



**Midweek Service of Word and Prayer
Grace Lutheran Church
Lincoln, Nebraska**

Opening Dialog

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead. **Alleluia!**

We are enlightened by the brightness of his rising. **Alleluia!**

Death's darkness has no power over us. **Alleluia!**

Introduction to Sunday

Fifty days after Easter, we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Originally Pentecost was a Jewish thanksgiving-type festival celebrated seven weeks after Passover. Crossing all boundaries that would separate us, the Holy Spirit brings the wideness of God's mercy to places we least expect it—to a crowd of strangers of different lands and languages, to dry bones, and to our own weakened faith.

Prayer of the Day

Mighty God, you breathe life into our bones, and your Spirit brings truth to the world. Send us this Spirit, transform us by your truth, and give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Readings

Acts 2

¹When the day of Pentecost had come, [the apostles] were all together in one place.

Why is it significant that the apostles be in “one” place on the Day of Pentecost? What does this say about the importance of Christian unity?

Romans 8

²⁴For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?

How do you experience “hope” in your life? What “unseen” things give you hope?

John 15

[Jesus said,] ²⁶“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf.

What testimony about Jesus has the Holy Spirit revealed to you?

Reflection

The Holy Spirit's Groaning

Few sounds capture a groan like birth pangs. It is the raw sound of life and birth as well as of pain. It is the body's desire for the end of the waiting for what has been anticipated and desired. For any who have been present through such an event, it is difficult to ever forget. It

is in equal parts beautiful, stunning, and holy, as well as raw, painful, and sometimes frightening.

Likewise, "Creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves . . . groan inwardly while we wait for adoption," writes Paul to the church in Rome. He describes aptly that painful wail of our souls for the redemption we know so well, the restoration of all things promised in Christ.

As Lutherans we know this all too well as the "now but not yet" proposition of our faith. We have been told of the return of the Messiah. We prepare for this coming and see how the whole of creation groans for her own restoration. We join this creation waiting for our own hearts, souls, and bodies to be restored.

We know this is coming and as in pains of labor groan for this reality. While we wait, we are given a midwife, a Spirit of God to join us in our waiting for the birth of a new world and a new reality. This gift is given this Sunday, the day of Pentecost. May the Holy Spirit join us in our cry to God, eagerly awaiting the begotten, the Son of God, Jesus.

Lord's Prayer (together)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Apostle's Creed (together)

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended to the living, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Responsive Prayer

Show us your mercy, O God,
and grant us your salvation.

Give us the joy of your saving help again,
and sustain us with your bountiful Spirit.

Give peace in all the world;
for only in you can we live in safety.

Keep the nations under your care,
and guide us in the way of justice and truth.

Let your way be known upon earth;
your saving health among all nations.

Let not the needy be forgotten,
nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

Create in us a clean heart, O God,
and sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Lord, hear my prayer,
and let my cry come before you.

Closing Prayer

O God, in you we live and move and have our being. Guide and govern us every day by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but remember that always we are walking in your promises; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Blessing

Almighty God (+) bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

Amen.