

Numbers 11

Moses heard the people wailing, every family at the door of its tent. The Lord became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. **11**He asked the Lord, “Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? ... **13**Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, ‘Give us meat to eat!’ **14**I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. **15**If only I had found favour in your eyes and not lived to see such misery as this!”

16The Lord said to Moses: “Gather seventy of the elders of Israel. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. **17**I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.

24So Moses went out and told the people what the Lord had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the tent. **25**Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied.

26However, two men, Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. **27**A young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.”

28Joshua, Moses’ aide since youth, spoke up and said, “Moses, my lord, forbid them!” **29**But Moses replied, “Are you zealous on account of me? If only the whole people of God were prophets and the Lord would give his spirit to them all!” **30**Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

31A wind went out from the Lord and drove quail in from the sea. It scattered them up to two cubits all around the camp, as far as a day’s walk in any direction.

John 20:19-23

19On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews,^c Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, “Peace be with you.” **20**When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. **21**Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” **22**And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

Lake of Bays Pentecost 28 May 2023

Welcome

Family Life / Work / Celebrations

Lighting of the Christ Candle and acknowledgement of the land

Pentecost: a new beginning, the beginning of a third life for Christ. The first, from his birth in Bethlehem until his death outside of Jerusalem. the second: from his resurrection until his ascension, during which he confirmed the faith of the apostles and made the 3 years of his ministry infinitely significant. And now, from Pentecost on, Christ lives again as the Spirit making the gospel story come alive, for generation after generation. As we light this candle, we think also of its boundlessness in space, across the many cultures of the human race. And we acknowledge the many nations from which our families stem and the many nations who have lived on this land before us. May the light of Christ shine upon all.

Call to Worship

At the onset of Creation, the Holy Spirit was present and moving, over the dark, formless, unordered chaos.

**When the time came to give life to Creation,
to give it breath, movement and freedom,
it was the Holy Spirit that moved first,
and the breath of Spirit that gave us life.**

When the Church of Christ was ready to move out into the world with Resurrection faith, it was the Holy Spirit who gave the strength, steadied our steps, set words and hearts afire.

**Whenever the Church gathers in worship,
our first action is to open ourselves to the same Holy Spirit,
who gave us life together in Christ,
who gives courage and hope to the Church,
and leads us always closer to God's love.**

Prayer of Approach (unison)

Mighty God, thank you for calling us together and making us one with Jesus Christ our Saviour. Thank you for the Church: for the power of Word and Sacraments, the faithful witness of bold men and women, the warm fellowship and bright hope.

When we have held back the movement of your Spirit, or been slow to serve or reluctant to speak, forgive us. By your Spirit, draw us together, fill us with eager desire to be faithful in our world today and to be at

peace with each other, for the sake of Christ our Lord, Head of the body of the Church and Light of the world. Amen.

By the grace of Christ, we are forgiven; by the love of Christ, we forgive each other. Let us share his peace.

Opening Hymn: VU 205 Like the Murmur

WE LISTEN

INTRO: The reading from Numbers takes us back to Moses and the years in the desert. In this episode, they already had the manna, but they wanted meat. Having to contend with the constant mutterings and complaints of the people, Moses was understandably discouraged.

Scripture Readings: Numbers 11:10-17; 24-31a

Psalm 104:24-34

O Lord, what variety you have created, arranging everything so wisely!

Earth is completely full of things you have made:

Among them, vast expanse of ocean, teeming with countless creatures, creatures large and small, with the ships going to and fro and the great whales to amuse you.

All creatures depend on you to feed them in due season;

When you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

When you hide your face, they are terrified.

You take away their breath, they die and return to dust.

You give your Spirit-breath, they are created anew, you renew the face of the earth.

Glory forever to the Lord, May the Lord find joy in all he creates,

at whose glance the earth trembles, at whose touch the mountains smoke!

I will sing to the Lord all my life. May my meditation be pleasing to him.

Praise the Lord, O my soul! Praise the Lord.

John 20:19-23

Leader: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church

All Thanks be to God.

Hymn VU 388 Spirit dancing

Sermon

Sermon

When the divine spirit is present in communities and personalities, grasping them, inspiring them, transforming them, it can be like split tongues of fire lashing out, like a gust of wind suddenly shaking the room. The story we most often hear on Pentecost about the apostles being so filled with the HS that they rushed out as if pushed by a gale, speaking in all kinds of different languages is not the one we are looking at this morning. But we bear it in mind. That one did describes God's presence in the HS like experiencing fire and wind. Fire sets on fire. The experience of the Spirit can make particular circumstances become for us a burning issue.

So fires are sometimes seen ablaze. But often they are unseen, smouldering underground, spreading through roots and turf. The wind sometimes blows in a rage, even uprooting trees, and it can be very annoying when we're on the lake and it is against us, or as once the disciples experienced it, contrary and confusing. But we prefer it blowing softly on our back, so more often we experience the gentle, moving air around us, more or less unnoticed, yet keeping us alive.

In Jn ch 14 Jesus had said to his disciples "the Holy Sp whom the Father will send in my name will bring to your minds all that I have said to you". bring to your minds = make real, relevant and contemporary. This is more the effect described in John 20 that we read this morning. the wind blowing softly on our back, pushing us gently ahead on life's journey. In these just 5 verses, we find 5 precious gifts that Jesus gave that day to his friends as part of his bestowing of the Spirit. And these gracious gifts are also ours.

1) The first was peace. What this might have brought to their minds was the double sided fact that he had disappointed them, made them feel that their whole experience with him those 3 years had been a waste of time; it had ended shamefully. But the shame was also theirs; they had disappointed, abandoned him at his trial and

crucifixion, and now, alive he gives them his peace. Assures them of the victory. Peace of mind, peace of heart, peace in the guts.

2) And secondly, of course, this brought them indescribable Joy, gladness of heart. He assured them of the truth of what they were now witnessing by showing his wounded hands and side. Again, this probably troubled them, to see his awful wounds which brought to their minds the pain of it all and their own guilt. But again, Jesus gives them peace on that point.

3) Thirdly with this joy and peace came a Mission, “As the Father sent me, he says, so am I sending you.” Well we know what that mission is: basically and summarily to let that Holy Spirit act in us to be agents of God’s love in the world. The mission certainly varies according to circumstances, but that’s what it is. And to act with the HS means not only to have received it but to ask often that we be refilled with it.

There are a few basic reasons for coming to church on a Sunday morning. Someone once said, well, the greatest thing is to receive the blessing. A blessing on the way out. And I agree. Another reason is to get that refill. Like taking your propane tank to be refilled for the BBQ. You have to do it to have it working. And we need to be refilled with that Holy Air to fulfill our mission, be it to those around us or those people, situations afar.

4) Then in sequence Jesus breathed on them and said “Receive the HS.” His breathing on them recalls God in the 2nd ch of Genesis breathing into the nostrils of some sort of an earthling (that’s the word in Hb, adam, taken from the dust, the adamah): and thus it became a living being, a soul with a spirit, some of God’s own spirit. And here some of Jesus’ own spirit. J’s own id’y, the means of his power, his thought, his Sp. Who knows if this is not what distinguishes humankind from the other animals. What made the homo, humanoid, a homo sapiens, a soul having some wisdom, even the potential for divine wisdom. I say potential because Jesus did not just give the spirit like that, he said “Receive it”. In the Greek that verb is in a tense we don’t really have in English. It means I’m

giving it, but you have to take it. It's offered, you make the gest to take it into yourself.

In our story from the book of Numbers, when Moses' responsibilities were just too much for him, God says I will give some of the elders some of my spirit also so as to equip them to help you. And Moses makes this prophetic declaration: "Would that everybody could receive the gift of the spirit and prophesy", i.e. of God's own wisdom.

Now for an aside: there's a very interesting fact in this OT story. The people were tired of the manna and they wanted real meat. Manna in fact is a kind of powdery substance that comes out of certain bushes on the desert with the morning dew. Now, after the elders prophesy, they got that meat in the form of quails like falling from the sky. Again it is a fact that a kind of quail flies across the Mediterranean in great flocks and they do fall on the north coast of Africa, tired out. Apparently they are served at that time of the year in restaurants on the coast of Egypt. So this episode maybe meant that the gift of the Spirit gave Moses and the others a trust in God, in God's own providence.

5) And 5ly, with the giving of the Spirit came the authority to forgive sins. this is indeed a great resp'y. Like Peter holding the keys to Hvn, we are holding keys to forgiveness on Earth! If I do not forgive my brother or my neighbour, he or she will go on into eternity bearing my condemnation! Just think about that!

Here's a little episode from my own exp'ce. I was about 20 ys old, living a kind of wild life around Europe, typical to that age and era. At some point I felt I had to consult a person of God. The priest in the American Episcopalian church in Geneva had me sit down in his office and asked me what I wanted to confess. I didn't know I really wanted to confess anything and certainly not anything in particular. So time passed and he kept pressing me to be more specific. Finally, he gave up, maybe he had another appointment, anyway, he took me into the chancel, had me kneel down, and absolved, in that church's jargon, me of my sin. I have come to think that it was as lucky for him as for me that he did so.

So Jesus bestows upon us the divine Spirit along with the gifts of peace, joy, a mission, and the authority to forgive.

I want to conclude by some practical notes, if we are to receive the HS. It is something that impressed me a year ago at Pentecost in a sermon by Pope Francis, 5/cost 2022. His topic was how to distinguish the voice of the Holy Spirit from “the voice of the spirit of evil.” how to recognize the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who “at every crossroads in our lives suggests to us the best path to follow.” He made the following surprising and significant points. “The Holy Spirit will never tell you that on your journey everything is going just fine. ... No, he corrects you; he makes you weep for your sins; he pushes you to change, to fight against your lies and deceptions, even when that calls for hard work, interior struggle and sacrifice.

“Whereas the evil spirit, on the contrary, pushes you to always do what you think and you find pleasing. He makes you think that you have the right to use your freedom any way you want. Then, once you are left feeling empty inside – it is bad, this feeling of emptiness inside, many of us have felt it – and when you are left feeling empty inside, he blames you, becomes the accuser, and throws you down, destroys you.”

The Holy Spirit, correcting you along the way, never leaves you lying on the ground, never. He takes you by the hand, comforts you and constantly encourages you.

Feelings of “bitterness, pessimism and negativity” never come from the Holy Spirit, but come from evil, which “stokes impatience and self-pity ... complaints and criticism, the tendency to blame others for all our problems.”

“The Holy Spirit on the other hand urges us never to lose heart and always to start over again. ... Get up! How? By jumping right in, without waiting for someone else. And by spreading hope and joy,

not complaints; never envying others, never – envy is the door through which the evil spirit enters – but the Holy Spirit ... leads you to rejoice in the successes of others.”

Finally, the Holy Spirit is “practical” and “wants us to concentrate on the here and now, because the time and place in which we find ourselves are themselves grace-filled.” Amen.

WE RESPOND

Call for Offering *We are invited to share our gifts with one another. St Paul wrote to the churches: As long as the willingness is there, a person is acceptable with whatever they can afford. Not that to give relief to others is to make things difficult for oneself, but that it is a question of balancing what happens to be your surplus now against another’s present need, and one day they may have something to spare that will supply your own need.*

Hymn VU 196 Wind Who makes All winds

Prayers of intercession

We bless you, Dear Lord, for these gifts that we are able to make for the furtherance of the work of your Holy Spirit on Earth. We praise you, Lord and Giver of Life, who renews the face of the earth and the depths of the seas. Take what we offer, our very selves, into your service.

Spirit, God of Pentecost, we pray that we may not only receive your Holy Spirit but also be filled with it each waking morning. Develop our talents, increase our wisdom, make us more sensitive to the needs of others. Give us the patience we need in the challenges of every day.

Spirit God of Pentecost, whose first gift to the disciples was peace, we pray, That the Holy Spirit of Peace may work in us to unite and reconcile the churches, peoples and nations of the earth. That your power may operate in us to help bring an end to violence, war, hatred, prejudice. That the Church, through the powerful communication of the Spirit, may indeed make the Gospel understandable to people of every race, language, and culture.

Prigozhin said his troops would have to leave

Bakhmut on or around June 1 to “reformat, reequip

and rearm,” adding: “427 days of war is hard combat work.”

When Wagner leaves Bakhmut, the city will become the responsibility of Russia’s Ministry of Defense, which should be ready to take over, he said. “If they cannot accept this, then the relevant persons must shoot themselves,” he said. 80% of Wagner’s casualties were due to his troops’ lack of ammunition.

Now hear dear Lord, the private prayers of each one of us as we sing:

Hymn VU 376

The Lord’s Prayer (p 914)

Closing Hymn: VU 375 Spirit, spirit of Gentleness

Commissioning and Benediction

WE LISTEN

Closing Hymn: VU 378 Spirit of God, descend

Commissioning and Benediction

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ
And the love of God
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Be with us all.
Amen

For your calendars:

May 15-28 Rev. Meg away.
May 21 Guest Minister: Jane Haapiseva
May 28 Guest Minister: Jane Haapiseva
June 4 Trinity Sunday with Rev Meg
Jun 11- July 9 Rev Meg away
June 11 Guest Minister: Rev. Donna Bowman Woodall
June 18 Guest Minister: Rev. Nina Fulford
June 25 Guest Minister: Rev Donna Bowman Woodall
July 2 Guest Minister: Pat Edmonds
July 9 OPEN HOUSE at each church
July 16 Rev Meg back
July 30 5th Sunday Joint Communion at Seabreeze

Note: For pastoral care emergencies when Rev Meg is away, please contact our VAM Rev. Donna Bowman-Woodall at. 705-571-1992.

a fragment of the First Epistle of Peter, 3-4th c.

And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. Gen

1:1