

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

May 31, 2020

ST. PAUL'S LUTHERAN CHURCH, FALLS CHURCH, VA

SERVICE OF WORD AND PRAYER



PRELUDE Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord Setting: Georg Friedrich Kauffmann

WELCOME

ENTRANCE HYMN #497 Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord

1 Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord,
With all Your graces now outpoured
On each believer's mind and heart;
Your fervent love to them impart.
Lord, by the brightness of Your light
In holy faith Your Church unite;
From ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue
This to Your praise, O Lord, our God, be sung:
Alleluia, alleluia!

2 Come, holy Light, guide divine,
Now cause the Word of life to shine.
Teach us to know our God aright
And call Him Father with delight.
From ev'ry error keep us free;
Let none but Christ our master be
That we in living faith abide,
In Him, our Lord, with all our might confide.
Alleluia, alleluia!

3 Come, holy Fire, comfort true,
Grant us the will Your work to do
And in Your service to abide;
Let trials turn us not aside.
Lord, by Your pow'r prepare each heart,
And to our weakness strength impart
That bravely here we may contend,
Through life and death to You, our Lord, ascend.
Alleluia, alleluia!

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

In the name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
(Silence for reflection and self-examination)

Gracious God,
have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us all our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen us in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep us in eternal life. Amen.

KYRIE

In peace let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

For the holy Christian church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord:
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us, gracious Lord.
Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, have mercy.

HYMN OF PRAISE

**To you on high be glory and peace to all the earth;
Goodwill from God in heaven proclaimed at Jesus' birth!
We praise and bless You, Father; Your holy name, we sing –
Our thanks for Your great glory, Lord God our heavenly King.**

**To you, O sole begotten, the Father's Son, we pray;
O Lamb of God, our Savior, You take our sins away.
Have mercy on us, Jesus; receive our heartfelt cry,
Where You in power are seated at God's right hand on high.**

**For You alone are holy; You only are the Lord.
Forever and forever, be worshiped and adored;
You with the Holy Spirit alone are Lord Most High,
In God the Father's glory. "Amen!" our glad reply.**

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Let us pray. O God,
on this day You once taught the hearts of Your faithful people by sending them the light of Your Holy Spirit. Grant us in our day by the same Spirit to have a right understanding in all things and evermore to rejoice in His holy consolation; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



FIRST LESSON (Be seated) Numbers 11:24-30

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the LORD. And he gathered seventy men of the elders of the people and placed them around the tent. Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. And as soon as the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied. But they did not continue doing it.

Now two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the Spirit rested on them. They were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, "My lord Moses, stop them." But Moses said to him, "Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the LORD's people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM 104, v. 1,24,29,30,31,34

Lord, send forth your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth!

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord, my God, you are great indeed!
How manifold are your works, O Lord! The earth is full of your creatures!

If you take away their breath, they die and they return to their dust.
When you send forth your Spirit of life, they are created in your sight!

May his glory last for all time; may the Lord be glad in his works.
Pleasing to him will be my theme; I will be glad in the Lord!

SECOND LESSON Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both

Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.” And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others mocking said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel:

‘And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.
And I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke;
the sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the day of the Lord comes, the great and magnificent day.
And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

CHILDREN’S SERMON

ALLELUIA VERSE (Stand)

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

These things are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL John 7:37-39

The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the 7th chapter

Glorify to You, O Lord.

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’” Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

SERMON

During His conversation with a Samaritan woman at Jacob's well in Sychar, Jesus promised her “living water.” In John 7 we hear this term, “**living water**” again, and with it comes one of Jesus' promises about the blessed work of the Holy Spirit. On this, the feast day of the Holy Spirit, this One

Who quenches our thirst by bringing us to Jesus, fills us with all that we call salvation. The Church has taught us to say the Holy Spirit is God, living within me. We have been gently tugged into the arms of Jesus by this Holy Spirit. He is the One Who called me and every other believer in every age to faith. **In fact, St. Paul says (I Corinthians 12) that no one can confess Jesus as Lord except the Holy Spirit enables or helps us to come to faith.** He is also the One Who nurtures our faith so that we can weather any storm.

In John's Gospel the outpouring of the Holy Spirit happened already on Easter evening (John 20.22) when Jesus walked through those locked doors to show His disciples that He was alive. Standing among them, John says, **"Jesus breathed on them,"** and with His breath He gave them the Holy Spirit and the command to forgive sins. John also places the great commission, the command to be witnesses in all the world, in that same evening appearance. We miss the command to forgive in today's Gospel text and also in Luke's Pentecost account which is our 2nd lesson (Acts 2). Only in John do we hear this command to forgive sins tied to the Spirit. And that is what I want to talk about today: the command to forgive, and forgiveness as a mark of the Holy Spirit in us, Christ's Church.

Dramatic things accompanied the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in Luke's account: **First**, there was **"A mighty wind,"** whose sounds gathered a crowd. **Then** there is this incredible crowd, gathered from at least 15 different countries or regions. In effect, Luke is saying that the Spirit descended on the whole world!! **Next** Luke pictures **"Bits of flame, of fire"** on the heads of the Apostles. Ever since, the Church has used artistic versions of such flames to depict the Holy Spirit (as in our own altar covering). **Then** Luke tells us that the Apostles **"Spoke in other languages,"** or perhaps it would be better to understand him to say that **"everyone heard the Apostles speaking in their own language"**, though Peter preached with his very Galilee accented Aramaic. **Finally**, the words themselves: Peter connected this great event to specific OT prophecy, and in so doing explained what could have looked like drunken behavior. He proclaimed Jesus as both Lord and Christ. **"Jesus is the One God chose and sent, but you crucified Him."** God chosen Him; you rejected and crucified Him. Right there is evidence that God was at work here, because rather than rising up and attacking Peter for charging them with sin, this incredible crowd admitted their crime, repented of it, and asked what to do next. Baptism is next, Peter said, and the Apostles baptized more than 3000 and Christ's Church was truly born.

In his explanation to the Third Article of the Creed, the one on the Holy Spirit, Luther taught us to confess amazing things, which come from the first Pentecost. **"First, 'I believe that I cannot believe on my own; it is the Holy Spirit that calls me to faith.'**" This is exactly what St. Paul said. Faith is a gift and the Spirit is its creator. **Second**, the Holy Spirit calls everyone, everywhere, to faith, and also nurtures our journey of faith. He acts in us all, in the whole catholic church; He is the giver and the builder of faith. **Third**, and this is what I want you to focus on today, the Holy Spirit forgives our sins. Luther's words are, **"In this Christian Church He daily and richly forgives all my sins and the sins of all believers."** Luther caught the words of Jesus exactly from that appearance on Easter evening. The energy of the Holy Spirit brings me to faith, and specifically He connects me to the forgiveness Jesus' won for us at the cross. He takes the sacrifice of Christ at Golgotha and brings it to me to forgive me right now.

And the Holy Spirit brings forgiveness to all who repent. Forgiveness of sins is so important that Jesus said more about it than about going and telling the world, at least in that Easter evening appearance. The power Jesus placed in the disciples' hands, by the miracle of the Holy Spirit, is breathtaking. **"Whoever you forgive, is forgiven."** So much authority and in the hands of ordinary people. So much authority and power that He also says, **"Whoever you do not forgive, is not forgiven."** Forgiveness will always mark the Church of Jesus Christ. Every time a sinner is forgiven is another mark of the presence of the Holy Spirit, Who implements this command of Jesus for all people and in all the ages.

My human reaction to my own sin is to try to hide it. I am like Adam and Eve in the garden. They tried to hide from God, but they could not. I try to hide my guilt or shift it to someone else. Adam said, **“The woman YOU GAVE ME, she did it!”** I can see your sin before I ever admit mine. And if you sin against me, my first response is to get revenge or make sure you are punished. Forgiveness doesn’t flow naturally. Denying, blaming, punishing – these come naturally. Even in the most important microcosm of human society – the family – getting back or getting even happens before forgiveness. On Easter evening Jesus made clear that forgiveness would mark His Church. **“Whoever you forgive, they are forgiven.”** Forgiveness is so crucial that Jesus is really telling us to find a way to forgive. Revenge comes naturally; forgiveness takes faith and prayer and the Holy Spirit.

The US Army, in choosing language to describe her Chaplains' relationships to her soldiers, even in the Uniform Code of Military Justice, says that a soldier's confession to a chaplain is always privileged; it is not available to the commander or the military court. I often had to remind both my chaplains and their commanders that this privilege is for all soldiers, all the time. One of my chaplains, on duty overnight in the base hospital, dealt with a family at the death of their infant. He wrote in the duty log: **“Ministered to a family at the death of their infant.”**

But the state of Washington charged the parents with child abuse, and subpoenaed my duty chaplain to testify to what the parents told him. I forbade him to do so and I told the state’s attorney that this was a privileged confession. My Commanding General was uncomfortable making waves in the civilian community, and he told us to testify. I reminded my Catholic General that he would not want his priest to repeat his own confession, and this was no different. That impasse went away, but I've told you this much to show that even secular entities like the Army and the courts, recognize the Church’s forgiveness as more important than their need to know “exactly what happened.”

We are that forgiving community. Jesus made us this way. The Holy Spirit gives wings to even our most feeble forgiving acts so that they carry Divine power. I live by that forgiveness, and Jesus commands us to pass it on, everywhere, and for all. When forgiveness comes, it comes on the breath of the Holy Spirit. We rejoice today that the Holy Spirit still breathes forgiveness into our lives, and through us, to everyone I touch. **“Come Holy Spirit, fill us with Your grace and goodness.”**

HYMN OF THE DAY #496 Holy Spirit, Light Divine

**1 Holy Spirit, light divine,
Shine upon this heart of mine;
Chase the shades of night away,
Turn the darkness into day.**

**2 Let me see my Savior’s face,
Let me all His beauties trace;
Show those glorious truths to me
Which are only known to Thee.**

**3 Holy Spirit, pow’r divine,
Cleanser this guilty heart of mine;
In Thy mercy pity me,
From sin’s bondage set me free.**

**4 Holy Spirit, joy divine,
Cheer this saddened heart of mine;
Yield a sacred, settled peace,
Let it grow and still increase.**

**5 Holy Spirit, all divine,
Dwell within this heart of mine;
Cast down ev'ry idol throne,
Reign supreme, and reign alone.**

Text (sts. 1–5) and Music: Public domain

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through Him all things were made. For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit He became incarnate from the virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered death and was buried. On the third day He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

OFFERING Holy Spirit, Light Divine Setting: David A. deSilva

PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Let us pray...

Almighty God, You have blessed us in love with the Savior to whom the nations cry and in whom there is forgiveness of sins, life and salvation. Grant to us Your Holy Spirit, the Comforter whom You have promised, that we and all who call upon His name shall be saved. Help us to treasure in our hearts Your mercy and to give ourselves fully to Your service. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You delivered Your Word through Moses and the prophets and fulfilled Your Word in Christ. He was planted in death for our sins and raised for our justification, and in Him shall all the nations of the earth be united. Give us pastors who will preach this Word faithfully and church workers who are devoted to Your service. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You breathe hope into the weary and renew Your Church by Your grace. Bless all congregations of the faith – new and established, here and throughout the world – that they may endure in times of hardship, continue in zeal for Your Kingdom, and prosper according to Your will. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You have promised that the thirsty will drink, and from the empty will flow forth rivers of living water. Help us to show forth in holy lives the fruits of the Spirit and to live with love toward our

neighbor. Give us a servant heart that does not seek its own way but walks on the path of eternal life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You have promised to make one people from the many. Take from us all pride, prejudice and hate, that we may not hinder the cause of the Gospel by our shame but give welcome to all people in the name of Christ. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, have mercy and spare us. Put an end to the pandemic, give us strength and endurance as we wait, provide for those who have suffered loss, and restore the communities of the world to their common life. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You have ordered all things in heaven and on earth. Bless Donald, our president; Ralph, our governor; the Congress of the United States; and all elected and appointed civil servants, that the rule of law may protect the weak and preserve life, and that peace may reign for the benefit of all. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, You carry the burdens of our lives in Your hands. Deliver from illness and suffering all who cry to You for release. Hear us on behalf of the sick, the dying and those who mourn, especially _____ . Answer Your people, O Lord, and deliver them from their infirmities and their grief by Your grace. Lord, in Your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, Your Word endures forever. Give us grace in this time when we are separated from one another and cannot commune at Your table. In our hunger and thirst, may we see what is lacking when we cannot be together, and may we be sustained in the faith until we can commune together again. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, grant us these petitions according to your promises and according to what you know to be best – hearing us for the sake of our crucified, risen and ascended Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

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;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom
and the power and the glory
forever and ever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

SENDING HYMN #503 O Day Full of Grace

- 1 O day full of grace that now we see
Appearing on earth's horizon,
Bring light from our God that we may be
Replete in His joy this season.
God, shine for us now in this dark place;
Your name on our hearts emblazon.**
- 2 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 darkness and shame removing.**
- 3 For Christ bore our sins, and not His own,
When He on the cross was hanging;
And then He arose and moved the stone
That we, unto Him belonging,
Might join with angelic hosts to raise
Our voices in endless singing.**
- 4 God came to us then at Pentecost,
His Spirit new life revealing,
That we might no more from Him be lost,
All darkness for us dispelling.
His flame will the mark of sin efface
And bring to us all His healing.**
- 5 When we on that final journey go
That Christ is for us preparing,
We'll gather in song, our hearts aglow,
All joy of the heavens sharing,
And walk in the light of God's own place,
With angels His name adoring.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Toccata on "Veni, Creator Spirit" Setting: Flor Peeters

Acknowledgments

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