and we sing your praises for as long as we live. Bring healing to all in mind, body, and spirit, and especially be with those among us who are sick, who mourn, or who feel lonely, that our hope and community be steadfast and life giving. We pray particularly for Ron, Tess, and Mineko; Beulah; Bryan and Chona; Kathy and Raj; Bev and family; Phil; John and Betty; Kristen; Sukhwant; Kristina; Laura; Kandie; Thomas Will; Chris; Larry; Walter; Piet; Pat and Patty; Hwee Yang; Ephraim; and all those we name aloud or quietly in our hearts at this time...

God, by your gracious Spirit, **hear our prayer.**

God of eternal joy, we rejoice in all that you do and our souls bless your holy name. Remind us always of our connection to you and all the saints, and may we revel in that community that provides the life that truly is life, now and forever. God, by your gracious Spirit, **hear our prayer.**

Into your hands, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your Spirit that is with us and guides us always, through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

DIALOGUE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It indeed right, our duty, and our joy, that we should at all times and places give thanks and praise to you, O God, through our Saviour Jesus Christ, who introduces us to your Spirit that joins us together in service and worship with all the choirs of angels, the hosts of heaven, and the whole church on earth, where we can praise your name with this unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (p. 11)

GREAT THANKSGIVING

O Lord your works are wonderful and wise and you create great things by your might and authority. All of creation looks to you as you provide nourishment and sustenance for our souls, upon which we lean on, rely, and gather strength. You send forth your Spirit to us to renew us with the love shown to us through your Son Jesus, who lived among us as one of us to reveal your enduring glory and forgiving grace.

For on the night that he was betrayed, your Son Jesus sat with his friends for a meal and took some bread, gave thanks, broke and shared it and said, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me."

And after they ate, he took the common cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them to drink from saying, "this cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me."

It is in this food that we share where we can see the Spirit working in and through us, even as we proclaim this mystery of faith:

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

O Lord, we shall sing to you for as long as we live, for all blessing, honour, and praise are yours, through Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER (p. 13)

Joined together as one body by the Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

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.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see, the Spirit residing with and among us all.

Thanks be to God.

COMMUNION

COMMUNION HYMNS: Lamb of God (p. 14)

Spirit of Gentleness (#396)

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Holy God, we give you thanks for giving us your Word of life, joining us by your Spirit, and empowering us to be your people in the world. May we always rely on your promises of grace and steadfast love, and may we continually praise you throughout our lives, through Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit. **Amen.**

BLESSING

May God our Shepherd who leads and guides us, hold us in truth and freedom,
God the Saviour who lifts us up in community, bring you hope and grace,
and God as Spirit who flows through us all, bless you with peace, grant to you love, and breathe in you the life that truly is life, now and forever.

Amen.

SENDING SONG: God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind (#400)

DISMISSAL

Go in peace, joined in Spirit and in love.

Thanks be to God.