



SUNDAY PRAYER

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

MAY 31, 2020

GRACE CHURCH, TRUMBULL

THE WORD OF GOD

Hymn: Like the murmur of the dove's song (Hymnal #513)



1 Like the mur - mur of the dove's song, like the
2 To the mem - bers of Christ's Bo - dy, to the
3 With the heal - ing of di - vi - sion, with the



chal - lenge of her flight, like the vig - or of the
branch - es of the Vine, to the Church in faith as -
cease - less voice of prayer, with the power to love and



wind's rush, like the new flame's ea - ger
sem - bled, to her midst as gift and
wit - ness, with the peace be - yond com -



might: come, — Ho - ly Spi - rit, come.
sign: come, — Ho - ly Spi - rit, come.
pare: come, — Ho - ly Spi - rit, come.

Leader Alleluia. Christ is risen.
People The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Almighty God, to you all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from you no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our
hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Hymn of Praise: *Gloria in excelsis*

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Collect of the Day

Leader The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading

Acts 2:1-21

Reader A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. 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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, 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 Arabs-- in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

But 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. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

 '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.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
 in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
 and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above
 and signs on the earth below,
 blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness
 and the moon to blood,
 before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.' "

Reader The Word of the Lord.

People Thanks be to God.

Psalm 104:25-35, 37

Benedic, anima mea

25 O Lord, how manifold are your works! *
 in wisdom you have made them all;
 the earth is full of your creatures.

26 Yonder is the great and wide sea
 with its living things too many to number, *
 creatures both small and great.

- 27 There move the ships,
and there is that Leviathan, *
which you have made for the sport of it.
- 28 All of them look to you *
to give them their food in due season.
- 29 You give it to them; they gather it; *
you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.
- 30 You hide your face, and they are terrified; *
you take away their breath,
and they die and return to their dust.
- 31 You send forth your Spirit, and they are created; *
and so you renew the face of the earth.
- 32 May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; *
may the Lord rejoice in all his works.
- 33 He looks at the earth and it trembles; *
he touches the mountains and they smoke.
- 34 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; *
I will praise my God while I have my being.
- 35 May these words of mine please him; *
I will rejoice in the Lord.
- 37 Bless the Lord, O my soul. *
Hallelujah!

The Epistle

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

Reader A reading from the First Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free-- and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.

The Gospel

John 20:19-23

Reader A reading from the Gospel of John.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People Thanks be to God.



A Reflection

The Rev. Dr. Paul Jacobson

Send your Holy Spirit upon us, and clothe us with power from on high. Alleluia.

Imagine the scene. It is a hot day in early summer in a busy city. Preparations for an important festival are underway, and people from near and far have come to town for the celebration. In any other year, this might have described any town in Connecticut last weekend as parades and picnics marked Memorial Day. But this story is about Jerusalem, 2000 years ago, as Jews from around the world gathered to celebrate Pentecost.

Pentecost, after all, didn't start out life as a Christian feast. Pentecost is the 50th day after Passover, a celebration of God's gift of the Law (the first five books of the Bible) to the Children of Israel. It was an enormously important day, one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals commanded in the Bible.

So, outside in the streets, there are Jews from all over the Mediterranean converging on Jerusalem to celebrate the gift of Law. And, somewhere in town, there is a group of people

shut up in a room. These are the disciples of Jesus who have experienced his death, shared meals with him after his resurrection, and, ten days earlier, watched him ascend to God.

But Jesus had told them to wait, and they are waiting...for something. Can you imagine? Being closed in...waiting...for fifty days? Of course you can. If our experience of sheltering in place since the middle of March is any indication, it's not hard to imagine the confusion and frustration of those gathered in that upper room. The world they knew had changed. When could they get back to normal? How do they even plan for whatever a "new normal" might look like? And so, they wait.

And then, as the writer of Acts tells us, "suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting." What would any of us make of such a thing? Was this the kind of Advocate that they were expecting?

Pentecost sermons, even mine, are usually chock-a-block with images of wind and fire, and speaking in tongues. But today, I want to talk about dreaming. At the heart of the "first annual" Pentecost sermon, Peter quotes the prophet Joel:

‘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.
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

All of us - ALL of us - have been commissioned to be official Christian dreamers (Acts 2:16-18). And yet, we seem to be skittish about dreaming. So what's going on? I want to offer three things to think about, to dream about, today.

First, we learned somewhere along the line that dreaming is for kids, that dreaming isn't something responsible adults should do. We draw one of those handy either/or lines between those who are "realistic" or "pragmatic" and those whose "heads are stuck in the clouds."

But Joel says that *everyone* will see visions, prophesy, and dream. Interestingly, while his list includes old men, it starts with the young.

Steve Levitt and Stephen Dubner, the authors of the best-selling book *Freakonomics*, spend a lot of time thinking about the young. In one of their podcasts, entitled "Think Like a Child," Levitt says, "I think the beauty of thinking like a child ... is that sometimes doing things differently and simply and with a kind of joy and triviality leads you to a really special place that as an adult you don't get to go to very often."¹

¹ <https://freakonomics.com/podcast/think-like-a-child-a-new-freakonomics-radio-podcast/>

You can hear an echo of Jesus saying, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3).

So, what happens? Most of us have the experience of hearing a child (maybe it was us) ask "why?" and an adult (again, maybe us) saying, "because."

This past week, a week of joyful feasts of the Church, has also been a week of unspeakable loss and sorrow. More than 100,000 Americans have died from COVID-19. The toll of the pandemic, both human and economic, has laid bare the pernicious roots of us/them in our society.

And into this already gaping wound, there has been poured the horror, grief and destructive violence that has beset our nation since the tragic police-involved killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on Memorial Day.

This week has shown us that too many things that "everyone knows" need to be called into question by some serious, active dreaming that invites the Spirit to help us see possibilities we hadn't seen before. Or to see things we once knew, and had forgotten.

When I heard about the powerful version of "I Just Wanna Live" that went viral from 12-year-old Keedron Bryant to describe the frustrations he was feeling, I was reminded of Isaiah's prophecy: The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them (Is 11:6). Your young men shall see visions.

Second, we worry that dreaming can be divisive. What if your dream and mine are different? How do we decide whose dream is "better"? Once again, "better" requires that pesky, even sinful, either/or exercise. Here, we can turn to Paul, who reminds us that there is always diversity and difference in the Christian body -- and that this is something to be celebrated!

There is, as Paul writes to his beloved and difficult congregation in Corinth, a variety of gifts and likely a variety of dreams (1 Cor 12:3b-13). But there is one Spirit. Many new dreams invite multiple new worlds of possibilities. And this flowering of dreams is mediated, as Paul says, by a commitment to the common good.

One of the most curious and frustrating things to me about religion, particularly Christianity, in America, is our obsession with the individual. We want to see religion as a "personal" matter. People want to be left alone, to do as they please, regardless of the effect on others.

But if the scriptural record tells us anything, it tells us that God deals with us as a people – God's people. It's clear that, throughout history, God has called particular individuals to specific tasks, but never in isolation. Abraham & Sarah, Isaac & Rebecca, Jacob & Rachel, Moses, Miriam & Aaron and the prophets, not to mention Mary & Joseph and countless

others... None of these was called and gifted as an individual, but always on behalf of, and for the sake of, a community.

Each member of the body -- and each member's dream -- has a role to play. It may seem challenging, sometimes impossible, to get there, but the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost was never intended to make things easy; rather, those tongues of flame were sent to set hearts on fire, to energize and purify us, sometimes to clear away the most closely held idols of our individual identity.

The breath of the Spirit gives us not only the ability 'to speak' Truth, but also, more importantly in our time, the ability 'to hear' Truth – especially the truth of those so long relegated to the edges of “our” world.

Pray that the Spirit will give us grace to hear, especially when that Truth is too hot handle, too hard to hear.²

In Hebrew, the word for wind or spirit or breath is *ruach*. *Ruach* hovered over the void at the dawn of creation. *Ruach* is what God breathed into Adam to give him life. *Ruach* is what hovers over the baptismal font. The breath of God is the unseen life force within the universe. Without *Ruach*, none of us can breathe.

Finally, I wonder if we're just worried that our dreams might be disappointed. I mean, if we just stick with the status quo, we won't be surprised by how things work out. Even if we're in decline, at least we can see it coming.

Dreaming, for some, feels like getting your hopes up. And if things aren't going to end well, why add insult to injury by getting ourselves even more hurt in the process? Again, there's that adult voice saying, "why set yourself up for disappointment? Be realistic."

Realism, the status quo, is our view, the view of the world. It is not the view of the One in whom we live and move and have our being. Jesus refused to leave his disciples mired in fear. Indeed, on the evening of the Resurrection, Jesus sought them out, finding them even though they'd shut themselves behind locked doors in fear (John 20:19-23).

Jesus has more in mind for us than fear. He wants to breathe upon us the same Holy Spirit he gave his first disciples and set us loose to forgive sin, share the good news, work for the welfare of our community, particularly for Racial Healing, Justice, & Reconciliation, provide strength to the weak and courage to the fearful, and in all these ways to share with those around us the dream and vision of Christian community.

The world tells us: Be practical. Be realistic. Be secure. This is not what God calls us to. God calls us to dream. God enables us to dream. God commissions us to dream.

Might we fail? Yes, especially if we attempt this work on our own. But rather than let that possibility paralyze us, “we're asked to pray - not for divine remedy, but for divine

² My profound thanks, from a fellow adoptive Minneapolitan, to The Very Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund, the Dean of the Cathedral Church of St. Mark, for his ministry, especially his letter of May 29, 2020, portions of which have inspired sections of this sermon.

revelation - for a divine reminder that 'God is With Us,' even as the fires rage, even as our fear threatens to overwhelm us, even as 'our trust is taxed.' Yes, even then, even when our most cherished pathologies are revealed, even when the root is laid bare, even and especially then, God is With Us, which is to say, Life's meaning and purpose and trajectory come finally into view."³

And, so, we close with the hymn that began today's service:

With the healing of division,
with the ceaseless voice of prayer,
with the power of love and witness,
with the peace beyond compare:
come, Holy Spirit, come.⁴

Amen. Alleluia.



The 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,

³ From a May 29, 2020 letter to the Cathedral Church of St. Mark, Minneapolis, by their Dean, The Very Rev. Paul Lebens-Englund.

⁴ Like the murmur of the dove's song (Hymnal #513), Carl P. Daw (1981).

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.

The Prayers of the People

Form II

In the course of the silence after each bidding, the People offer their own prayers, either silently or aloud.

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for our Bishops Ian and Laura; for this gathering; and for all ministers and people.

Pray for the Church.

Silence

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people.
Pray for justice and peace.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, and those in prison.
Pray for those in any need or trouble.

Silence

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him.
Pray that they may find and be found by him.

Silence

I ask your prayers for the departed [especially _____],
Pray for those who have died.

Silence

Members of the congregation may ask the prayers or the thanksgivings of those present

I ask your prayers and thanksgivings for _____ .

Grace's Parish Prayer Cycle

Bill Feige.

Diocesan Cycle of Prayer

St. Paul & St. James, New Haven; St. Thomas', New Haven; Trinity, New Haven; St. James, New London.

Environmental ministry networks, eco-justice work; community gardens.

Anglican Cycle of Prayer

Pray for all members of the Anglican Communion around the world.

Silence

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored [especially _____ whom we remember today].

Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day.

Silence

Almighty God, by your Holy Spirit you have made us one with your saints in heaven and on earth: Grant that in our earthly pilgrimage we may always be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer, and know ourselves to be surrounded by their witness to your power and mercy. We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ, in whom all our intercessions are acceptable through the Spirit, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer *feel free to use whatever version you prefer*

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 for ever. Amen.

Leader Let us bless the Lord. Alleluia, Alleluia!

People Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia!

Leader May the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Spirit. *Romans 15:13*

People Amen.

Hymn: Alleluia, alleluia! Give thanks to the risen Lord (Hymnal #178)

Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia! Give thanks to the ris-en Lord. Al-le - lu - ia, al-le - lu - ia! Give praise to his Name.

1. Je - sus is Lord of all the earth,
 2. Spread the good news o'er all the earth:
 3. We have been cru - ci - fied with Christ.
 4. Come, let us praise the liv - ing God,

He is the King of cre - a - tion. Al - le
 Je - sus has died and has ris - en.
 Now we shall live for ev - er.
 joy - ful - ly sing to our Sa - vior.

MISCELLANEOUS PRAYERS

A Collect for Sundays

O God, the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: Do not leave us comfortless, but send us your Holy Spirit to strengthen us, and exalt us to that place where our Savior Christ has gone before; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, in glory everlasting. Amen.

For Peace

O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, to know you is eternal life and to serve you is perfect freedom: Defend us, your humble servants, in all assaults of our enemies; that we, surely trusting in your defense, may not fear the power of any adversaries; through the might of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Mission

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

For those who face great uncertainty

God of the present moment,
God who in Jesus stills the storm
and soothes the frantic heart;
bring hope and courage to all
who wait or work in uncertainty.
Bring hope that you will make them the equal
of whatever lies ahead.
Bring them courage to endure what cannot be avoided,
for your will is health and wholeness;
you are God, and we need you.

Adapted from A New Zealand Prayer Book, p. 765

A Collect in Times of Pandemic

Grant we beseech thee, merciful Lord, help and deliverance unto us, who are visited with grievous sickness and mortality. Sanctify to us this our sore distress, and prosper with thy continual blessing those who labor to devise for mankind protection against disease and pain; through him who both healed and hallowed pain, thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

Proposed Prayer Book 1928 (Church of England)

A Prayer for the Power of the Spirit Among the People of God⁵

God of all power and love,
we give thanks for your unfailing presence
and the hope you provide in times of uncertainty and loss.
Send your Holy Spirit to enkindle in us your holy fire.
Revive us to live as Christ's body in the world:
a people who pray, worship, learn,
break bread, share life, heal neighbors,
bear good news, seek justice, rest and grow in the Spirit.
Wherever and however we gather,
unite us in common prayer and send us in common mission,
that we and the whole creation might be restored and renewed,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

⁵ This is a new collect composed by a team of Episcopalians and Lutherans calling us both to renewal in the midst of the pandemic and also honoring the nearly two decades of full communion between The Episcopal Church and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). Presiding Bishop Curry and the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, invite our parishes to pray this collect every Sunday from Pentecost through the first Sunday in September.

For the Victims of Addiction

O blessed Lord, you ministered to all who came to you: Look with compassion upon all who through addiction have lost their health and freedom. Restore to them the assurance of your unfailing mercy; remove from them the fears that beset them; strengthen them in the work of their recovery; and to those who care for them, give patient understanding and persevering love. Amen.

A Prayer Attributed to St. Francis

Lord, make us instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is discord, union;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;

to be understood as to understand;

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive;

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,

we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks

for all your goodness and loving-kindness

to us and to all whom you have made.

We bless you for our creation, preservation,

and all the blessings of this life;

but above all for your immeasurable love

in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;

for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.

And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,

that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,

not only with our lips, but in our lives,

by giving up our selves to your service,

and by walking before you

in holiness and righteousness all our days;

through Jesus Christ our Lord,

to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,

be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen.