

Pentecost - Whitsunday - Year B - 24th May, 2015

The power and significance of the Pentecost celebration is impossible to overstate, and this year the readings really reveal how far this gift of God's Spirit reaches. Pentecost is not just about a few individuals receiving a euphoric experience. Rather, the outpouring of God's Spirit reveals a whole new order for the entire cosmos!

May our celebration this year empower us and open us to find our place in the glorious, God-sustained unity of creation.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Acts 2 : 1-21

In Jerusalem, many pilgrims had come for the great Pentecost Harvest Festival. As Jesus had promised, the Holy Spirit of God came upon the gathered company of disciples with great power. They found themselves impelled to proclaim the resurrection Gospel to everyone who would listen.

or **Ezekiel 37 : 1-14**

At the time of Ezekiel, Jerusalem was derelict and the land laid waste. In a vision he sees nothing but dried-up bones, until the breath of God - the Spirit of God - fills the valley with life. It is a sign that God will give new life to his people Israel.

Romans 8 : 22-27

We live with all our hopes founded on God, longing for him, but it is hard for us to know how to pray. Paul's assurance is that the Holy Spirit continues to work in the church and the world, and he will make known to God everything we mean.

or **Acts 2 : 1-21 as above.**

John 15 : 26-27, 16:4b-15

Jesus's teaching about the Holy Spirit describes him as one who represents Christ to us, revealing to us many truths about the world and about God, leading us into all truth.

Click here to view the readings

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Acts%202:%201-21%0A%2BOR%0AEzekiel%2037:%201-14%0Acw%20Psalm%20104:%2026-36,%2037b%0ARomans%208:%2022-27%0A%2BOR%0AActs%202:%201-21%0AJohn%2015:%2026-27,%2016:4b-15

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

God,
who as at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people,
by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit;
Grant us by the same Spirit
to have a right judgment in all things,
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour,

who liveth and reigneth with thee,
in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, world without end.

Collect Two

Almighty God,
who on the day of Pentecost
sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,
filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:
By the power of the same Spirit
strengthen us to witness to your truth
and to draw everyone to the fire of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Presider or deacon

The Spirit of God aids us in our weakness and teaches us to pray. In the power of the Spirit let us offer prayers to God for the needs, concerns, and hopes of all the world.

Deacon or other leader

For peace from on high and for our salvation.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the newly baptized illumined by the light of Christ.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For *N* our bishop and the presbyters, the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For all those in need, the suffering and the oppressed, travelers and prisoners, the dying and the dead.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

Remembering our most glorious and Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who transforms our lives and makes us new. Hear our prayers which we offer in confidence and breathe upon us with your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

When we pray for others, it is our contract to try and serve them. Let us pray.

In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we seek your blessing, God, on your church in its service to the world.

Come Holy Spirit, come with healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Work, holy Helper, in our own denomination, and within the others around us. Especially bless and encourage those with whom we feel the least affinity, that we may see your Spirit at work in them and have the grace to give thanks.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Bless those congregations that are facing radical change, the ones who are teetering on the threshold of new possibilities and must make difficult decisions. May they choose well and step forward with courage.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Inflame with your love congregations which have become lukewarm, and any members whose faith, hope and love have grown cold. May they recover their first love and find once more the sheer joy of living as your own children.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Bless your church in its service to the wider community and world. Guide and inspire those special church agencies which care for the homeless, the social misfit, the prisoner, the addict, the refugee, the broken family, the hungry and the abused.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

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Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Inspire your contemporary prophets who challenge unfairness and corruption; those who work within community organisations, and some who serve from within political parties, that our land and all lands, may find greater justice and peace.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Be the wise Counsellor to the priests and pastors of all denominations, and send your Spirit of truth upon Biblical scholars, theologians, and ethicists, that they may prove capable in facing the complex issues of these days.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

Loving God, please be to each of us the Helper in times of weakness, the Guide when circumstances confuse us, the Warmth when our hearts feel cold, the Counsellor when we need straightening out, the Comforter when hearts are broken, the Fire when our faith ebbs low, and the Light when deep darkness falls.

Come Holy Spirit, come healing breath of the risen Christ,

Come, sweep us with your wind and inflame us with your love.

POST COMMUNION

Faithful God,
who fulfilled the promises of Easter
by sending us your Holy Spirit
and opening to every race and nation the way of life eternal:
Open our lips by your Spirit,
that every tongue may tell of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

PRAYERS

Holy God,
you spoke the world into being.
Pour your Spirit to the ends of the earth,
that your children may return from exile
as citizens of your commonwealth,
and our divisions may be healed
by your word of love and righteousness. Amen.

Empowering God,
you gave the church
the abiding presence of your Holy Spirit.
Look upon your church today and hear our petitions.
... *Petitions...*
Grant that, gathered and directed by your Spirit,
we may confess Christ as Lord

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and combine our diverse gifts with a singular passion
to continue his mission in this world
until we join in your eternal praise. Amen.

Creator Spirit and Giver of life,
make the dry, bleached bones of our lives
live and breathe and grow again
as you did of old.
Pour out your Spirit upon the whole creation.
Come in rushing wind and flashing fire
to turn the sin and sorrow within us
into faith, power, and delight. Amen.

Holy Spirit,
you poured yourself out on the people of the early church, pour yourself out on us now.
Holy Spirit you set their tongues on fire with languages so as to speak to one another in
ways that could be understood.
Set our tongues on fire to speak in different languages and ways so others may hear the
good news about Jesus.
Jesus,
you said you had to go away so that the Holy Spirit, the advocate, the counselor would
come and it was so.
Come once again Holy Spirit as the advocate that we all need, as the counselor we all
need, and as the helper we all need.
Come Holy Spirit, fan your flames of love and empowerment, set us on fire for you once
again. Bring life to each of our dry bones.
Amen

Three meditations for Pentecost

<http://www.edgeofenclosure.org/mysticaljourney/pentecostday.html>

PRAYER FOR CHILDREN

Holy Spirit, our God-Friend,
thanks for always being with us.

You are like the wind
that blows away the smog
from our mind and soul.
You are like the fire
that makes us enthusiastic
for Jesus and his way of loving.
You are like the breath of Jesus
that helps us to forgive
those who do wrong to us.

Holy Spirit, our God-Friend,
Fill us to day.

Amen!

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

Acts 2:1-21

- I have to admit - speaking in tongues is something that I don't connect to, don't understand, and frankly, usually don't take seriously. My only witnessing of speaking in tongues has left me more than a little skeptical. But I can't deny its frequent presence in the scriptures - so where does that leave me? Last year, a girl of approximately 9 year of age read this passage in church on Pentecost, and she whipped through Phrygia and Pamphylia like they were her hometowns. It was amazing. If I think about her reading this passage so flawlessly, I think I can get my head a little bit around the idea of speaking in tongues. When an unlikely vessel communicates an even more unlikely message, with unlikely abilities?
- Pentecost. In some ways, these scene is one of the most exciting in the Bible. This is the moment of truth - Jesus is dead, risen, and ascended. The disciples have been taught, prodded, encouraged, but most of all, entrusted with the good news. Will they carry it on? Will they stand up in the face of opposition and accusations? Yes! The start of the church.
- Everyone who calls on God's name will be saved!
- Notice that Peter quotes how God's spirit is poured out on *all flesh*: songs, daughter, young, old, slave free. Seriously, where do we get the idea that God only speaks through some people, who we deem acceptable?

Psalm 104:24-34, 35b

- manifold: many and varied
- Leviathan: same name as Jonah's whale is given - a big sea 'monster'/creature, or just generally a big thing of its kind: the 'Leviathan' of the redwoods would be the biggest of the trees. (check out Dictionary.com)
- The dependence of creation on the Creator. While I don't like to think of God hiding God's face from me, the psalmist makes the point that we are dependent on God.
- "I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being." Amen!

Romans 8:22-27:

- "whole creation has been groaning in labor pains" - I like this image - the whole creation is expecting - in expectation of what God is working in us.
- "wait for adoption" - I'm always torn by Paul's language of adoption. On the one hand, I'm hesitant to think that we're not born into God's family, God's children. I shudder to think that God only adopts some as children, and not others, which is an unfortunate and often drawn conclusion of such theology. But on the other hand, there is a special-ness about God going the 'extra mile', as it were, to make us God's own. Out of God's deep desire to have us as children. I guess I just want to make sure God has no limits or special qualifications for who is adopted! But I can also picture the hope of a child waiting to be adopted.

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- Hope - "we wait for it with patience." Ah, some are better at this than others, no?
- "for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words." Yes, exactly. Thank God for the spirit interceding. God hears us, even if we can't speak it.

John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15:

- "from the beginning" - those he speaks to know the whole story, or apparently all of it Jesus them to know to fulfill their roles.
- :7 "It is to your advantage" - I doubt the disciples saw it this way. Who wants a weird-sounding Advocate instead of Jesus who they know and love?
- "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." *Bear*, from the Greek *bastazo*[^], meaning, to lift up, to bear in mind, to consider. Perhaps this statement from Jesus still applies to us today - Jesus is always wanting to fill us in, share more, but we are never able to bear it, it seems.
- "When the Spirit of truth comes, [it] will guide you into all the truth." What a unique way of phrasing this - "*all* the truth" (emphasis added). What is *all* the truth?
- The Spirit is not speaking things the Spirit comes up with, the Spirit is not originating direction on its own - the Spirit is like a messenger, conveying what is heard, and what is to come. The Spirit is the Vessel for God's communication with us, at least in this interpretation from John. Interesting words for Trinity Sunday . . .

Pastor's Note: (I use the Greek-English Lexicon from Liddell and Scott, the "little Liddell" and the Metzger et. al Greek New Testament in my translation work.)

Rev. Beth Quick.

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

This year the Pentecost celebration has a particular emphasis on how the gift of God's Spirit impacts, not just followers of Christ, or even human beings, but the whole of creation. As usual, the reading from Acts 2 describes the experience of the disciples when they receive God's Spirit. The John reading supports this narrative with the account of Jesus' promise of the gift of the Holy Spirit whose presence and action will be experienced not just by the followers of Christ but also by the world. The life-giving power of the Spirit is also reflected in Ezekiel's prophecy in which God promises to revive and "resurrect" God's people. But, when these readings are placed beside the Psalm, which describes how all of creation depends on God for breath and life, and the Romans passage, which describes all of creation as awaiting the time when God's life flows through God's children, the cosmic implications of this day become clear. The giving of God's Spirit is not just about personal empowerment, or an individual experience of God's presence. It is about God's life and grace flowing into the entire cosmos. It is about followers of Christ being empowered to bring God's resurrection life to the whole of creation, finding our place in the unity of God's universe. The reverse of the Babel confusion of languages is simply an image of the reuniting of all things under Christ by God's Spirit, and the experience which the disciples shared is recognised, in the Scriptures, to be available to all people, and ultimately, to all of creation.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: The message of Pentecost for all creation is further strengthened when we remember that it was originally the feast of first fruits – a thanksgiving for the harvest. Today, we seem to have lost this appreciation for the earth and the life God gives us through it. Rather than taking care to protect and preserve our planet, we debate whether climate change is our fault. Rather than appreciate and care for the resources that our planet provides to ensure sustainability, we exploit the earth to the maximum, damaging the creatures with whom we share the world, and jeopardising our children's future. When we view Pentecost as nothing more than a personal gift of empowerment and presence from God to us, we run the risk of increasing our selfishness and ignoring the wider call of God for which we have been empowered. But, neither we nor our world can afford such self-indulgence. Rather, we need to hear the message of the Scriptures which proclaim that God's "breath" gives life to all creation, and which reminds us that creation longs for us to take our place as Spirit-filled, loving, life-bringing children of God. This means, on a personal level, that part of our spirituality must include making daily choices for simple, sustainable living, and on a global scale, it must mean that we work, in whatever capacity we can, for governments, corporations and communities to make choices for sustainability and planetary care. God's salvation, and the dream of God's Reign, are not just about personal, human restoration. Eternal life is about the entire cosmos brought together in Christ, and this is the Pentecost challenge this year.

LOCAL APPLICATION: It is unfortunate that Pentecost has largely been presented, in the Church of today, as a personal "second blessing" experience that "fills" or "baptises" us with God's Spirit. There are a number of problems with this view from both a theological and a practical perspective. Theologically, this denies the Scriptural testimony that God is omnipresent. As Richard Rohr says, God is either everywhere or nowhere. Pentecost has to have been less an outpouring of God's Spirit and more an "outpouring" of awareness of God's Spirit that has always been the sustaining breath of creation. From a practical perspective, the individualistic view of Pentecost too often leads to rather un-Christlike attitudes of superiority, judgment and exclusivity. The Pentecost moment, however, is far more far-reaching and significant than just a personal experience of blessing. If we are truly to open ourselves, both as individuals and as communities, to the Pentecost Spirit, we must also open ourselves to our connection with others and with the cosmos – not just with God. This means that we receive God's gift as an empowerment which comes with a responsibility to grow in love, to grow in compassion and respect for other people, for all creatures and for the earth. Then, as we live out of this empowerment, we must inevitably make daily choices in the direction of unity, sustainability, peace and inclusivity.

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"The Church's Hope," the Rev. Dr. Fred R. Anderson, *Day 1*,
http://day1.org/1257-the_churchs_hope

[Pentecost Sermons](#), Pastor Edward F. Markquart, Grace Lutheran Church, Seattle, Washington.
<http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/pentecost.htm>

[Selected Sermon](#), Pentecost (RCL), the Rev. Suzanne E. Watson, in *Sermons that Work*, ECUSA.

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<http://episcopaldigitalnetwork.com/stw/2009/05/?cat=7>

["Breathing Deeply,"](#) the Rev. Shannon Johnson Kershner, *Day 1*.

["What's Gotten into You?"](#) Dianne Bergant, CSA, *America: The National Catholic Weekly*.

["A Living God Present in Spirit and Power,"](#) John R. Donahue, SJ, *America: The National Catholic Weekly*.

Two sermons - 'Our polycarpic God' and 'In our own experience' - by Bruce Prewer - scroll down.

<http://www.bruceprewer.com/DocB/BPENTECOST.htm>

CHILDREN

[Worshiping with Children](#), Day of Pentecost, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown, 2012.

["Sermon of the Week,"](#) / ["Mensajes para ninos."](#) Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Coloring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.

["The Breath of Life,"](#) Children's Time, in Sermons and Liturgies. Richard J. Fairchild. (Scroll down in liturgies to find Children's Time.)

HYMN SUGGESTIONS

Breathe On Me Breath Of God
O Thou Who Camest From Above
Spirit Divine Attend Our Prayers
O Spirit Of The Living God
All Creatures Of Our God And King
Deep Calls To Deep
Breathe (Link to YouTube video)
All Who Are Thirsty (Link to YouTube video)
Spirit Of The Living God (Link to YouTube video)
Shine Jesus Shine (Link to YouTube video)
Your Word