**First Presbyterian Church, Tucumcari**

*The Church With the Holy Spirit Window*

**Sunday, May 31, 2020 Day of Pentecost**

**Rev. Amy Pospichal, Pastor Accompanist, Marjorie McKenzie**

**BH 130 Let Every Christian Pray**

**RH 235 Breath on Me, Breath of God**

**RH 242 O Spirit of the Living God**

**Call to Worship (please see bulletin)**

**Prayer of the Day**

On this Pentecost Day, we thank you for sending us an Advocate who guides us with power and truth. Thank you for the grace of your Spirit who prays with us in wordless sighs, even when we don’t know what to say. For being with us as we seek to heal the world, by revealing Jesus to us. Thank you for your fire and your adoption into God’s family, for strengthening us as your people. Thank you for the many gifts of your Spirit, blessing and encouraging us. Be in our worship of you today, empowered by your invisible Spirit, that we bear you visibly through our lives! Amen.

**Call to Confession**

**Prayer of Confession (please see bulletin)**

**Assurance of Pardon**

My friends, God hears your voice – whether you shout from the top of your lungs or whisper softly below your breath. God has already forgiven you for not listening – and is calling you to live this Good News through the Holy Spirit.

**Praise God, who sends the Spirit of Truth and Love to the world. Amen!**

Believe and live the good news:

**In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!**

The peace of the Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

**Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 (please see bulletin)**

**Prayers of the People**

God of our awakening…

we have named our fears;  
we have named those things  
that hold us back  
and keep us from moving beyond  
where we are.

You have taken our fears…  
our inhibitions…  
and our complacencies…  
and you have invited us  
uninhibited…courageously…  
passionately and COMpassionately  
to fly on the wings of your Spirit.

We look to the sky…  
we look on the streets…  
we look in the alleyways…  
we look in our homes…  
we look to the mountains and the rivers…  
the valleys and the seas…  
we look into the eyes of one another…  
those we know,  
and those we are meeting for the first time…  
we look at individuals,  
we look into communities…  
we look throughout your whole creation…  
and we see potential.

Where there is despair…we see the potential for hope.  
Where there is hunger…we see the potential for satisfaction.  
Where there is war…we see the potential for peace.  
Where there is prejudice…we see the potential for fellowship.  
Where there is oppression…we see the potential for justice.

This list could go on…  
but when we dare to look at the world through your eyes…  
when we make enough room for your Spirit to enter in…  
when we have the audacity  
to trust your perfect vision for creation…  
all there is to see is potential.

So inspire us…  
in the midst of hatred and destruction,  
abuse and neglect,  
natural disasters and human-generated disasters…  
inspire us with the stories of loving and building up,  
respecting and caring,  
helping and sharing and repairing…  
so we may cling to your Spirit  
as she leads us beyond where we are  
into a way of life that reflects your goodness…

just as Jesus prayed…

OUR FATHER…

**Presentation of Offering and Offertory**

**Time out for Teaching: The Holy Spirit (according to James Montgomery)**

One of the hymns we sing today was written by James Montgomery. Never having heard of the guy, I thought I’d look him up. I like to know the lives of these people who write our hymns. James Montgomery was the son of missionaries. While he was studying to become a minister, his parents went to the West Indies and they died there. He also became a newspaper publisher in England during the Napoleonic Wars. He was there for 31 years, until he sold it and became a full time poet and hymn writer.

The last hymn (#242) “O Spirit of the Living God” is 5 short verses about the works of the Holy Spirit. I want to invite you to open it up and look at the words together. What works of the Holy Spirit do you see there?

“Plenitude of grace”

Giver of fire and love to preach the word

Giver of power and heavenly anointing

Light for our darkness and confusion

Giver of strength and mercy

A fresh breath like morning air for hearts of stone.

The Presbyterian “Brief Statement of Faith” describes the Holy Spirit in other ways, but similar:

52 We trust in God the Holy Spirit

53 everywhere the giver and renewer of life.

54 The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,

55 sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbor,

56 and binds us together with all believers

57 in the one body of Christ, the Church.

58 The same Spirit

59 who inspired the prophets and apostles

60 rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,

61 engages us through the Word proclaimed,

62 claims us in the waters of baptism,

63 feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,

64 and calls women and men to all ministries of the Church.

65 In a broken and fearful world

66 the Spirit gives us courage

67 to pray without ceasing,

68 to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior,

69 to unmask idolatries in Church and culture,

70 to hear the voices of peoples long silenced,

71 and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

72 In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,

73 we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks

74 and to live holy and joyful lives,

75 even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,

76 praying, “Come, Lord Jesus!” 11.5

77 With believers in every time and place,

78 we rejoice that nothing in life or in death

79 can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Prayer for Illumination**

**Acts 2:1-21**

1When 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.

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.  
18  Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
          in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
               and they shall prophesy.  
19  And I will show portents in the heaven above  
          and signs on the earth below,  
               blood, and fire, and smoky mist.  
20  The sun shall be turned to darkness  
          and the moon to blood,  
               before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.  
21  Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’”

**John 20:19-23**

19When 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.” 20After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. 21Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” 22When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

**Sermon: “The Walls are Down” Rev. Amy Pospichal**

Pentecost is often remembered by the fire and wind and novelty of the day when the Holy Spirit lands upon the disciples there, during the Jewish Pentecost holiday. We just heard the story. It’s a grand work of God, who enabled people to speak in tongues, understandable to the out of towners who were there. It was a grand event, one that happened in the past to form the church of God, and yet it is one that continues to happen as it goes. God keeps on making us and remaking us, day by day and season by season.

Dr. Emily Kahm, a professor of theology in Omaha, mentions something very interesting, about today’s gospel reading. She says that, in light of our new rules for wearing masks, we are able to entertain it from a different perspective. They are hiding in fear behind locked doors. They are afraid that those who have been bringing the provisions might tell on them, or that the authorities could crucify them too as they did Jesus.

This moment sticks out for Dr. Kahm because they are isolated. And the idea of someone, anyone, entering our homes so freely, and then breathing all over us might give us the willies right now. But Jesus did. But what else might they have been afraid of? They may have also been afraid to see Jesus. They had deserted him before his death. They knew they deserved his wrath. And now, Jesus has demonstrated that he beat death and could walk through walls. If Jesus was able to do all these things, what more could he do to them?

So, no wonder Jesus tells them when he arrives, “Peace be on you.” For they were not at peace. This calming declaration, “Peace be on you” came with the gift of his breath, and the breath of Jesus is the very breath of God. It must have been an instant elixir of tranquility. This calming message was meant to cover all of their fears, everything.

So, I say to you as well, “Peace be on you. Receive God’s Holy Breath.” This is God’s way of telling us that we have forgiveness, and we really have everything we need to make our moves through life. This peace is a stark contrast, I think, to the tensions of our own times. I think our nation is in a posture of fear. Riots and looting in city streets over police violence. Anxieties about the unemployment rates. Fears about the pandemic. Not to mention our own personal conditions and illnesses…

But for us, that peace from God’s Holy Spirit can help us stay centered, and know that God is there, even in every storm. Even in the streets of L.A., Austin, Minneapolis and Philly. In Hong Kong, North Korea. God has already been there. The Holy Spirit is there, saying “Peace be on you.” Hopefully someone there is listening. The Holy Spirit is saying “Peace be on you” to the hospitals overwhelmed with sick people. It is the good news of the Holy Spirit is that God goes before us and with us and behind us too. If Jesus could walk through walls, then the Spirit is able to be everywhere.

Our Exercise Eat and Pray group has resumed meeting. Right now, there are five of us, most of the time. We do exercise in that room with the hula hoops behind the kitchen. Then we sit together to drink coffee, snack on something that one of us brought to share. Then we end with prayer. The other day one of them remarked how wonderful it was that we could be so comfortable with one another. No matter our differences, we can sit and joke around for an hour and not take anything personally. It is fun, but it is also joy and peace to see this kind of thing happening – a thing where peace and grace comingle and flow.

Remember the peace of Christ that was given the disciples on that day. He was also forgiving them. They had deserted him and he died, but he rose and now breathed on them a sign of forgiveness. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for us. To receive that grace and to also give it. To break down the walls for all of us. To give us the grace we need to overcome our fears. Amen.

**Benediction:**

The Spirit of God inspires…  
listen!  
The Spirit of God transforms…  
grow!  
The Spirit of God empowers…  
go…and be…and do!

And may you…  
those you encounter…  
and those who are touched beyond that encounter…  
discover and know the grace, love, and peace of God  
each and every day.

Amen.

**THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH**

**Session will be meeting as soon as worship is over.** We will be discussing church insurance and doing some catching up on unfinished business, as we have not had a chance to meet during the lockdown.

**Church is back!** Please respect one another’s space, observing the 6-foot distancing between one another. Please also wear a mask or some other means of covering your face. Please remember to wash your hands on the way out today. Consider it a reminder of your baptism.

