

As we unite in worship today, we extend a warm welcome to each one present.
May we together experience the presence of God

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We Gather to Prepare Our Hearts to Meet Our Lord

Prelude
Welcome



As we gather for worship this Pentecost Sunday, let us place ourselves before God, to be birthed anew with the breath of God's benevolent life through his Holy Spirit. Let us be led to Pentecost and wish to do so without preempting the history of the Spirit's work in Israel. Today we worship God the Holy Spirit by beginning at the beginning, with the hovering, birthing Spirit of creation as written in Genesis 1:1-31a

Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

1 In the beginning when God created[a] the heavens and the earth, 2 the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God[b] swept over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. 8 God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. 16 God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17 God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." 21 So God created the great sea monsters

and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23 And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind[c] in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth,[d] and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

*27 So God created humankind[e] in his image,
in the image of God he created them;[f]
male and female he created them.*

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29 God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Our loving God, we are awed by creation, by your ordered explosion of artistry.

People: We bless you, Creator God, for your gift of love and delight.

(Gen. 6:5–6) And God saw that it was very good. For a time, perfect. But following upon the disobedience of Adam, during the generations of Noah: "The Lord saw that the wickedness of humankind was great in the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of their hearts was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that he had made humankind on the earth, and it grieved him to his heart" (reads, followed by a silent pause).

Lord, have mercy upon us.

People: O Lord, hear our prayer, and rescue us.

Homiletic Reflection

God grieved, and God judged sin. But even so, over the course of Israel's history, God poured out his Holy Spirit upon chosen leaders and messengers, in order to continue God's salvation mission toward his creation. Listen to a sampling of the Spirit's ministry in Israel. Pharaoh, the leader of the Egyptians, asked regarding Joseph, "Can we find anyone

else like this—in whom is the Spirit of God?” An outsider, a man of power and position, recognized God’s discernment in Joseph, who was at the time a prisoner of Pharaoh’s in Egypt. The Spirit’s presence in Joseph led him to work for good, both for Pharaoh and for his fellow Israelites.

In contrast to this is the mysterious work of the Spirit recorded in the book of the Judges. The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson, each of whom, though a judge in Israel, is of questionable character. Jephthah sacrificed his only child, a young woman, as a burnt offering to Yahweh, and Samson died in disgrace. Mystery and grace continue in the period of the kings and the restoration. The “spirit of the Lord” came mightily upon David, the shepherd, poet and king, whose story is rich with the rise and fall of character, as seen both in himself and in others. The rise of the Spirit in David contrasts the decline and departure of the Spirit in Saul. In God’s grace-filled irony, God’s Spirit in David then comforts the tormented and tragic Saul. Years later, the prophet Nehemiah reminds Israel that God warned Israel by his good Spirit through the prophets, but Israel would not listen. The Spirit instructs, but humans are called to respond. Today we are called to listen, and today we are called to respond to our particular heritage of God’s Spirit in this new covenant.

(Acts 2:1-13) The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes (Meedz), Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia (Fridgia) and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes (praa-suh-lites), 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Our loving God, we offer our gratitude for your benevolence.

People: Renew our hearts, that we may respond with due amazement.

Hymn: UMH #393

“Spirit of the Living God” (sing twice)

Author: Daniel Iverson (1926, adapt.)

Publication Date: 1989

Copyright: © 1935, renewal © 1963 Birdwing Music

Tune Information

Composer: Daniel Iverson (1926)

Copyright: © 1935, renewal © 1963 Birdwing Music

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33cgXtDXqK4>

**Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me.
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the living God,
Fall afresh on me.**

What does Pentecost mean for us, but that we allow God to lead us beyond the perimeter of our limited assumptions and presumptions and into God's vision for our life in faith. How does this happen?

(read John 3:1-10)

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

3 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 He came to Jesus[a] by night and said to him, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God." 3 Jesus answered him, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above." [b] 4 Nicodemus said to him, "How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?" 5 Jesus answered, "Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.[c] 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, 'You[d] must be born from above.' [e] 8 The wind[f] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." 9 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" 10 Jesus answered him, "Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?"

Leader: Many of us here this morning have already entered the kingdom of God, and have received the gift of the Holy Spirit. But perhaps we are not too old in faith to extend Nicodemus' question to ask, "Even at this stage can I participate in new birth: can I choose to submit myself to the unpredictable movement of the Spirit within and experience new life and growth?" Let us offer ourselves in prayer to the Lord.

Our gracious God, we thank you for your Holy Spirit, messenger of hope, judgment and grace.

People: We bless you, Lord, for endowing us with your Holy Spirit.

Our merciful God, we thank you for your Spirit's messages to the prophets, to John the Baptist, and to Jesus, to reveal to us our sin and our need for forgiveness. Have mercy on us, we pray, and pierce our limited self-contained worlds.

Hymn UMH #420

"Breathe on Me, Breath of God"

Author: Edwin Hatch (1878)

Publication Date: 1989

Tune Information

Name: TRENTHAM

Composer: Robert Jackson (1888)

<http://www.gbod3.org/sorter/audio/420.mp3>

**1. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.**

**3. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
till all this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.**

**2. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.**

**4. Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.**

Words of Inspiration from Paul to the Christians of Rome (Romans 8:12–17)

12 So then, brothers and sisters,[a] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13 for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. 15 For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, “Abba![b] Father!” 16 it is that very Spirit bearing witness[c] with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The Holy Spirit has come upon us, and the Holy Spirit continues to come, enlightening and enlivening us in our journey after Christ.

Jesus Promise to all His beloved Children.....(John 14:15–19)

The Promise of the Holy Spirit

15 “If you love me, you will keep[a] my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,[b] to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in[c] you.

18 “I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. 19 In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live.

The Holy Spirit came to us, because Jesus left us in order to return to the Father. Reflection of the gift of the Spirit is inseparable from reflection upon Jesus' gift of himself to us.

For Jesus said to His Disciples.....(Read John 14:25–27; 16:7, 12–15)

John 14:25-27

New Revised Standard Version

25 “I have said these things to you while I am still with you. 26 But the Advocate,[a] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

John 16:7

New Revised Standard Version

7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate[a] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

John 16:12-15

New Revised Standard Version

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 When 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. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Dear friends in Christ, we desire to follow Jesus, and we desire to allow the Spirit to lead us after him, but, on our own, we stumble on the cross that comes between the two. Jesus does not ask of us greater courage than he asked of his disciples, to whom he gave the meal in remembrance of himself. Let us quietly and courageously confess our desires and our fears to the Father at this time, asking that we might be freed to gratefully allow the Spirit to bear new life within us. For Christ's sake.

Prayer of Confession: Our loving Father, God of creation, God of the ages, God of our Lord Jesus Christ. We confess to you that we are companions with your disciples in their confusion and fear. That we are oft-times caught between our desire to follow you and our desire to remain with that which is known and recognizable. We pray you would pour your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine; consecrate it, that we might be nourished with truth, courage, and hope in our journey with Jesus to the Father.

WORDS OF ASSURANCE

God has reached out to us once again, offering salvation, making us whole, drawing us into community where life is integrated and filled with meaning. The Spirit comes to us, making holy the commonplace. We are forgiven.

PASTORAL PRAYER

Ever living and ever loving God,
We praise you for your loving presence with us.

Come, Holy Spirit,
take and transform our societies—
that broken people find healing;
that lonely people find love;
that bitter people find peace;
that fearful people find hope.

Come, Holy Spirit,
take our world's leaders and governments and bring renewal—
that communication can be open;
that relationships between hostile people and hostile nations will evaporate;

that a hunger for justice addresses the hunger for food felt by so many.

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill your church—
that our worship will be ever more pleasing to you;
that prayers will change our minds
instead of trying to get you to change yours;
that our lives will make a real difference to real people in the real world.

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill our lives with your presence—
so that more and more every day,
all that we do and say and hope
will be an act of worship to you and an expression of love to others,
to the glory of your name we unite in the prayer you taught us to pray...

Offertory/Doxology/ Offertory Prayer

(Wykoff)

God of wind and flame: set us on fire this morning as we celebrate the explosion of your Holy Spirit coming into the world on the Day of Pentecost! Remind us that the gift you gave that day was not just the gift to speak in different tongues, but also the gift of hearing and comprehension. May your Holy Spirit keep us attuned to the voices all around us, to those who need us to be bearers of your love and compassion, and may these gifts we give help us, through your church, meet those needs. In the holy name of Jesus we pray. Amen. (Acts 2:1-21).

Hymn TFWS #2153

“I'm Gonna Live so God Can Use Me”

Publication Date: 2001

Copyright: Public Domain

Tune Information

Arranger: Wendell Whalum

Copyright: Arr. © Estate of Wendell Whalum

<http://www.gbod3.org/sorter/audio/2153.mp3>

**1 I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**2 I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**I'm gonna work so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**3 I'm gonna pray so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

I'm gonna pray so God can use me

anywhere, Lord, anytime!

**4 I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**I'm gonna sing so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**5 I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

**I'm gonna live so God can use me
anywhere, Lord, anytime!**

Benediction:

May God nurture his gift within you as God likewise liberates you from your fears. Go in the peace and protection of God's Spirit.

Postlude