

*Worship Resources - <https://youtu.be/YGKI2qMLiCk>

1st Sunday of Pentecost, Year A, Spirited

31st May, 2020

Acts 2:1-21 CEV / John 7:37-39 CEV

Intro/Prelude *Blessings*, written by Laura Mixon Story,
arranged by Carol Tornquist,
performed by church musician Annie Center,
reported under CCLI streaming license 20261246

<https://youtu.be/jJ0DR4r6atc>

Welcoming/Announcements

Welcome to online worship with Olympic View Community Church. We welcome all of God's children to join us in bearing witness to the radically transforming power of God's love.

We continue to monitor the COVID19 situation in our area and we are committed to ensuring the safety of our church members. Our community has not yet reached a point where it is safe to worship in-person, so we will continue to gather online, and continue to explore new options to fellowship virtually. I will provide updates as time passes, here in our online service, as well as through email and social media. If you have any ideas for other online activities we could explore, please leave a comment in the video description, or email myself or the church office. May we all continue to safeguard our own health, and the health of those around us.

Part of our tradition is sharing words of peace and welcome with each other when we gather. Since we can't greet each other in person to pass the peace of Christ, let's instead think of those we would like to offer peace, whether those in our church family, or others we can think of who would benefit from the sharing of peace today. Feel free to say their names aloud, to pray for peace for them, or simply think a peaceful thought for them silently. Let's take a few moments to pass the peace to others from wherever we are, while we enjoy this musical interlude by Annie.

Interlude - *A Thousand Little Things*, by Point of Grace,
performed by church pianist Annie Center,
reported under CCLI streaming license 20261246
<https://youtu.be/ADbYw-tLeGI>

Let's take a deep breath, quiet our minds and hearts, as we light a candle to represent the Spirit among us. Let us call ourselves to worship.

Call to Worship

The wind at our backs, we entered Jerusalem. Only to watch him die on the cross. It spiraled so quickly. Trial. Torture. Crucifixion. Death.

But on the third day the breath of God blew new life into our futures. Forty days with the risen Jesus.

Before he ascended, Jesus reminded us that the Spirit will come. It was on Pentecost. It was on Pentecost when the wind breathed into each and every one of us.

Invocation

Let us pray:

Sacred breath, move among us. Unlock a song within your people. Breathe into us your hopes and dreams for a world filled with justice, love, and peace. Amen.

Our first scripture this morning is from Acts chapter 2. Listen to these words and reflect on this scene of the fire of the Spirit entering the disciples, and give some thought into how that Spirit might light a fire within us.

Scripture Reading Acts 2:1-21 CEV

On the day of Pentecost all the Lord's followers were together in one place.

Suddenly there was a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind! It filled the house where they were meeting.

Then they saw what looked like fiery tongues moving in all directions, and a tongue came and settled on each person there.

The Holy Spirit took control of everyone, and they began speaking whatever languages the Spirit let them speak.

Many religious Jews from every country in the world were living in Jerusalem.

And when they heard this noise, a crowd gathered. But they were surprised, because they were hearing everything in their own languages.

They were excited and amazed, and said: Don't all these who are speaking come from Galilee?

Then why do we hear them speaking our very own languages?

Some of us are from Parthia, Media, and Elam. Others are from Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia,

Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, parts of Libya near Cyrene, Rome,

Crete, and Arabia. Some of us were born Jews, and others of us have chosen to be Jews. Yet we all hear them using our own languages to tell the wonderful things God has done.

Everyone was excited and confused. Some of them even kept asking each other, "What does all this mean?"

Others made fun of the Lord's followers and said, "They are drunk."

Peter stood with the eleven apostles and spoke in a loud and clear voice to the crowd: Friends and everyone else living in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I have to say!

You are wrong to think that these people are drunk. After all, it is only nine o'clock in the morning.

But this is what God had the prophet Joel say,

"When the last days come, I will give my Spirit to everyone. Your sons and daughters will prophesy. Your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams.

In those days I will give my Spirit to my servants, both men and women, and they will prophesy.

I will work miracles in the sky above and wonders on the earth below. There will be blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

The sun will turn dark, and the moon will be as red as blood before the great and wonderful day of the Lord appears.

Then the Lord will save everyone who asks for his help."

Scripture Video

Acts 2:1-21 The Coming of the Holy Spirit
Peter Addresses the Crowd - Lectionary bible reading,
read and posted to YouTube by Douglas Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bb-F31Pqee8&t=108s>

A Time of Prayer

So as we come to our normal time of sharing prayer together from a distance. I have included Those concerns shared from my conversations with some of you, in our prayer today. If you have items you would like lifted in prayer, please leave a comment below, or email myself at vicarglenn@gmail.com, and I will make sure to include them next week, as well as send a prayer chain email, unless directed otherwise.

Joys and Concerns

This morning, we come to our time of prayer with heavy hearts. We grieve the senseless death of George Floyd, and so many others. We are saddened by this and all acts of violence that injustice creates. May God's Spirit work through us to address the injustice of this world, and guide those working to seek justice.

We also grieve the loss of over 100,000 people to the Coronavirus this week. A number so large it is hard to fathom. May God comfort those who have lost loved ones, and may the Spirit continue to work through and protect those who are working to save lives, as well as those whose vocation exposes them to risk. We express our gratitude for their efforts, and pray for their safety.

We also remember those who continue to struggle with job and financial security in these trying times. May they be supported and strengthened.

Finally, we seek strength and comfort for our own faith community. These times have been tough on many of us, in not having the support and fellowship of our weekly gatherings in person. May the Spirit continue to guide us, and support and strengthen us until we are able to safely meet again.

Join me in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, and fill us with your love. Open our eyes to see the presence of God all around us, in the stillness of this sacred space, in the busyness and noise of our city streets, in the joys and celebrations of our lives, in the tragedies and struggles that break our hearts.

Come, Holy Spirit, and comfort those who grieve.

Grant them the peace that only you can bring. Stir within us a trust in life beyond death, as we ponder the mysteries of Christ's resurrection and the hope we have in new and everlasting life.

Come, Holy Spirit, and bring wholeness to the sick.

Strengthen those who are weak; heal the wounded and broken; give rest to the weary.

Come, Holy Spirit, and inspire our warring world to seek peace, to love our enemies, to put away our weapons, to remember the price paid for our freedom, to care for those who have served.

Come, Holy Spirit, and ignite a fire in our bones, a passion for justice that cannot be quenched until all of your children are loved, until no one is marginalized or oppressed, until everyone has the opportunity to thrive, until the world is transformed and renewed.

Come, Holy Spirit, and revive your church.

Liberate us from complacency and apathy; inspire us with Christ's vision for a world reborn; help us to recognize our gifts for ministry and to use them in service of others; transform our hearts and our minds; fill us with love that overflows; remind us that there is no greater calling than to love you with all that we are and to love our neighbors as ourselves.

Gracious God, give us a glimpse of your kingdom emerging around us and drawing us into the new things you are doing in the world.

It is for your kingdom that we now pray, filled with your Spirit, using the words Jesus taught us.

Continuing with the Lord's Prayer

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be 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, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Our gospel reading this morning shares the analogy Jesus makes between the Spirit and Living Water. As we watch this clip, let's give some attention and thought to how the Holy Spirit nourishes us and meets our needs, or what the Spirit means to us.

Gospel Reading John 7:37-39 CEV

On the last and most important day of the festival, Jesus stood up and shouted, "If you are thirsty, come to me and drink!

Have faith in me, and you will have life-giving water flowing from deep inside you, just as the Scriptures say."

Jesus was talking about the Holy Spirit, who would be given to everyone that had faith in him. The Spirit had not yet been given to anyone, since Jesus had not yet been given his full glory.

Gospel Video John 7: 37-39

Streams Of Life Giving Water | Lectionary bible reading, read and posted to YouTube by Douglas Brown

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CGIqP4G7ZVw>

Message – Spirited

It's been a tough news week, hasn't it? Not only have we topped 100,000 deaths from COVID19, but we have likely all witnessed the images of George Floyd senselessly dying, and then viewed the clips of protests erupting in violence in response to that injustice. But in this pandemic time, it just seems like every week brings some new dire event, some new sign of the fracturing of our world. We seem to be divided as never before.

This ugly bitterness and anger is perhaps a greater and more insidious virus that has been quietly infecting all of us. One whose symptoms are hard to contain. I catch myself getting infected on a regular basis, especially on social media. We get so angry because of the injustice, because of the apparent assault on our values, on what we hold to be important. We often find ourselves on opposite ends of the debate from some in our own families, or from those we considered to be good friends. We can't fathom how they could take that position. It's so unjust, the truth is so obvious. And they can't fathom how we can be on the other side for the same reasons. Emotions run high when fear abounds, whether that fear is rational or not. We fear loss, losing what is most important to us, losing the security of the familiar world we have always known.

Unfortunately, what is safe and familiar for one group of people, is not so safe and secure to another. Therein lies the problem, and it is a problem that is certainly not new. Our history is literally full of the tales of one group emerging victorious over another; of one group taking prominence at the expense of another. Yet, nobody likes to feel like the bad guy or villain in a story. As God's creations, we have an inherent sense of morality. We know when situations are not just. So we find ways to justify our own view, and discredit those of other

groups. We become masters of rationalization. Us versus them becomes justifiable, or deniable. We allow ourselves to be distracted from the elephant in the room. We allow ourselves to be divided, to stay us and them. Most people, deep down, don't like the status quo we've become accustomed to, but feel helpless to change such a systemic problem. But we are people of faith, we are to be led by the Spirit.

On this day of Pentecost, where is the Spirit in all this? Is the Spirit present? Maybe Pentecost is the place to start. Maybe Pentecost means a little more than just the one week of the church calendar that there is red in the vestments and decorations. Sadly, people crawl out of the woodwork to get to church on Christmas Eve and Easter, but Pentecost is barely a blip on our faith radar. It's just that final event after Easter, before we go green and relaxed for the summer and fall. It's like that final hurdle before we can take a breather. But I would argue, from a faith community perspective, no other date on the church calendar is more important.

The argument could even be made that Pentecost was the birth of the church itself. But what made that day so special, so important for that early group of believers? Let's put ourselves in their story. On that Pentecost day, they were gathered together in their upper room in Jerusalem, hiding out together yet again. Yet again, Jesus was gone. The hope they found in Jesus seemed a memory again. The purpose and work that drove them for three years had ended. They were a marginalized group within a marginalized group, wanted by the authorities, scorned troublemakers. The goal they thought they were working towards for years has vanished, and they are left to hide together, waiting for something to change, for some direction in how they could possibly move forward. Into this despair blows the Spirit in a powerful way, so powerful that the event draws a sizable crowd. In an instant, this group locked away in an upper room is transformed: fear becomes boldness, aimlessness becomes clear direction. They have a purpose now, they know what needs said and they say it, in multiple languages they don't even know. It's a symbolic reversal of the separation of the Tower of Babel. There are no longer any "out" groups. Everyone can be "in." As Paul says in his letter to the Galatians, "there is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." Central to the good news was inclusion. The kin-dom of God was meant for all, not just a privileged few. After Peter's sermon in today's reading, 3,000 new believers were added from every corner of the known world, from every race and class. This new movement was all about Spirit-driven work. And that's what made it so attractive.

The early church exploded across the Roman empire because it was an equal opportunity faith. There were no entrance requirements. Your family of birth or the color of your skin had no impact on your eligibility. The Spirit-driven excitement was contagious in those early days. Yet, sadly, we are creatures of habit. We like security, we like to have boxes to put things in. So over time we created boxes for our faith. We made rules and dogma to give that faith an order and routine that we could find familiar and could understand from our human perspective. Unfortunately, all too often we put the Spirit in a box too. If the movement of the Spirit didn't fit into our nice ordered way of things, then we too often just

pushed it out of the way and moved on. We didn't forget about it, we still remember it in creeds and songs, and talk about seeking the Spirit's guidance.

Yet somehow over time we became separate groups again. Our churches largely became homogeneous groups of people from the same secular groups. The voices that sought to divide us in the world outside subtly divided us within the larger church as well. Some of us became part of the “in” crowd in the secular world, and we learned to like it, and found ways to justify and rationalize our parts in it. The unity of that first Pentecost faded from our collective memories, and we found ourselves back in the inequality and injustice that is the antithesis of God's intentions. The Spirit never left us but we chose to make it something we observed at our convenience. The results are clear to see all around us: the vitriol and divisiveness of our national dialogue; the rise of populism and scapegoating, hate and discrimination, so many suffering unfairly all around. The list of us and them grows long. Fear has always been a powerful tool for the divisive voices of the world, especially fear of the other, of “them.”

The question for us is, which voice do we listen to: the voices that would divide us or the voice of the Spirit that unites us? When we hear the names of George Floyd, Ahmaud Aubery, Breonna Taylor, and so many others, do we listen to the voices that try to justify the tragedy of their deaths, or do we hear the Spirit mourning the injustice? When we see protests become riots, do we see through the Spirit's eyes the injustice at the root, or do we hear the voices of division that label and write them off as just a bunch of “thugs,” and we yet again do nothing about this insidious disease that has plagued us so much longer than COVID19? When we see the pain and suffering of so many around us, do we sigh and wish something could be done? Where do you think the Spirit is leading us? Is it just to candlelight vigils and services of lament, or do you think some action might actually be in order to actually change things so we don't need another protest or vigil for yet another lost life?

A Spirit-driven life is not docile. A Spirit-driven community is not quiet and complacent. We live in a world full of injustice and inequity, a far cry from the kingdom we are called by the Spirit to realize. We follow a Savior who preached an active gospel, one that requires rolling up our sleeves and getting busy. One that requires the “living water” of the Spirit to flow freely from the hearts of each and every one of us. One that has the leading of the Spirit at its core. One that actually uses those gifts of the Spirit we are all given. Our individual voices may seem like a drop in the bucket, but enough drops will fill that bucket, enough voices will be heard, enough action will enact change.

The question for our community of faith today is are we Spirit-led and Spirit-driven or not? Are we alive in the Spirit, or dead in the world? Our choices determine our fate and future, and more importantly the fate and future of so many others. I hope and pray that we choose wisely and seek the Spirit's leading in everything we do and plan, so we may be the Spirit-ed source of “living water” we are called to be. Amen.

Call to Serve

Pentecost people!

We have received gifts too numerous to count.

Now we have a chance to give in thanks and joy.

Your offering will enable this church

to be a Pentecost presence in this community
and the world—

to reach out in passionate commitment

and bring the wind and fire of the Spirit

to a people and a world that so desperately need it.

As we continue to seek to be a Pentecost source of light and love in times such as these, we ask that you give prayerful consideration as to how you may support our efforts. If you would like to make a donation, gifts can still be mailed to our church office, or online donations can be made through the link in the video description. Thanks again for all your support, and may we continue to work together to keep being a place of ministry and peace in these difficult days.

As we listen to the following interlude, the hymn *Holy Spirit, Come with Power*, let's give some thought to what the Spirit is leading us to, and how we can bring that leading to action in this troubled world today.

A Time for Reflection

Reflection on the Word [video] *Holy Spirit, Come With Power*,

written by Anne Rupp,

performed by the Hesston College Bel Canto,

with Tim and Gretchen May

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e9ISMdJo7U>

The Prayer of Thanksgiving

Blow the dust off our fears, Generous Spirit, so we might be more giving people. Blow the dust off our material gifts we think are so paltry, so we might realize how they can bring hope and life to others. Blow the dust off our mistaken views of others, so we might see them as our sisters and brothers, ready to grace us, even as we may bless them with these offerings. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Benediction/Blessing/Assurance

So now we leave this space of worship

And while so much of the road ahead is uncertain,
the path constantly changing,
we know some things that are as solid and sure
as the ground beneath our feet,
and the sky above our heads.

We know God is love.
We know Christ's light endures.

We know the Holy Spirit this there,
found in the space between all things,
closer to us than our next breath,
binding us to each other,
until we meet we again,

Go in peace.

As we extinguish this candle, may we keep it's light alive, it's Spirit shining through our own lives, as we seek to find that Spirit at work in the world around us.

Postlude Holy Spirit, Rain Down, written by Russell Fragar,
performed by church pianist Annie Center,
used under CCLI Streaming License 20261246

https://youtu.be/tp7ue9_CD_g