**Solidarity with Sisters’ Communal Prayer**

**June 5, 2022**

**Pentecost**

*“Peace be with you. Receive the Holy Spirit.”*

**HELLOs** and then Betty mutes everyone. **(Lynn Bufka)**

**WELCOME (Lynn)**

Welcome, everyone!

* Introductions – people who haven’t been here before?
* I prepared today’s communal prayer.
* Thanks to the people who will be reading and leading us in music and prayer today: Charlotte Cook, Jim De Quattro, Suzie De Quattro, Linda Donaldson, Cecilia Estrada, George Fulk, Ann Jelen, Karen McCarthy, Judith Nestor, Debra Street, Betty Thompson.
* If you’d like to read on future Sundays, please get in touch.

**SETTLING IN (Lynn)**

Let’s quiet ourselves so we can be attentive to what God hopes for us today. Notice your breath as it goes in and out…. Let it slow and deepen… and slowly fill you with the peace of Christ. We begin with 3 deep breaths. One to be here… one to be together… and one to welcome in the Spirit who never leaves us.

Now Debra Street will lead us into our prayer together.

**OPENING SONG** **- Lord, Send Out Your Spirit (Debra Street)**

Psalm 104- Lord, Send Our Your Spirit

Refrain: Lord, send out your spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Lord, send out your spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord, my God, you are great indeed. How manifold are your works, O Lord! The earth is full of your creatures.

Refrain

If you take away their breath, O Lord, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your spirit, they live. You renew the face of the earth.

Refrain

**GREETING (Linda Donaldson)**

Let us rejoice, for God gave us the Spirit! Alleluia! Alleluia!

All: The Spirit is in us! Alleluia! Alleluia!

**CALL TO WORSHIP/ GATHERING PRAYER**  **(Linda Donaldson)**

We come together today to stand beside the disciples in astonished joy as we know the Spirit of Jesus is still with us! And so we pray.

Holy Spirit, spill over from us into the world!

Teach us how to be a community of contagious peace and hope.

In a world and among loved ones with heart-breaking needs,

show us how to be your heart.

May we inquire, nudge, and challenge each other

to imagine what none us could conceive alone.

Amen.

Cecilia Estrada will introduce us to today’s theme.

**INTRODUCTION TO THEME (Cecilia Estrada)**

The first Pentecost must have been a scary yet awesome experience. Their revered teacher had died a most cruel and public death and the followers gathered in fear. Yet into that closed room, the Holy Spirit came. Jesus breathes the Holy Spirit into the people and by doing so, the people are transformed. With each breath, we are filled with God’s name. It is the Spirit of God, the breath of God, that is in each of us and connects us to each other.

*(Slight pause)*

Now Ann Jelen will read from the Acts of the Apostles. Jim DeQuattro will offer questions that will lead us into silence.

**READING 1 Acts 2:1-9**  **(Ann Jelen)**

(Ann) When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together.  
And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind,  
and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.  
And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in different tongues,  
as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.

Ann J: “Peace be with you.”

George: “Pax vobiscum.”  
Cecilia: “La paz sea con vosotros.”

Charlotte: “Amani kwako.”

Lynn: “Aapako shaanti mile.”

Judith Nestor: “La pè Bondye avèk nou.”

Jim DeQuattro: “Peace be with you.”

(Ann) Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused  
because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Are not all these people who are speaking Galileans?  
Then how does each of us hear them in our own native language?”

**QUESTIONS 1 (Jim De Quattro)**

We are from the East Coast, the South, California, the Midwest, Canada and Europe. We are older and middle aged, professed religious and single and married, parents, workers, retired. Just like the first followers, we too hear many people speaking to us of the mighty acts of God. Spend some time reflecting on how your faith has been shaped by people who seemingly are very different from you.

When have you had a time when your experience transcended any differences in language?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Lynn:** Share slides w/questions, Betty: time 2:00, chime.)

Lynn: Now George Fulk will read from the Gospel of John.

**READING 2 John 20:19-23 (George Fulk)**

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the doors were locked, where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst  
and said to them, “Peace be with you.” When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.  
Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As I have been sent by God, so I send you.”

And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,  
“Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them,  
and whose sins you retain are retained.”

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 2 (Jim De Quattro)**

What is it like to be breathed on by God?

What do you experience when you hear God say you or any one of us can forgive sins or be the one to retain sins?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** (Lynn: Share slides w/questions, Betty: time 2:00, chime, stop slide.)

Betty: Now Lynn Bufka will read a reflection.

**READING 3 (Lynn Bufka)**

And when Jesus had said this, he breathed on them and said to them,  
“Receive the Holy Spirit.”

When are we breathed on by someone else? Right now, we are trying to avoid just that- being breathed on- for fear of spreading illness. But typically, when someone breathes on us, it is often in very intimate moments- between loving partners, between parents and children, in the close embrace of a friend. How does it feel to be so close to someone that you feel their breath?

We often hear the word “aloha” and know that it is a greeting of welcome and community. The word comes from “Alo” meaning ‘presence’ and “Ha” meaning ‘breath’ so Aloha is the presence of breath or more beautifully the breath of life. With each greeting, you are being welcomed and welcoming others with the breath of life. Hawai’ian children are taught to remember to express Aloha with tenderness, harmony, pleasantness, humility and patience.

Many of you may be familiar with the word “namaste” as a common greeting in a yoga class. But namaste is not limited to yoga. It is a widely used greeting in India and among people of Indian origin. When used in greeting, people place their hands together in prayer over their heart and bow to the other person. It is a very respectful gesture. Namaste can be translated in many ways including “The soul within me, bows to the soul within you.” Or “I honor the place in you in which the entire Universe dwells, I honor the place in you which is of Love, of Integrity, of Wisdom and of Peace. When you are in that place in you, and I am in that place in me, we are One.”

God’s name- Yahweh- is itself a breath of prayer. The Hebrew recording of God’s name, as told to Moses, is YHWH [Reader: Please say each letter- Y H W H.] and over time, vowels have been added. But scholars have noted that YH WH [again say the letters with a pause between YH and WH] are breathing sounds. When pronounced without vowels, it sounds like breathing. YH (inhale with a “yuh” sound): WH (exhale with a “wuh” sound). With each breath, we speak God’s name. A baby’s first cry is God’s name. A deep sigh or groan or gasp that is too heavy for words is God’s name. And our last breath is when God’s name no longer fills our lungs.

With this awareness let us take a moment right now to breathe God’s name in and out (slowly) YH/WH, YH/WH, YH/WH. (Then silence for another 3 breaths).

The interconnectedness of language is a wonderful thing and reminds us of how all life, religion and culture comes from one source.

*(Slight pause)*

**QUESTIONS 3 (Jim DeQuattro)**

When have you felt another’s breath? What was that like for you?

How do you recognize the Spirit in others?

If breathing is speaking God’s name, how does it feel to know it is heard the loudest when we are quietest? How does it feel to quiet yourself to hear God’s voice?

**COMMUNAL SILENCE** **(Betty:** Share slide w/questions, time 2:00, chime, stop slide.**)**

Lynn: Suzie D eQuattro will lead our sharing.

**SHARING (Suzie De Quattro)**

We invite you to briefly share whatever is emerging in **your** heart this morning as you listened and as you reflected on these readings. That helps us to glimpse the many ways God is among us. We welcome all voices, and we know that the wisdom of this community includes both words shared and silent listening,

As you share your feelings, please use "I” or “me". And let's leave a breath of silence between speakers. A bridge of silence allows us to take in what was just said as we sense how the Spirit is moving in us.

So let’s begin in silence as we gather our reflections. *[Long pause.]*

Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute again afterwards.

Who would like to begin our sharing? *[Let silence extend until someone is moved to*

*speak.]*

(Sharing)

*[If there is extended silence during the sharing:]* Is there anyone else who would like to

share? *[Long-ish pause]*

*[Stop by about 11:20.]*

Thank you. We can continue after the final song, as we often do.

*[If necessary say]* “Those are wonderful points and information but let’s save them for after our final song and return to personal sharing.”

Thank you.

**PRAYERS OF THE COMMUNITY (Charlotte Cook)**

Let’s pause to notice the prayers that arise in us now. (Pause) Our response will be: Breath of Life, hear our prayer.

Let us pray that we will feel the breath of God in ourselves and in others. For this we pray. Breath of life, hear our prayer.

As we sleep and as we walk, we have the name of God on our lips. When we sigh in sadness, we speak God’s name. When our lungs burst with joy or we hold our breath in fear, God is with us. God is with us when we take a deep breath to find our courage. May the knowledge that the name of God is always on our lips, bring us comfort, strength and happiness. For this we pray. Breath of life, hear our prayer.

Let us join in prayer with the Medical Mission Sisters who each day pray for loving kindness to reach the hearts of people most responsible for death and carnage. Let us set a loving intention to slip past violence and hatred and be beacons of healing light. For this we pray. Breath of Life, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for pulmonologists and respiratory therapists and all healers who help us to breathe. For this we pray. Breath of life, hear our prayer.

Let us pray for all those who struggle to breathe. We pray for people with asthma and COVID and lung cancer and fear and anxiety and other ailments and challenges. We pray for people who have felt a knee on their neck and whose breath is choked. We pray for those breathing polluted air. We pray that all may have healing, fresh breaths. For this we pray. Breath of life, hear our prayer.

For what else shall we pray? Please unmute yourself to speak, and mute yourself afterwards.

(Shared prayers)

O You who see us, hear us, and love us more than we can imagine, thank you for receiving our intentions, spoken and unspoken. We entrust all to you. Amen.

**OFFERTORY (Betty Thompson)**

During this week after Pentecost how will you breathe out the presence of God? *[Long pause.]*

Let us pray. You who love us more than we can imagine, we give you our imaginations. Show us how to commit our time, talent, and treasure this week in gratitude for all you give us. Amen.

**CELEBRATION OF COMMUNION (Karen McCarthy)**

As we prepare to share this meal, let us be conscious of the Holy One we call our Creator, Friend, Mother, Father, Sister, Brother, Redeemer, Provider, and Shepherd.

Mindful of those who tilled the soil, those who harvested its bounty, and those who toiled in the heat of sun and kitchen, we ask blessings on all of them, they are here with us in a special way.

We ask you, Holy One, to accept these gifts and transform them into plenty to share with our sisters and brothers in need. Accept our gratitude for your love and grace. Accept our efforts to give thanks for each other.

Bless and inspire all young people to realize their visions of a better world, a world of peace. Bless those whose generosity and commitment makes possible their dreams: their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, and all others.

Bless all of us as we struggle to be engaged in the transformation of our world.

Bless us as we become eucharist for one another.

Give us and our world, we pray, plenty of knowledge and wisdom,

plenty of justice and compassion, plenty of bread and peace.

Let us say: Amen. So be it! Blessed be!

**THE PRAYER OF JESUS (Betty Thompson)**

Now let us join our hearts as if we could join our hands in harmony with our family throughout the world:

***All (muted):*** Heavenly Father, heavenly Mother, Holy and blessed is your true name. We pray for your reign of peace to come, We pray that your good will be done, Let heaven and earth become one. Give us this day the bread we need, Give it to those who have none. Let forgiveness flow like a river between us, From each one to each one. Lead us to holy innocence Beyond the evil of our days — Come swiftly Mother, Father, come. For yours is the power and the glory and the mercy: Forever your name is All in One. Amen.

**FINAL BLESSING (Debra Street)**

As we go forth, let us recognize the in-dwelling of God in our family members, in our neighbors, in strangers, in ourselves. May that in-dwelling transform us in our thoughts and our actions. May our every breath be praise to God and a blessing unto others. Aloha. Namaste.

Now Linda Donaldson will lead us in The Spirit is A-Movin.’

**CLOSING – The Spirit is A-Movin’ (Linda Donaldson)**

Refrain: The spirit is a movin’ all over, all over this land.

V1: People are gatherin’, the church is born; the Spirit is a blowin’ on a world reborn.

Refrain

V3: Old walls are falling down, and people all over are speaking with each other.

Refrain

V4: Filled with the Spirit, we are sent to serve. We are called out together, we are called to work.

Refrain

V5: The Spirit fill us all with pow’r, to be God’s witnesses to all we meet.

**RESOURCES**

Reflection contributions from

<https://www.doyou.com/what-do-namaste-and-aloha-have-in-common/> and

<https://diggingdeeper.net/2022/02/17/my-very-breath/>

(a reflection by Sandra Thurman Caporale from the Memorial Church of Christ in Houston) and Jason Gray released “The Sound of Our Breathing” in 2011 on his album A Way To See In The Dark.

The universal prayer of Jesus from Parker J. Palmer

<https://www.elkgroveumc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Alternative-versions-of-the-Lord.pdf>

Psalm 104: Lord Send out Your Spirit (because who doesn’t like a little Gospel music to get going!) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QPOyabOvK4>

Image 1:

Pentecost by Jen Norton. <https://fineartamerica.com/featured/pentecost-jen-norton.html>

Image 2: <https://pixabay.com/photos/dove-waves-particles-abstract-4191376/>



Image 3: <https://awaken.com/2019/06/the-healthy-happy-holy-breath/#post/0>

A picture containing invertebrate, mollusk

Description automatically generated

One more image, not being used, but lovely for Pentecost none the less!

<https://www.virtualpreacher.org/sermon-outlines/why-baptism-holy-spirit/>

