

Day of Pentecost
May 31, 2020
Cross of Glory Lutheran Church
Brooklyn Center, MN

PRELUDE **A Song to the Lamb** *Keith Williams*

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God, whose steadfast love is everlasting, whose faithfulness endures from generation to generation. **Amen.**

Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

Reconciling God,

we confess that we do not trust your abundance, and we deny your presence in our lives. We place our hope in ourselves and rely on our own efforts. We fail to believe that you provide enough for all. We abuse your good creation for our own benefit. We fear difference and do not welcome others as you have welcomed us. We sin in thought, word, and deed. By your grace, forgive us; through your love, renew us; and in your Spirit, lead us; so that we may live and serve you in newness of life. Amen.

Beloved of God, by the radical abundance of divine mercy we have peace with God through † Christ Jesus, through whom we have obtained grace upon grace. Our sins are forgiven. Let us live now in hope. For hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

GATHERING HYMN #627 O Day full of Grace

1 O day full of grace that now we see **2**
appearing on earth's horizon,
bring light from our God that we may be
abundant in joy this season.
God, shine for us now in this dark place;
your name on our hearts emblazon.

verses 1, 2 and 4

O day full of grace, O blessed time,
our Lord on the earth arriving;
then came to the world that light sublime,
great joy for us all retrieving;
for Jesus all mortals did embrace,
all shame and despair removing.

4 God came to us then at Pentecost,
the Spirit new life revealing,
that we might no more in death be lost,
its pow'r over us dispelling.
This flame will the mark of sin efface
and bring to us all true healing.

GREETING

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

KYRIE Pages 98-99

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gracious Lord.

Amen, amen.

HYMN OF PRAISE **page 101**

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God. Power and riches, wisdom and strength, and honor and blessing and glory are his.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation: Blessing and honor, glory and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

For the Lamb who was slain has begun his reign. Alleluia.

This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

PRAYER OF THE DAY The Lord be with you. **And also with you.** *Let us pray . . .*

O God, on this day you open the hearts of your faithful people by sending into us your Holy Spirit. Direct us by the light of that Spirit, that we may have a right judgment in all things and rejoice at all times in your peace, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

SPECIAL MUSIC

O Spirit Bountifully Kind

Keith Williams

NEW TESTAMENT 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:

¹⁷In 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 John 20:19-23

The Holy Gospel according to St. John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

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 the Father 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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON

"THE PROMISE OF PENTECOST"

John 20: 19-23 Acts 2: 1-21

Prayer: Come Holy Spirit our souls inspire. Enlighten us with your celestial fire. For if you are here, nothing else matters. And if you are not here, nothing else matters. Come, Holy Spirit, come. Amen.

During the last two months you and I have experienced a world that has changed! The world we occupy right now has changed. Things have been turned upside down and you and I have been forced to live with the certainty of uncertainty.

Bishop Ann Svennungsen of the Minneapolis Area Synod shares that after the death of their son a few years ago, she and her husband were told by their therapist, "The universe has shifted. You are the parents of a child who has died. You may try to return to your normal life, but it is not possible—everything has changed!" I think the words of this therapist reflect a lot of what we might be feeling at this time. The world has shifted. We have encountered a contagious virus to which no one has immunity. This virus has spread across the globe. As I write this sermon 5,378,402 people have contracted the virus worldwide and 342,840 have died. Our world has changed in just a relatively short time. Because of this, every day brings new questions: How are we to live in this? When can we be together again? How careful do we need to be? You and I can become exhausted by the endless questions and the ever-changing answers. Our world has indeed changed!

Such a changing world is exactly what the first followers of Jesus were experiencing as they gathered together in the upper room. They were hiding in the out of fear that those who crucified Jesus may come after them. They, like, us were experiencing the certainty of uncertainty. And what does Jesus do? Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit upon them! He doesn't fortify the room in which they are in. Jesus doesn't magically take away their problems. He doesn't take them away from Jerusalem. Instead, Jesus sends them out into that dangerous world: "As the Father sent me, so I now send you" (20:21) and then he gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit to create in them the courage they will need to follow Jesus' command. Similarly, in Acts, the disciples are waiting for the gift of the Holy Spirit and, once it comes, they go out to proclaim the good news to people they had good reason to believe would be at least skeptical if not outright hostile to their message. After the Holy Spirit had been breathed on them, these once fearful, doubtful and timid believers went forth with boldness and literally changed their world. By the close of the day on that first Pentecost, the community of believers had grown from 120 to 3000!

In our readings for today, we get the sense that the Holy Spirit isn't some kind of super hero sent to rescue us, but rather the Spirit is the one sent to us from God to comfort, encourage and stay with us - even during times of change and uncertainty because our world has shifted!

Indeed, it is the Spirit that is sometimes referred to as the Comforter. As we deal with the certainty of uncertainty in our lives today, we truly need a power greater than ourselves to understand what we

are going through and to bring us comfort. In his writing to the Romans, (8:26) the apostle Paul affirms that it is indeed God the Holy Spirit who helps us in our weakness and “intercedes for us with sighs and groans too deep for words.”

This has always been one of my favorite passages. It talks of a Spirit who can help even when we have no words to describe our pain and sorrow. I have a friend, David, who has had Covid-19 and recovered several weeks ago. Recently a family member of his died and his other family members did not want him to come to the funeral service. “I am over the disease. I have built antibodies and I am not a threat.” David shared. And then he added, “I feel like a leper. I can’t even mourn with my family.” For David right now the pain is too much. And the Holy Spirit steps in to help.

During this time when our world has shifted, it seems to me that it is very important for us not to negate the power of mourning. When we experience change and loss, one of the greatest tools is the power of mourning - facing our brokenness and acknowledging our hurt. Knowing how to mourn can literally lead us to a new MORNING!

I like what a rabbi once said when a child came to him and asked, “Why is it that God allows our hearts to break?” The rabbi responded, “God allows our hearts to break so God can fill the cracks!” That’s how the light gets in. As we face the fact that our world has changed and that loss of various kinds may exist for us because of this virus, that’s how the light gets in! The Holy Spirit is our Comforter - helping us in our weakness. It brings a new light of hope in our brokenness and uncertainty.

The gift of the Holy Spirit given to each one of us in our baptism, is also the Encourager. The Spirit empowered those early believers and propelled them out of their hiding and fear to reach out in the world to others. It is the same Spirit today which draws us together and unites us as one in Christ.

In this time of Covid-19 we realize that we not only need each other but we need each other even more! Pastors are sharing how people in their congregations who previously attended worship only a few times a year are now expressing their deep desire for the church. Yes, people are yearning to get back to worship and also to be together as God’s people. It is the Spirit that draws us together and we find the Spirit’s nourishment and encouragement in being together as God’s people.

Indeed, it is the Spirit that creates within us a need and a desire for connection. That is why here at Cross of Glory we have wanted to be creative in offering opportunities to have connections even in this time. Before and after we worship by Zoom conversation, people of this congregation are excited to see someone as their picture pops up on the screen to gather for worship. Several members of this congregation have come forward to be callers - that people in this congregation are periodically called to let them know that they matter and that the church family is with them. We need connections. Who cares if you now have a “bouffant” hairstyle! We need each other.

If you don’t already, I pray that during this time you have someone to share with. Find a companion/friend to speak with. Sometimes the greatest blessing in a time of difficulty is to have someone to share with. And why not give the gift of connecting to someone new this week. It is the Holy Spirit that draws us together and encourages us as we come together as God’s people.

Along with comfort and encouragement, it is the Holy Spirit that is God’s presence with us always. Jesus rose from the dead and 40 days later ascended into heaven. Why? So, he could come back in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit to be with us always - not bound by space or time. You see, it is the Holy Spirit that continues the presence, power and work of the risen Christ on earth today. Don’t worry if you don’t understand everything about the Holy Spirit. What is important is that we TRUST that the Spirit is the presence of God with us always - even closer to us than our very breath!

Consider this, while you have been watching this worship you have seen Mark, Keith and me on your screen. But there have been others here with us all the time making this service happen. Ryan Bailey is back in the sound booth. Dawn Bailey and her father Earl Simon sitting in the very back pew. Earl has become our acolyte - making sure the candles are taken care of. Dawn drives Ryan to church and is often running errands for all of us. You don’t see Ryan, Dawn and Earl but this service wouldn’t happen without them. You can’t see them but they have been listening, and encouraging and if this sermon comes out well, they also have been praying!!

So, like the Holy Spirit, these unseen people support us and enable us to do the work before us. You may not see them in the worship frame, but they are here. In like manner, we may not always see, or feel or recognize the Holy Spirit. Yet the Spirit is always present with us - giving us the strength, the courage and the help to make it through. God the Holy Spirit is truly our certainty in uncertainty. Grace and peace. Amen.

HYMN**#800 Spirit of God Descend Upon My Heart****verses 1, 3 and 4**

- 1** Spirit of God, descend upon my heart;
wean it from earth, through all its pulses move;
stoop to my weakness, strength to me impart,
and make me love you as I ought to love.
- 3** Have you not bid me love you, God and King;
all, all your own, soul, heart, & strength, & mind?
I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.
Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!
- 4** Teach me to love you as your angels love,
one holy passion filling all my frame:
the baptism of the heav'n-descended dove,
my heart an altar, and your love the flame.

CONFESSION OF FAITH**Apostles' 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 the PEOPLE

With the whole people of God in Christ Jesus, let us pray for the church, those in need, and all of God's
creation. (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 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 compassion. Lord in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We call on your spirit of healing. Surround our nation and the world as we face new uncertainties
around the coronavirus. Protect the most vulnerable, especially all who are currently sick or in
isolation. Grant wisdom, strength and patience to health care workers and first responders. Give
us courage to face these days not with fear but with compassion, concern and acts of service. Lord
in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We call on your spirit of hope. As you have led your people 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.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy; through
Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OFFERTORY RESPONSE**Holy Spirit**

There's nothing worth more that will ever come close
Nothing can compare You're our living hope
Your Presence

I've tasted and seen of the sweetest of loves
Where my heart becomes free and my shame is undone
In Your Presence Lord

Let us become more aware of Your Presence
Let us experience the glory of Your goodness (Lord)

Worship Team

Holy Spirit You are welcome here
Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere
Your glory God is what our hearts long for
To be overcome by Your Presence Lord

Your Presence Lord
Your Presence Lord, Your Presence
Oh God how we love Your Presence Lord

OFFERING PRAYER

God of goodness and growth, all creation is yours, and your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens. Water and word, wine and bread: these are signs of your abundant grace. Nourish us through these gifts, that we might proclaim your steadfast love in our communities and in the world, through Jesus Christ, our strength and our song. Amen.

WORDS OF INSTITUTION

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, 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.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord remember us in your kingdom and teach us always to pray. **Our father who art....**

COMMUNION

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

God of the welcome table, in this meal we have feasted on your goodness and have been united by your presence among us. Empower us to go forth sustained by these gifts so that we may share your neighborly love with all, through Jesus Christ, the giver of abundant life. Amen.

BENEDICTION

Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. God, the creator, † Jesus, the Christ, and the Holy Spirit, the comforter, bless you and keep you in eternal love. Amen.

SENDING FORTH SONG

The Lord now sends us forth
with hands to serve and give,
to make of all the earth
a better place to live.

#538 The Lord Now Sends Us Forth

The angels are not sent into our world of pain
to do what we were meant to do in Jesus' name;
that falls to you and me and all who are made free.
Help us, O Lord, we pray, to do your will today.

Worship Team

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Christ is with you.
Thanks be to God.

TUESDAY BIBLE STUDY will resume on-line by means of Zoom communication.

We are resuming the Tuesday Bible Study. Each week will reflect on the readings for the upcoming Sunday. If you would like to be a part of this gathering, all you have to do is to send Pastor Lee your email address. (Pastor's email is: 19ldh53@gmail.com) You will be sent an invitation to the meeting. Just click on the link in the email a few minutes before 9:30 a.m. on Tuesdays.