



Order of service
Date: Sunday May 31st, 2020
Pentecost

We acknowledge that we are worshipping on the traditional lands of the Boon Wurrung people, of the Kulin nation, and pay our respects to elders past and present.

DON'T FORGET YOU CAN LOG INTO THE CHURCH WEBSITE AND SEE MUCH OF THIS BY VIDEO ON THE FRONT PAGE!!!!

Pre-service song learning – Send down the fire of your justice.

Refrain:

*Send down the fire of your justice,
Send down the rains of your love;
Come send down the Spirit
Breathe life in your people
And make us the people of God.*

1. Call us to be your compassion,
Teach us the song of your love;
Give us hearts that sing,
Give us deeds that ring,
Make us ring with the song of your love. *Refrain.*

INTROIT – WITHIN!

CALL TO WORSHIP

Then I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, thus says the Lord.

Send down the fire of your justice!

Your sons and your daughters shall prophecy.

Send down the rain of your love!

Your old shall dream dreams,
and your young shall see visions.

Send down your Spirit; breathe life into your people!

In those days, I will pour out my Spirit.

And we shall be people of God!

Let us worship God!

Sing – Send down the fire

*Send down the fire of your justice,
Send down the rains of your love;
Come send down the Spirit*

*Breathe life in your people
And make us the people of God.*

1. Call us to be your compassion,
Teach us the song of your love;
Give us hearts that sing,
Give us deeds that ring,
Make us ring with the song of your love. *Refrain.*
2. Call us to learn of your mercy,
Teach us the way of your peace;
Give us hearts that feel,
Give us hands that heal.
Make us walk in the way of your peace. *Refrain.*
3. Call us to witness your Kingdom,
Give us the presence of Christ;
May your Holy light,
Keep us shining bright,
Ever shine with the presence of Christ. *Refrain.*

WELCOME

May the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit
be with you all!

And also with you!

Opening prayer

On this day of Pentecost, we simply pray together:

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Be with us as you were with the first disciples.

Surprise us with the wonder of

your truth and wisdom and never leave us nor forsake us.

Come, Holy Spirit, come.

Prayer of confession

In a moment of quiet, let us bring our fear, our brokenness and our failures to the God who is love.....

God of Israel, when you send forth your Spirit, the world is created and every living thing is renewed in its glorious vitality. Forgive us, when we lose faith in your endless creativity and fail to care for your creation.

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me.

Jesus our brother, at Pentecost you sent us a Counsellor to companion your people into the truth of your love for all creation. Forgive us when we listen to other voices, voices that lie and maim and confuse.

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me.

Spirit most Holy, by the grace and mercy of Christ, you welcome us into the family of God. You give us the voice of children who can cry out “Abba, Father!” to the one who makes us whole. Forgive us when we forget our inheritance and become enslaved again to all that is selfish, unworthy and unjust.

Spirit of the living God

Fall afresh on me.

Gracious and merciful God, grant us your forgiveness and your love that we may truly care for one another.

Refresh and renew us with your Spirit so that we can be fruitful and vital disciples of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Words of affirmation

Hear the great good news of our faith: The Spirit is alive!

Breathe, children of God, breath the fresh winds of the Spirit.

Taste, children of God, taste the quenching waters of God’s love.

Touch, children of God, touch the heart of God’s passion for justice.

We are forgiven and made whole!

ALL: Thanks be to God! Amen.

EARLY WORD – Pentecost...what does it all mean?

So today is Pentecost Sunday, but what does that really mean?

Any suggestions?

Ok so here is some more stuff.

Pentecost – fiftieth. 50th what? 50 days after Easter, or Passover...because...

Pentecost started as a Hebrew festival, at first a harvest festival...what do you think that was?

In time it came to celebrate the giving of the 10 commandments to Moses.

In the Christian church Pentecost celebrates a very unique event concerning the Holy Spirit coming to the first followers of Jesus during this festival time in rather unusual ways – e.g. they described the spirit coming being like a wind, or like fire, and that they heard people from other countries speaking their language and so on. It is often called the birth of the church.

So we make a big deal of this day because without this event who knows, the church might not be here today.

We also make a deal of it because it helps us think about the Holy Spirit and how the Spirit, continues to be present in our world today.

So next time you are out in the wind, imagine it is the Holy Spirit blowing around you. Or the next time you breathe in a big breath, imagine it is the Holy Spirit you are breathing in, and think about what this would mean.

We haven’t had a children’s song for a bit so let’s have one today. This is called “The Spirit in me”. It’s probably new but it is very easy. Usually when we sing it you move around shaking hands with others. Let’s see if we can synchronise shaking hands with the people next to us in our video squares.

Here we go.

Sing – The Spirit in me

The Spirit in me greets the Spirit in you,
Alleluia.
God's in us and we're in God.
Alleluia.

The servant in me...
The wisdom in me...
The love in me...

SHARING OUR STORIES – paintings or drawings of the Ascension??

READINGS:

Genesis 1:1-3

¹In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, ²the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

³Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.

Reflection:

The Holy Spirit is somewhat of a paradox.

We are invited to consider an invisible agent of an invisible God that acts in ways that are somewhat unknowable.

For some this is too big an ask to take on board.

For others, it is the pinnacle of affirmation of all they believe.

For most, I would argue, it is not on their daily radar, and in church when it comes up, they just accept it as a church thing without overthinking it.

The readings today, apart from the Acts passage, are not the usual designated readings for Pentecost.

I have chosen them because whatever we think of the whole Holy Spirit enigma, they cut to the heart of what the Holy Spirit has meant to the church through the ages.

But today I am reflecting briefly on each passage with the help of Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*, from his book, "Christ plays in 10,000 places".

Let's begin.

Genesis 1:1-3 (p 21 'Christ plays in ten thousand places)

God begins by creating.

This act, according to Genesis, accounts for everything. Before this act, the text suggests pre-creation consisted of oceans deep and dark.

God breathes over these waters. This breath is life, and life making.

God breathes life into this dark, watery non-life.

This breath of God then makes words. The breath that produces wind now makes language. We first see the effects of God's breath on the water, then we hear the articulation of God's breath in words: "God said..." Again and again the breath speaks, and 'create' accounts for everything that is in heaven and earth.

But this ruach, this breath or if you prefer, Spirit of God that moved over the face of those ancient waters, continues to move, continues to create.

The Genesis creation story is not confined to telling us how the world came into being. In fact, it is not really even telling us that. It is more telling us, by whom. But more importantly, it is also a witness to the creation work of the Spirit of God now.

Through this and other Old Testament texts, the Creator Spirit is seen as creating both a structure to live in and human lives adequate for living in it now.

Create, is about what the Spirit did and does.

Creation is not an impersonal environment, it is a personal home – this is where we live.

The work of the Spirit in creation is no longer confined to asking the questions

"When did this take place? How did this happen?"

We are quite rightly, now asking "How can I get in on this?"

Where is my place in this?"

Maybe this is the missional question we must be asking.

Mark 1:9-11

⁹In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. ¹¹And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Reflection:

Mark 1:9-11(p 23 'Christ plays in ten thousand places)

God begins again. A second beginning: Jesus is baptized and identified as God's beloved Son.

Genesis is cosmological, that is, concerned about the whole world and everything in it, presenting us with a watery chaos breathed on by God to bring about life.

The gospel of Mark presents us with a local and named river in which Jesus is baptized.

Baptism is a replay of Genesis.

As Jesus is lifted out of the water, God breathes life into him. The breathing is given visibility this time by means of what looks like a dove descending out of heaven. We are given an image of the Spirit of God. The dove – an image that prevails still.

And as in Genesis, the breath becomes word – thou art my beloved son; with you I am well pleased.

The same Spirit of God, so lavishly articulated in words that create everything that is, now descends on Jesus who will speak wholeness into reality in our death-ravished and evil -decimated world.

The God-breathed-into-life of Jesus, the God-blessed person of Jesus, at this moment of his baptism, begins to work out the consummation of abundant life.

Sing: TIS 418

1

She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters,
hovering on the chaos of the world's first day;
she sighs and she sings, mothering creation,
waiting to give birth to all the Word will say.

2

She wings over earth, resting where she wishes,
lighting close at hand or soaring through the skies;
she nests in the womb, welcoming each wonder,
nourishing potential hidden to our eyes.

3

She dances in fire, startling her spectators,
waking tongues of ecstasy where dumbness reigned;
she weans and inspires all whose hearts are open,
nor can she be captured, silenced or restrained.

4

For she is the Spirit, one with God in essence,
gifted by the Saviour in eternal love;
she is the key opening the scriptures,
enemy of apathy and heavenly dove.

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost had come, they 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.

Reflection:**Acts 2:1-4 (p 24 'Christ plays in ten thousand places')**

And yet again, God begins. A third beginning, as God breathes on a company of followers of Jesus and creates a holy community, which came to be known as the church.

In the story of his ascension into heaven Jesus told his followers that God would breathe life into them, just as God had done at creation and the baptism of Jesus. Once having been breathed into life by God – or baptized with the Holy Spirit as Jesus put it – they would have the resources to continue the God-breathed creation and the God-breathed baptism of Jesus. “My witnesses” was the term Jesus used to designate this new identity, of who they were meant to be and what they were meant to do.

Believing this, they then told others, and soon 120 of them were waiting for it to happen.

Ten days later it happened, with some extra surprises.

It was like the Genesis creation and Jesus' baptism, but there was more.

Holy breathing became a holy wind, and filled the room and filled the followers.

Then there was the fire, a sign surely associated with the presence of God. But this fire was different. It was distributed, each person visibly on fire with the presence of God. In this story, Luke is telling us, that God was present and alive in this place.

And as in Genesis creation and the baptism of Jesus the pattern continued, and the living presence of God was formed into spoken words. The tongues of fire became tongues of speech. The language of every person present that day was spoken, or perhaps heard, and came to life.

Of course this got people's attention. How could these local yokels possibly speak all this language?

The real miracle though was that the same breathe of God that created heavens and earth, that validated and blessed Jesus, is now being breathed into ordinary men and women and formed into words that continue to give witness to God's Genesis-creation and Jesus-wholeness, a task we are invited to attend to still today.

These three passages ground every aspect of life – creation, wholeness, community – in the living, breathing God. God alive who makes alive. God the Spirit who imparts the spirit. God's Spirit is not marginal to the main action, it is the main action. Spirit is all-inclusive.

The three passages today remind us that the Spirit designates God's living presence among us, and the passages mark the range of the formative work of the Spirit in the world we find ourselves in.

Each of the passages marks a beginning and in each passage it is the Spirit that initiates the beginning.

It was once said that there are two views of the world that can be characterised like this:

One view was that when the trees are waving wildly in the wind, it is the wind that moves the trees;

the other view held that the motion of trees creates the wind.

The first view was predominant for most of our history, but the second view has become more popular in recent history.

In other words it was always thought that the invisible is behind and gives energy to the visible. The shift is that many if not most now assume that what they see and hear and touch is the basic reality and generates whatever people come up with that cannot be verified with the senses.

This view holds that the visible accounts for the invisible.

The passages today call us back to an older place that says "Spirit" was not spiritual for our ancestors; it was sensual.

It was the invisible that that had visible effects.

It was invisible, but it was not immaterial.

Air, as we well know, can be felt, heard, and measured; it provides the molecules for the quiet breathing that is part of all life, human and animal, waking and sleeping –

the puffs of air used to make words, the gentle breezes that caress the skin, the brisk winds that fill the sails of ships, the wild hurricanes that tear roofs off houses, uproot trees and decimate banana crops.

What is true for air, wind, breath, is no less true for Spirit.

A meditation- by Rev Prof. Bill Loader

*Wind, wind,
you come from nothingness and go to nothingness,
and when you are still,
there is nothing we see, nothing we hear,
and you surround us in our not seeing and not knowing.
Wild, wild wind,
you whip the seas, whirling great water spouts and fountains,
crashing on the foamed edges of the shore,
sweeping the unsuspecting fisherman from the slippery rocks,
terrifying force, uncontrollable, beyond our power.
O wind, piercing wind,
driving the blizzard, the sleet, the rain,
trampling earth with wild tempests and tantrums
that uproot trees, unroof houses and wreak devastation in your path.
Wind, wind, wondrous wind,
hovering at the birth of creation,
whisking secretly among the wonders of new life,
bearing the seed, lifting high the heads of mighty trees,
swirling among the grasses, celebrating life.
Wind, wind, we know your ways,
we trace your web on the map of highs and lows,
today's weather, tomorrow's predictions,
depressions and sea breezes,
we harness your power,
our weather vanes point to you,
a cross shows where you have been
and we do not know.
O wind, O silent wind,
where do you go?
Do you go away and play,
in outback gorges or bare mountains of the desert,
stirring small clouds of red dust among the bushes,
kissing the rippled smile of the billabong,
running down the slopes, exulting at the rock face,
passing by the mountain with none to see
and none to know your trail.
Wind, gentle wind,
wind of our breathing, our life, our hope,
renewing, refreshing,
sighing in our stress,*

*moaning in our pain,
still in our dying.
O wind, wind,
you breathed upon the clay and there was life,
you danced down to the forehead of a Galilean
and there was hope,
you shook the foundations of community
and there was Pentecost.
Wind of nothingness and awe,
wind of knowing and unknowing,
wind of bearing and begetting,
wind of secrets and mystery,
O wise, wise wind,
whisper to us your grace.*

Sing – TIS 409

1

O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and power;
O breath of life, come cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.

2

O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;
then in your tenderness remake us,
revive, restore: for this we plead.

3

O breath of love, come breathe within us,
renewing thought and will and heart;
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,
revive your church in every part.

4

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,
equip your church to spread the light.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE – read by Suzy Toovey.

All these words we bring in the name of the Risen Christ who taught us to pray together, saying:

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,**

**your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forever. Amen**

BLESSING – (by Jan Richardson)

Here's one thing you must understand about this blessing:
it is not for you alone. It is stubborn about this;
do not even try to lay hold of it if you are by yourself,
thinking you can carry it on your own.

To bear this blessing, you must first take yourself to a place where everyone
does not look like you or think like you,
a place where they do not believe precisely as you believe,
where their thoughts and ideas and gestures
are not exact echoes of your own.

Bring your sorrow. Bring your grief.
Bring your fear. Bring your weariness, your pain, your disgust at how broken
the world is, how fractured, how fragmented by its fighting, its wars,
its hungers, its penchant for power, its ceaseless repetition
of the history it refuses to rise above.
I will not tell you this blessing will fix all that.

But in the place where you have gathered,
wait.
Watch.
Listen.
Lay aside your inability to be surprised,
your resistance to what you do not understand.
See then whether this blessing turns to flame on your tongue,
sets you to speaking what you cannot fathom
or opens your ear to a language beyond your imagining
that comes as a knowing in your bones
a clarity in your heart that tells you -
this is the reason we were made, for this ache that finally opens us,
for this struggle, this grace that scorches us toward one another
and into the blazing day.
We are, all of us, beloved and blessed, people of God.
Amen.

Recessional – Send down the fire (verse 3 and refrains)

*Send down the fire of your justice,
Send down the rains of your love;
Come send down the Spirit
Breathe life in your people
And make us the people of God.*

3. Call us to witness your Kingdom,
Give us the presence of Christ;
May your Holy light,
Keep us shining bright,
Ever shine with the presence of Christ. *Refrain.*