

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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May 31, 2020

DIVINE SERVICE II

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... we may be getting stressed and worried, tired and frustrated, and in need of a new heart!

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we celebrate Pentecost! Jesus hasn't left us alone; he has given us his Holy Spirit, just as promised. He hasn't left us in our old ways; by Word and Sacrament, the Spirit makes us new to live and love with a new heart from God!

OPENING HYMN

"Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord"
Hymn 176

Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord!
May all your graces be outpoured
On each believer's mind and heart;
Your fervent love to us impart.
Lord, by the brightness of your light,
In holy faith your church unite
From ev'ry land and ev'ry tongue;
This to your praise, O Lord our God, be sung: Alleluia! Alleluia!

Come, holy Light, Guide divine,
And cause the Word of life to shine.
Teach us to know our God aright
And call him Father with delight.
From ev'ry error keep us free;
Let none but Christ our Master be
That we in living faith abide,
In him, our Lord, with all our might confide. Alleluia! Alleluia!

Come, holy Fire, Comfort true;
Grant us the will your work to do
And in your service to abide;
Let trials turn us not aside.
Lord, by your pow'r prepare each heart,
And to our weakness strength impart
That bravely here we may contend,
Through life and death to you, our Lord, ascend. Alleluia! Alleluia!

INVOCATION

M: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

THE LESSON FOR PENTECOST SUNDAY

ACTS 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these men who are speaking

Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.
I will show wonders in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.
And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

CONFESSION

M: Dear friends, let us approach God with a true heart and confess our sins, asking him in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive us.

C: **Lord of life, I confess that I am by nature dead in sin.**
For faithless worrying and selfish pride,
For sins of habit and sins of choice,
For the evil I have done and the good I have failed to do,
I deserve to be cast away from your presence forever.
O Lord, I am sorry for my sins. Forgive me, for Jesus' sake.

ABSOLUTION

M: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. In his great mercy, God made us alive in Christ even when we were dead in our sins. Hear the word of Christ through his called servant:

I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

LORD, HAVE MERCY †

Kyrie

M: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

For the well-being of all people everywhere, that they may receive from you all they need to sustain body and life, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: For the spread of your life-giving gospel throughout the world, that all who are lost in sin may be brought to faith in you, hear our prayer, O Christ.

C: **Christ, have mercy.**

M: For patience and perseverance in this life, that we may not lose the hope of heaven as we await your return, hear our prayer, O Lord.

C: **Lord, have mercy.**

M: Lord of life, live in us that we may live for you.

C: **Amen.**

† Kyrie is the Greek word for Lord. The expression "Lord, have mercy" is one of the oldest worship responses in the Christian church

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold, uphold me with your free Spirit.

PRAYER OF THE DAY *(Spoken together)*

Holy Spirit, God and Lord, come to us this joyful day with your sevenfold gift of grace. Rekindle in our hearts the holy fire of your love that in a true and living faith we may tell abroad the glory of our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you and the Father, one God, now and forever. Amen.

HOLY GOSPEL

John 16: 5-11

“Now I am going to him who sent me, yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Because I have said these things, you are filled with grief. But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”

LUTHER'S EXPLANATION TO THE 3RD ARTICLE OF THE APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe that I cannot by my own thinking or choosing believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him.

But the Holy Spirit has called me by the gospel, enlightened me with his gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith. In the same way he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith.

In this Christian church he daily and fully forgives all sins to me and all believers.

On the Last Day he will raise me and all the dead and give eternal life to me and all believers in Christ.

This is most certainly true.

HYMN

"We Now Implore God the Holy Ghost"

Hymn 190

We now implore God the Holy Ghost
For the true faith which we need the most,
That in our last moments he may befriend us
And, as homeward we journey, attend us.
Lord, have mercy!

Shine in our hearts, O most precious Light,
That we Jesus Christ may know aright,
Clinging to our Savior, whose blood has bought us,
Who again to our homeland has brought us.
Lord, have mercy!

O sacred Love, grace on us bestow,
Set our hearts with heav'nly fire aglow
That with hearts united we love each other,
Of one mind, in peace with ev'ry brother.
Lord, have mercy!

O highest Comfort in ev'ry need,
Grant that neither shame nor death we heed
That e'en then our courage may never fail us
When the foe shall accuse and assail us.
Lord, have mercy!

SERMON

Psalm 51: 10-12

It's tiring, isn't it? Having to wear masks, maybe worse, having to listen to people argue about masks. And all the questions - what to do, when to do, how to do? Tiring, isn't it? Needing answers and not getting the answers we want. Needing answers and not having any answers to give. It's tiring, isn't it, this COVID-life? Being cooped up, stepping on each other's toes, getting on each other's nerves. Day after day, not being smart enough, strong enough, patient enough, loving enough. It's tiring, isn't it?

If only, huh? If only they could come up with a vaccine. If only life could get back to normal. If only ... they and them If only "they and them" would be smarter, more patient, more careful. If only they and them would do what they're supposed to. That's right! If only the rest of the world, they and them, would just do what I want, when I want, the way I want, then I would be just fine. If only "they and them" It's so easy to go down that "if only ... they and them" road, isn't it?

Our lesson gives us a better way. Our lesson is a prayer, not a prayer coming out of COVID-stress, but a prayer coming out of heart failure. So David prays, not just for an easier life, but for a new heart. And that's good, because my problem isn't just COVID-stress, or this stress or that

stress - "if only they and them would fix this and that then I would be all fine." No, my problem, like David, is heart failure. Not just high cholesterol, or a leaky valve or blocked artery; not just misfiring ignition or a blood-flow problem. No, David saw in himself a heart so stopped up with sin and guilt that God's love couldn't flow right. David saw in himself a heart with so many holes - you know how guilt eats at us - a heart with so many holes that it couldn't hold God's love right. David saw this in himself, that instead of God setting the pace for his heart, instead of God firing the ignition for his heart, time and again the ways of the world, worry, stress, sin, guilt, pride, envy, greed, lust, the need for control - they were setting the pace, they were firing the ignition in David's heart. David saw that in his heart. I see it in my heart. How about you? It's not easy to admit it, is it?

In Psalm 51, David confesses that his problem wasn't something or someone out there; he doesn't blame anyone or anything else (it, they, or them.) Even when life was good, and "they and them" were doing what he wanted, David still fouled up the works. He fouled up the works with the people around him; and worse, he fouled up the works with God. So he prayed, he begged for forgiveness. **"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. ... Cleanse me ..., and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."**

And in Psalm 103, he tells us how good it is to be forgiven! **"Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits - [and what comes first?] who forgives all your sins. ... The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."**

With Jesus, we have that same forgiveness! With a pure heart and a willing spirit, Jesus took our place in this world. What do you find to be the worst part of living in this world - the hurt and heartache? ... sickness and death? ... the ungodliness? ... the injustice? With a pure heart and a willing spirit Jesus faced it all. And he didn't just face it, he owned it. With a pure heart and a willing spirit Jesus took on our ungodliness, impurity, unwillingness, Jesus took it all as his own and with his death on the cross he paid the price to set us right with God. With a pure heart and a willing spirit, Jesus did everything God gave him to do for you and me and that whole world out there so that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved! Now, with Jesus, God sees you as he sees Jesus. He sees you with a pure heart and a willing spirit. And what do we say? **"Praise the Lord, O my soul."**

That wasn't good enough for David. I don't mean that in a bad way. It's not good enough for us either, is it? We aren't content being forgiven, praising God, and then living the same way we were with the same old heart, are we? If David were content to keep on stealing wives and killing their husbands, what would we say about his heart for God? Something fake, false, and fraud in there, right? And if we're content to keep on in our sin, what does that say about our heart for God? There's something fake, false, and fraud in us, isn't there?

When we love God and know how good it is to be forgiven by God, because we love God and it pains us to sin against him and that means it pains us to sin against each other, and, oh, because we love God and we want the world to know how great God is - we aren't content just to be forgiven and to keep on sinnin', are we? No, we're driven to live for God, driven to live with the heart and the Spirit of God, aren't we? So what do we do? We join David: **"Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me."**

Before David prayed **“Create in me,”** before he prayed **“grant me a willing spirit,”** before David even strummed his Hebrew guitar, God was already answering his prayer. And even before you pray, God is answering your prayer. You see, Jesus isn’t content to just wash us off and put us up on a shelf up in heaven. No, Jesus forgives us to live with his heart and his Spirit here in this world, yes, to share his heart and his Spirit in this COVID world.

We don’t have to live with hearts stuck in stress and worry. We don’t have to live with hearts stuck on getting our way. We don’t have to live with hearts stuck on our guilt (what we’ve done wrong) or hearts stuck on their guilt (what they do wrong). No, God is creating for you an always new heart; he’s working in you an always willing spirit - always ready and willing to pump with the love and the Spirit of God. How? Not with the snap of a finger, not by sitting back and waiting. No, this is how God gives you his new heart and spirit - by what you’re doing now, by filling up with his Word, and then by doing what you have been doing week after week with him - exercising the heart he is giving you! How will you exercise his new heart this week?

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”

HYMN

“Holy Spirit, the Dove Sent from Heaven”

Hymn 723

Holy Spirit, the dove sent from heaven,
Ever one with the One who is three,
From the Father you came, Words of peace to proclaim,
Come and comfort us, speak tenderly.
You, the fragrance of life we are seeking;
Fill your temple, your altar make clean.
Joyous shelter of love, Gracious friend from above,
In your care we are resting, serene.

Holy Spirit, the fire celestial,
Who on Pentecost came as foretold
To descend from on high, And the Church occupy
As the cloud filled the temple of old;
All the baptized you seal with your promise,
All believers your gift there receive,
So that all the elect— All in Christ—may expect
To enjoy what by grace they believe.

Holy Spirit, the unction of blessing,
Sacred oil of the green olive tree,
Giving heat, giving light, As the tent lamps ignite
And as Aaron praised God joyfully.
Blessed living and life-giving water,
Now preserve us from evil within;
For in Jesus, God's Son, All believers are one
In this washing that cleanses from sin.

Holy Spirit, the wind of great power,
Source of strength and of peace and of love,
Truest Comforter, plead As you bring all our need
To the throne of God's glory above.
Be the light that enlightens the Scriptures;
Keep our feet from each devilish snare;
Only you can make whole All that troubles our soul;
By your chrism, Christ's triumph we share.

This Spanish hymn to the Holy Spirit summarizes the blessings of Pentecost that our loving God continues to pour out on his people.

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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.

BLESSING

M: The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look on you with favor and give you peace.
C: Amen.

CLOSING HYMN

"When God the Spirit Came"
Hymn 187

When God the Spirit came
Upon his church outpoured
In sound of wind and sign of flame,
They spread his truth abroad
And, filled with the Spirit,
Proclaimed that Christ is Lord.

What courage, pow'r, and grace
That youthful church displayed!
To those of ev'ry tribe and race
They witnessed unafraid.
And, filled with the Spirit,
They broke their bread and prayed.

They saw God's Word prevail,
His kingdom still increase,
No part of all his purpose fail,
No promised blessing cease
And, filled with the Spirit,
Knew love and joy and peace.

Their theme was Christ alone,
The Lord who lived and died,
Who rose to his eternal throne
At God the Father's side,
And, filled with the Spirit,
The church was multiplied.

So to this present hour
Our task is still the same:
In Pentecostal love and pow'r
His gospel to proclaim
And, filled with the Spirit,
Rejoice in Jesus' name.

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* Moved by God's love in Christ, we offer him our first and best gifts, purely out of thanks to him.

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