

Pentecost Sunday
May 28th, 2023

Introduction to the Day

Pentecost derives its name from the Jewish festival celebrating the harvest and the giving of the law on Mount Sinai fifty days after Passover. Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the Holy Spirit as God's presence within and among us. In Acts the Spirit arrives in rushing wind and flame, bringing God's presence to all people. Paul reminds us that though we each have different capacities, we are unified in the Spirit that equips us with these gifts. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit on his disciples, empowering them to forgive sin. We celebrate that we too are given the breath of the Holy Spirit and sent out to proclaim God's redeeming love to all the world.

Greeting – The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Blessed be the holy Trinity, † one God,
by whose hand we are given new birth,
by whose speaking we are given new life.
Amen.

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are welcomed, restored, and supported
as citizens of the new creation.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Silence for Reflection

Holy God,
holy and merciful,
holy and mighty,
you are the river of life,
you are the everlasting wellspring.

In mercy and might you have freed us from death
and raised us with Jesus, the firstborn of the dead.
In baptismal waters our old life is washed away,
and in them we are born anew.

Gathering Hymn

“Christ, Be Our Light”

#715 vs. 1,3,4,5

Prayer of the Day

O God, on this day you open the hearts of your faithful people by sending into us your Holy Spirit. Direct us by the light of that Spirit, that we may have a right judgment in all things and rejoice at all times in your peace, through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Genesis 12:1-9

Now the LORD said to Abram, “Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”

As water is poured into the font

Glory to you for oceans and lakes,
for rivers and streams.

Honor to you for waters that wash us clean,
quench our thirst, and nurture both crops and
creatures.

Praise to you for the life-giving water of baptism,
the outpouring of the Spirit of the new creation.

**Wash away our sin and all that separates us
from you.**

**Empower our witness to your resurrection.
Strengthen our resolve in seeking justice for all.**

Satisfy the world's need through this living water.
Where drought dries the earth, bring refreshment.

Where despair prevails, grant hope.

Where chaos reigns, bring peace.

We ask this through Christ,
who with you and the Spirit reigns forever.

Amen.

⁴ So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. ⁵ Abram took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot and all the possessions that they had gathered and the persons whom they had acquired in Haran, and they set forth to go to the land of Canaan. When they had come to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved on to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, and there he built an altar to the LORD and invoked the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on by stages toward the Negeb.

Thanks be to God.

Children's Message

Holy Gospel: John 20:19-23

¹⁹ 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." ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." ²² 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 retain the sins of any, they are retained."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to You, O Christ

Sermon

People of God, grace to you and peace from God, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Our theme for the summer is an extension of our Strategic Plan process. The process itself has three phases. Phase 1 is Listening to the Congregation. Thus far we have had the Congregation Conversation that kicked off this process and coming up this week the Strategic Plan team will take a look at the results of the 109 surveys that were completed.

The second phase is Listening to the Community. The Strategic Plan team has started that process with the gathering of names of community partners and those interviews are underway.

The third phase is what we are going to be doing starting today, going through the summer, until September 10. Listening to God. Each week in worship we will hear a story from scripture revolving around the idea of God's call.

These stories will be accompanied by three questions:

- How do the people in the story hear God's call to them?
- How open are they to God's call?
- What might this passage say to our community of faith?

Our call story for today is the story of Abram. The story of Abram (renamed Abraham) begins the long narrative of the chosen people of God. This passage is only 12 chapters into Genesis, the first book of the Bible. After creation (and Adam and Eve) the stories move quickly from Noah to the Tower of Babel. Beginning with Abraham, the story becomes specific to a person, a family, a clan, and (eventually) the nation of Israel.

In the verses before this passage, Abram and his wife Sarai moved from Ur of the Chaldeans to a new home in Haran. God then spoke to Abram and calls him to take their family somewhere they had never been. Then came the promises of a land (which came to be known as Israel) and a great nation (God's chosen people). These promises shape the rest of the Biblical Story.

This introduction lays out the incredibly journey that Abraham and those who would go with him are about to embark on. The way this all takes place leads to some question. Our text simply states, “Now the Lord said to Abram...” How exactly did the Lord say this?

Was it a booming voice from the sky? When that happens, scripture tells us.

Was it a burning bush? When that happens, scripture tells us.

Was it in a dream? Again, when that happens scripture tells us.

We don't know how it is that the Lord spoke to Abram. But it worked! The Lord speaks to Abram a message full of hope and promise, a vision of what can and will be! He will be so blessed and in being blessed he will be a blessing to others!

“So Abram went!” At 75 years aged he took with him his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, and all things and people that he possessed, and they set forth to go to the Land of Canaan.

In all honesty, this is a moderately terrifying text to be presented with in this 16 week process of Listening to God in scripture. “Well folks, Abram did it so we should to!

For them, God speaks directly (though we don't know in what format) to Abram, and Abram speaks to them. And seemingly without hesitation they go!

Wide open to what God is speaking to them through Abram they go.

How are we feeling about that? Does this leave any of you feeling a little unsettled? Trust me, you are not alone!

But, that is what God is doing, is it not? God *DOES* call us into the unknown and the uncomfortable. God *DOES* send us to places to reach people we never thought imaginable. That is what God does! That is what it means to be people of faith!

So, what might this passage be saying to us as a community of faith?

I don't, yet, have an answer to that question. But, I do know this. We will not lose sight of what Abram did when they reached the “place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh... The Lord appeared to Abram, and said, ‘to your offspring I will give this land.’ SO HE BUILT AN ALTAR TO THE LORD.

People of God, we can do all of the programming and processes, we can reach every unreached person in the Chippewa Valley, but if we forget that God is at the center of this acting in and through us, then we have done it wrong.

A footnote in the Lutheran Study Bible for this passage states, “The centrality of “blessing” in the promises God makes links back to the blessing at the creation of humankind. In and through this family, God's original intention in creation is to be brought forward in the lives of all.”

This call to Abram and those who would go with him is a call to us, to be a blessing to others as we have been blessed, but also bring forth God's activity in the lives of all people.

Thanks be to God.

AMEN

Hymn of the Day

“Baptized and Set Free”

#453

Baptism of Brighe Clare Hocking Huggins (granddaughter of Mike and Barb Huggins)

Apostle's Creed

Prayers of Intercession

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

A brief silence.

Passionate God, you sent your Spirit through the gifts of fire, wind, and word. As you equipped the disciples for their work, equip us to bring the good news to all those who long for you. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Restoring God, wind and flame bring life and destruction throughout the world. We pray for those who work with wind energy, for migratory birds, for protection for lands facing destructive fire, for forestry managers and firefighters. Renew the face of the earth. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Ever-present God, your spirit embraces all. Send your spirit of understanding to immigrants, refugees, and any experiencing language barriers. Bless the work of translators, ESL teachers, ambassadors, and international peace organizations. Safely guide those fleeing war and danger. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Merciful God, you anoint us with your spirit. Bless nurses, doctors, midwives, chaplains, counselors, and hospice workers as they care for those in need. We pray for all who seek your comfort (*We pray especially for Peyton, Matt, David, Verna, Lois, Irene, Connie, Clarice, Steve, Kathy, Val, Jacob, Cherri, Keith and JoJo, Bob and Joanne, Bill and Bonnie, Frank and Heather, Bob and Sonja, Bill and Betty, Tom and Kay, Sherm and Mary, Sandy*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Generous God, you impart a variety of gifts. Set aflame the desire to learn from one another, especially those who differ from us. Make your presence known through missionaries, peace workers, and through the outreach ministries of our synod and community (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Here other intercessions may be offered.

Life-giving God, we give thanks for those who have died to new life in you (*especially*). As we observe Memorial Day, we remember those who died in military service. Comfort all who mourn, and usher in a world where war is no more. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Amen.

Offering

Offertory Prayer

Generous God,
in this meal you offer your very self.
We give thanks for these gifts of the earth.
In the breaking of this bread
reveal to us the Risen One.
In the pouring of this wine
pour us out in service to the world;
through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Words of Institution

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen

Communion

Hymns #471 and #483

Prayer

Gracious God,
in you we live and move and have our being.
With your word and this meal of grace,
you have nourished our life together.
Strengthen us to show your love
and serve the world in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Blessing

The God of all,
who raised † Jesus from the dead,
bless you by the power of the Holy Spirit
to live in the new creation.

Amen.

Sending Song

“O Beautiful for Spacious Skies”

#888

Dismissal

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go in peace, to love and serve the Lord!

Okay! We will! Thanks be to God!

And all of Good Shepherd said...

AMEN!

May Financial Snapshot

Your generosity in action:

This Sunday we will have our 4th baptism
in the month of May!

Baptism starts a child's faith journey and
the family is given a faith chest.

May also saw the end of Shepherd's Kids
and Confirmation for the year.

YOUR GENEROSITY makes all of this
possible at Good Shepherd.

THANK YOU!!

Through May 24

Total Revenue **\$22,646**

1 more Sunday Offering to Come

Total Expenses **\$23,760**

Difference to date:

\$1,014



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