

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise:
A Worship Service for Sunday, May 31, 2020 -- Pentecost

Opening Acclamation:

Almighty God, on this day you opened the way of eternal life to every race and nation by the promised gift of your Holy Spirit: Shed abroad this gift throughout the world by the preaching of the Gospel, that it may reach to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

A Reading from the Gospel According to John 20:19-23

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

Meditation *(by The Rev. Bonnie Morris, St. James, Batavia)*

We were sitting in the park, enjoying the beauty: the water, the late spring blooms, the green. Oh, the beautiful green after a long, dull gray winter. The birds singing, even an occasional bee was a welcome affirmation of life. I'm pondering Pentecost. All that noise, confusion, the unexpected, the doubtful, even accusations of sinfulness. What is the Spirit? Why do I need it? What can a noisy wind do for me? What did the faithful receive? Did it make their lives any different at all? My mind drifts lazily back to the beauty, the warm air, cool breeze and far off noises of life in the park.

Suddenly I'm called back by the sniffing nose of a scrubby little dog sporting a bright pink harness and leash. The be-masked gentleman, smartly attired in a dress shirt, slacks and belt (totally old-school—no sweatpants and untucked tee shirts here) said hello and called his dog back. Because of the mask all we could see of his face were his eyes, bright piercing blue, and grey neatly combed hair partially covered by a Korean War Veterans hat.

We learned that he was 88, his wife of 68 years was at home, down the street in a house that he built on a lot that he purchased for \$650. He had been a soldier, a farmer, a factory worker—but most of all he was a fiery Baptist preacher. Full of humor, love and energy he believed that he was called to share the Spirit. His story was peppered with all that the Holy Spirit had provided for him throughout his life—opportunity and a passionate zeal to share the best of what life and God had to give. His walking stick waved in the air to punctuate points and punchlines. We listened, we engaged, we were inspired.

Holy Spirit—unexpected, sometimes confusing and maybe a little scary. Holy Spirit—invitation to listen, invitation to share. Holy Spirit—right here in the park on a bright spring day. Thank you for reaching out to me, for calling me into your life, into your language and your community. Amen.



Prayer:

*Almighty God, send your Advocate to strengthen and support us in the ministries which you have called us to serve us for the work which you have given us to do, even as we are restricted from our regular ministries, and allow us the gift of being able to support others through our work, prayers, and witness; this we ask in Christ's name. **Amen.***

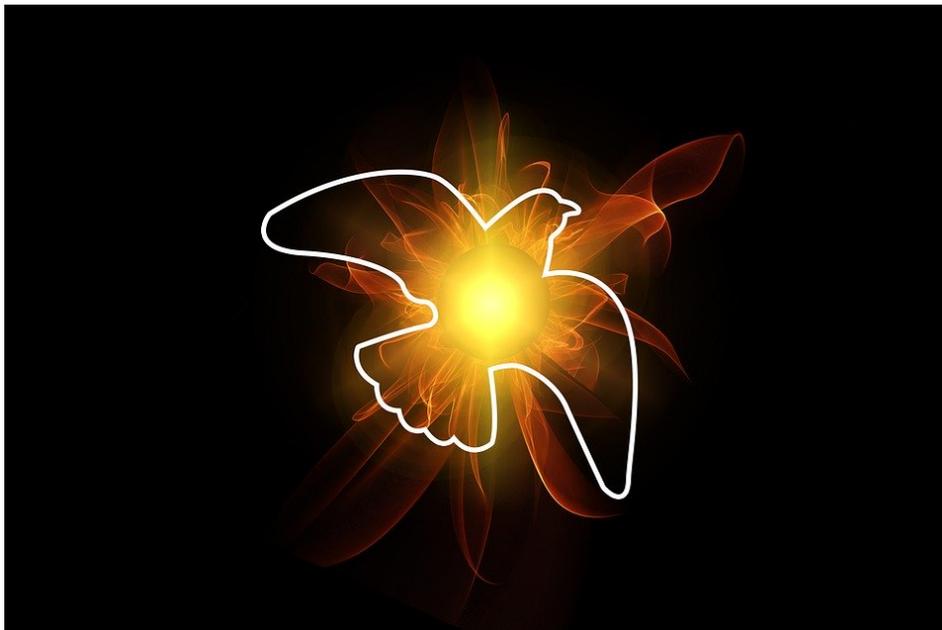
Take a moment now for silent reflection. Think of the people and things that cause you worry or concern; think of the things for which you are grateful. Raise them up in prayer using the words our Savior Christ taught us:

**Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by 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
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Grace:

*May all who love the Lord be touched with the terror of Flaming Tongues upon their heads and the fire of Brilliant Witness haloed about their faces; May all your voices fill the earth with the roar of Amens and Hosannas and every ear shudder from the glory of the Good News proclaimed with passion and purpose; May each one be filled with the Peace of Christ, the Peace Which Passes All Understanding; the Peace which brings the Knowledge and Love of God to all who do not know of it; and may the Spark of the Holy Spirit ignite in us the power to change the world with love for All God's Creatures, **Amen.***

Take a moments and think about how the Holy Spirit has empowered you in your own ministry and vocation. Pray for all who are dependent upon the ministries your region's congregations support: food pantries, clothing ministries, feeding programs, and social justice work.



Each Sunday at 10 a.m., Bishop Sean and other leaders from WNY and NWPA will lead worship via the Zoom platform. Anyone can join the service via phone by calling **646-876-9923** use **code 127336938#**. Those wishing to join by instead of video can use this this link: <https://zoom.us/j/127336938> If you are asked for a password, use **lakeerie**.

Simple Prayer, Simple Praise is produced for The Episcopal Dioceses of NWPA and WNY by the Rev. Steve Lane and the Rev. Claudia Scheda, and guest contributors as noted. May 2020.