**Pentecost, May 23, 2021**

**Zion, Philipsburg and St. PEters, Linwood**

Welcome to worship on the day of Pentecost, May 23, 2021. Today we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit that weaves its way in, around and through on lives!

What beautiful weather we are having, I hope all have been able to get out and enjoy it, whether its working in your gardens, sitting on your porches, or going for a walk. As I record this on Saturday morning they are calling for some much-needed rain this afternoon.

 Coffee hour will take place today at 11:00. Have you considered joining us? All are welcome! Please remember that Zion relies on your contributions in these continuing times of pandemic. If you have not made a donation lately, please consider doing so. Thank you to all who continue to support and pray for our congregation.

**GATHERING**

The Holy Spirit calls us together as the people of God.

**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.**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Mighty God, you breathe life into our bones, and your Spirit brings truth to the world. Send us this Spirit, transform us by your truth, and give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING SONG*God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind* (ELW 400)**

1 God of tempest, God of whirlwind,
as on Pentecost descend!
Drive us out from sheltered comfort;
past these walls your people send!
Sweep us into costly service,
there with Christ to bear the cross,
there with Christ to bear the cross!

2 God of blazing, God of burning,
all that blocks your purpose, purge!
Through your church, Christ's living Body,
let your flaming Spirit surge!
Where deceit conceals injustice,
kindle us to speak your truth,
kindle us to speak your truth!

3 God of earthquake, God of thunder,
shake us loose from lethargy!
Break the chains of sin asunder,
for earth's healing set us free!
Crumble walls that still divide us;
make us one in Christ our Lord,
make us one in Christ our Lord!

4 God of passion, God unsleeping,
stir in us love's restlessness!
Where the people cry in anguish,
may we share your heart's distress.
Rouse us from content with evil;
claim us for your kingdom's work,
claim us for your kingdom's work!

**WORD**

God speaks to us in scripture reading, preaching, and song.

**FIRST READING: Acts 2:1-21**

A reading from Acts.

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.

**SECOND READING: Romans 8:22-27**

A reading from Romans.

22We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; 23and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.
  26Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. 27And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The word of the Lord.

**GOSPEL: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

The holy gospel according to John.

[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.

**SERMON**

 Today is the 50th day of Easter, also known as Pentecost Sunday. It is a day of commemoration where we join in the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the disciples after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Just before his ascension, Jesus spoke words of encouragement to the disciples stating in Luke 24:48-50, “You are witnesses of these things. And see I am sending upon you what God has promised; so, stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” And that is what the disciples did, they remained in Jerusalem together. They studied the word, they prayed, and they waited, they waited for the empowerment and promise of God to appear once again in their lives.

 And oh, what a day it was when the Holy Spirit appeared! There was a sudden gush of wind that filled the entire house and divided tongues of fire appeared around them and even rested on the disciples. Suddenly they were able to speak in many different languages, and all were filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. These images fulfill the prophecy of John the Baptist who stated that Jesus would indeed baptize the world with the Holy Spirit and fire. Come Holy Spirit, come.

 It is on this day of Pentecost that the church was said to be born. In the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples, they were able to proclaim the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who would believe. The coming of the Holy Spirit established the fellowship of faith for the believers and called them into the mutuality and love of God to be witnesses to the work of Jesus Christ in the world. Come Holy Spirit, come

 Pentecost does not take place in gospels, in fact in our gospel reading this morning Jesus is speaking his farewell discourse to the disciples, but he speaks of the Holy Spirit none the less. Jesus was leaving the disciples and they were upset, but he was sending the Spirit in his place to encourage and accompany the disciples, to bring light and truth to the world in Jesus’ absence. The Spirit would guide the disciples in knowing and living out the will of God in the world. In each of our readings this morning, the promise and outpouring of the Holy Spirit was seen and heard. And in the coming of the Holy Spirit the world was made new, a new reality was waiting. The promise of Jesus Christ was restored, God through the work of Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit hah returned. The spirit of Truth prevailed; the radical love of God prevailed! The Holy Spirit gave testimony to the power of Jesus Christ in her role as a witness who testified on Jesus’ behalf. It is a role that the disciples would need to take on, a role that would be demanded of them. Come Holy Spirit, come.

 The Holy Spirit is known by many names. She is the Paraclete (which translated from Greek means “to come alongside together”). She is the Helper, the Comforter, the Midwife. She is the wind that moves in, around, and through us, bringing us strength, comfort, hope and promise for today and for all the days ahead. She is the Advocate, as we read in our gospel reading this morning. The advocate who walks beside us, encouraging us, giving us strength when we are weak and words when there is nothing for us to say. Come Holy Spirit, come

 This past Thursday was our monthly clergy cluster meeting of the Nith Valley Ministry Area. We meet online of course and usually, there is lots of chatter. This week though was different. We were quiet and when it came time for each of us to do our check-in, there was more silence than spoken words. And that is what I have noticed of late with many folks whom I have spoken to. We are all tired and exhausted. This third wave is seemingly harder than the first two. The pandemic is stretching into its 15th month. That is 15 months of not seeing family and friends on a regular basis, 15 months of not attending church. 15 months of not eating out, of not travelling. For many, 15 months of working from home, months of home and online schooling, months of online ordering and curbside pick up, months of activities missed, deaths with no funerals, anniversaries and birthdays not celebrated in their usual fashion. Yes, we are tired, and we are exhausted. Some days we just have no more words……Come Holy Spirit, come.

 But you know what, maybe that is okay because maybe that is the Spirit working in us. Maybe that silence and lack of words is the Spirit telling us to take a break. Maybe that is the Spirit telling us to stop and just breathe because sometimes taking a breath is all that we can do. In all the anxiety, sadness, grief, loneliness, and sorrow… we breathe, and we keep on breathing knowing that the presence of God is within us through the power of that lifegiving and comforting Holy Spirit. Come Holy Spirit, come.

 The words from our reading from Romans this morning give us comfort and encouragement in knowing that the Spirit helps us in our weakness, she intercedes when our sighs are too deep for words, when our gas tanks are empty, when we just need to breathe. The Spirit knows just what we need, we just are not always that great at recognizing and listening. We think we can do it ourselves, that we can just push through it, that tomorrow will be better. It is in these moments that the Spirit steps in. It is in these moments that she intercedes. It may be in the voice of a family member calling to check in and say I love you, or a friend sending a text or email sharing a silly dad joke or picture that makes you laugh. It may be in the sending or receiving of a card, a bouquet of flowers, or a meal.

 The Spirit shows up in the beauty of nature, in butterflies emerging from their winter slumber, in baby birds hatching from tiny blue eggs, in seeds popping out of the ground, in lilacs bursting forth with colours of purple, pink and white filling the air with their scent of sweetness. When we stop to take notice of the beauty and love that continues to go on around us, when we stop to breathe, when we take some time to be gentle with ourselves, that is the Spirit interceding, that is the love of God, that is the grace of Jesus Christ coming to us in our time of need. Come Holy Spirit, come.

 So may the winds of the Spirit move in, around, and through us. May she lead us and hear our pleading and fashion us anew. May she empower and enliven us, may she comfort and encourage us in all that we do, may she show us the beauty that is all around us, may she bring us peace, may she help us to breathe and be gentle on ourselves, Come Holy Spirit, come.

Amen

**HYMN OF THE DAY*Gracious Spirit, Heed Our Pleading: Njoo kwetu, Roho mwema* (ELW 401)**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2m0QkYctaFo>

1 Gracious Spirit, heed our pleading,
fashion us all anew.
It's your leading that we're needing,
help us to follow you.

Refrain
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.
Come, come, come, Holy Spirit, come.

2 Come to teach us, come to nourish
those who believe in Christ.
Bless the faithful, may they flourish,
strengthened by grace unpriced. Refrain

3 Guide our thinking and our speaking
done in your holy name.
Motivate all in their seeking,
freeing from guilt and shame. Refrain

4 Not mere knowledge, but discernment,
nor rootless liberty;
turn disquiet to contentment,
doubt into certainty. Refrain

5 Keep us fervent in our witness;
unswayed by earth's allure.
Ever grant us zealous fitness,
which you alone assure. Refrain

**PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love. *A brief silence.*

Gracious God, you give the Holy Spirit to your church, filling it with many and varied gifts. In the church throughout the world, strengthen us in our visioning and dreaming, that it may discover anew the Spirit’s creative work. Hear us, O God.

**Your mercy is great.**

God of life, your mighty works are too numerous to count. The earth is full of your creatures, living things both great and small. Open your hand and give them the necessities of this life. Send your fresh Spirit over the face of the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of the nations, at the sound of the rushing wind, people speaking different languages proclaimed and heard together your deeds of power. Fill the leaders of nations with your Holy Spirit, so that they exercise your gracious will in the lives of people. Bring peace to end the violence and injustices between Israel and Palestine. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of faithfulness, you tend to the needs of your people, even the sighs of our heavy hearts. Hear those who cry out to you in distress from illness, injury, grief, or sorrow. Restore to wholeness all who are in any need this day especially Eddy, Elaine, Donelda, Lynette, Barb, Sarah, Alea, Mary Ann, Cheryl, Bonnie, Mary, Ruth, Tilly, Nancy, Robert, Helen, Vivian, and those we name in the silence of our hearts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of love, fill our congregations of Zion and St. Peters with gratitude for the gifts we have received from you. Renew our ministries, heal our divisions, and open us to the needs of our neighbors. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of hope, those who have died in you raise their eternal song of praise. We give you thanks for the many gifts of your people and rejoice in the witness of your saints. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.

**And also with you.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD**

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

O God of justice and love, we give thanks to you that you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son. Give us the light we need, awaken us to the needs of others, and at the end bring all the world to your feast; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever.

**Amen.**

**LORD’S PRAYER**

Gathered into one by the Holy Spirit, let us pray as Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**SENDING**

God blesses us and sends us in mission to the world.

**BLESSING**

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

**Amen.**

**DISMISSAL**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia!

**Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

**SENDING SONG*O Day Full of Grace* (ELW 627)**

1 O day full of grace that now we see
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.

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 shame and despair 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,
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.

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 there we will join God's endless praise,
with angels and saints adoring.

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