

Sunday, May 31st, 2020
Mantua Center Christian Church
MCCC Home Worship

You will need:

A candle and match
Bible
Paper
Bread and Juice (if desiring communion)

Order of Worship

WELCOME PANEL on the Video

- Welcome to Worship
- Today you can gather
 - *A candle and match*
 - *Bible*
 - *Bread and Juice (if desiring communion)*

GREETING & CALL to WORSHIP

The Peace of the Risen Christ and the Power of the Holy Spirit be with you. Welcome to our Pentecost worship this week with the Mantua Center Christian Church. Together...we are seeking to have Open Minds, Open Hearts, and Open Arms to live and love like Jesus.

As we come together, we are contemplating the ways the Gift of the Holy Spirit makes a difference in our lives and our church. What role does the Holy Spirit play in your life? Are you using the Gifts of the Spirit God has given you...for the good of others?

As we light a candle now to remind us of God's Presence with us. Hear these gathering words from Jesuit Priest John Bucki celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit.

The coming of the Spirit transforms the Christian community.
 Fear is replaced by courage.
 Peace is proclaimed.
 The power to forgive sins is present.
 Those who were afraid now speak up boldly.
 Thousands hear the message in their own language.

The coming of the Spirit is reflected in our social values.

In a world of racism and xenophobia and fear of immigrants,
 the Spirit speaks to people of every nation under heaven.

In a world of fear and doubt and confusion,
 the Spirit inspires people to speak out

especially about issues of justice and peace.

In a world of selfishness, competition, and control,
the Spirit gives out gifts that are shared for the benefit of all
especially those who are poor or in need.

In a world with war, violence and terrorism,
the Spirit proclaims a message of peace and reconciliation to all.

In a world of economic problems,
the Spirit reminds us that the things of the world are meant to be shared by all
and are to be used for the common good.

In a world where the environment is abused and overused,
the Spirit calls to reform how we live and to use the earth with care and love.

In a world of ideology and prejudice,
The Spirit calls us to think about things in a new way.

Family in Christ, today is Pentecost Sunday. Let's turn our minds and hearts from
other things and remember God's Spirit is among us.

Light a Candle

OPENING SCRIPTURE - Acts 2:1-4 - Brian Tipton

HYMN - Spirit of God, Descend Upon my Heart

MOMENT with ALLY

PASTORAL PRAYER - Chad Delaney

*Spirit of the Living God
Fall afresh on Me
Spirit of the Living God
Fall afresh on Me
Melt me, mold me, fill me, use me.
Spirit of the Living God
Fall afresh on Me*

Spirit of the Living God, you gather us in your fire and wildness. You gather us in your
warmth and peace. You gather us in, connecting us in strands of a great tapestry. We are
children. We are adults. We are whole, we are broken. We are grief-stricken and joy-filled.
We raging anger and we are peace. We are sinful and we are perfect just as we are. We are
simple and we are complicated. Whatever we are, we are yours. Come Holy Spirit, come.
Give us strength where we are weak. Fill in the cracks of our fragile minds and souls with

your love. Be an ever-present reminder that your grace is enough. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on us.

Bless and fill those who are hurting, Holy Spirit. Bind their wounds and hurts through the blessings of doctors, nurses, therapists, and holy friends and listeners. Bless and fill the refugees and those searching for home. May manna come in helping hands, food, and water. Bless and fill those who are afraid in their own homes. Nudge towards courage and seeking help, stay by them and reassure them. Bless and Fill, Holy Spirit, each and everyone who is wondering what the future holds, bring your peace that passes all understanding.

Hear now our silent prayers....

God, you are an awesome God. We are filled with thanks and praise for all that you are, have been, and will be. Fill us now with your Holy Spirit as we pray and seek to live the prayer Jesus taught us saying..."Our Father...."

SCRIPTURE & SERMON - Chad Delaney

1 Corinthians 12:4-13

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ¹¹All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. ¹² For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. ¹³For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, servant or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

We have taken a great little tour of the book of 1 Corinthians. We saw in the opening chapter how there was much division in the church and they needed a reminder that they weren't meant to be a community that would argue and fight over belief and practice...but instead to unite under the cross of Christ. To be people of servanthood, humility, and putting others' interests over their own.

Last week we looked at that famous chapter on Love in 1 Corinthians 13 with Pastor Sarah. Love is not just a static thing, but dynamic and risk-taking and active. That kind of Love is what holds us together as a community and drives our way of doing and being.

This week, Paul's message to the Corinthians is one absolutely appropriate for the Day of Pentecost. As you might recall from the Book of Acts...the Spirit descended upon the church in tongues of fire and rested on each of them. Every last one of them were bathed in this fire from the Holy One that ignited a response from within them. In those moments they burst into

speaking different languages, yet were still able to understand one another. The many and diverse became the heard and understood. It was a powerful and miraculous moment.

Yet, as we've seen before, the church can take a good thing like the power of the Holy Spirit being upon everyone and turn it into something dysfunctional and corrosive. Instead of celebrating this gift of the Spirit manifesting in so many different ways, the church found a way to make some feel less than others.

I think this works in a couple of different ways.

First way is most obvious. Some gifts can clearly be more valued than others. That person can speak real good. That person can sing fantastically. That person has the gift of leadership. Characteristics that are often rewarded and celebrated in society, can also dominate a church community. The community will center certain gifts more. Celebrate her more. Admire him more. In so doing, others will feel their gifts aren't quite so important or critical to the whole. These are the gifts that REALLY matter and these are the ones over here. That kind of environment can create hierarchy, competition, and struggles for power. The people who are centered can get big egos and think they should be able to run everything. They use the gifts God gave them for their own gain--economically, politically, socially. You've probably been a part of churches or organizations that have this going on. It's a huge turn-off and is destructive to the Body of Christ when some parts are celebrated over others.

BUT there's another way the church finds a way to minimize peoples' gifts that is less obvious but just as pervasive. Church folks I've come across in ministry at Mantua Center won't be the pompous, arrogant type...instead y'all are more likely to minimize your own significance in the name of humility. In a self-deprecating way. I'm not that important. I don't have a lot to offer. I don't really have any gifts. What can I really do? I don't know about the bible. I haven't been here long enough. I'm too old and past my time. I'm too young and don't know anything.

God has instilled a greatness in each one of us to share with others...yet we too often forget, deny, ignore, minimize who we are and what God has given. It reminds me of Alice Walker's great quote, "The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any."

Sisters and brothers in Christ, on this Pentecost Sunday, I'm going to invite you to do something super hard and quite counter-intuitive. I'm going to invite you to not spend a whole load of time hailing and lifting up the gifts of others around you, instead take a moment to think about and recognize the gifts of God within yourself. To recognize what gifts God has given you. Maybe you have the gift of encouragement. Teaching. Serving. Giving. Helping. Wisdom. Knowledge. Mercy. Faith. What have you minimized within you?

⁴ Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

And right there. That's the key. Whatever gifts we have--big or small. Noticed or unnoticed. Celebrated or ignored. God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit to bind up the broken-hearted. To give release to the captives. To let the oppressed go free. This power God has given us is not for the glorification of ourselves. Not for the glorification of the church. Not for the glorification of our religious tradition. But for what? ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. That means everyBODY. We are called to be salt and light. Called to join with anybody and everybody looking to build up our common community and humanity.

Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life."

Church, in this time and season in human history, it is no time for us to play small. We need all hands on deck. You are a child of God. You have been blessed with the Power of the Holy Spirit for the common good. We are the church together and now more than ever we need to use the Gifts God has given us to extend care, love, and grace in the world. May it be so. Amen.

COMMUNION

Meditation and Prayer - Ruth Anne Ruehr

Words of Institution - Sarah Smith

CLOSING HYMN - Spirit Song

BENEDICTION - Sarah Smith

Church, I come to you this week with a heavy heart. In true Pentecost fashion, the world is shifting around us. We find ourselves in the middle of another reformation, one bigger than our church has ever seen. We have some important decisions to make in the coming weeks that are going to be uncomfortable, but, church, since when has Jesus ever called us to the life of the comfortable? From what I can tell, God has come to us as a fiery spirit and told us to move and spread among the nation. Uncomfortable? Definitely. Awesome? Absolutely.

In a world on fire, I invite you to not be complacent but to allow the spirit to guide your actions. If you choose direct action, make sure that you have an accountability buddy and listen to organizer instructions. If you cannot participate directly, consider calling your politicians, both local and national. Before we close worship, I ask that we take a moment of silence for the African American lives that have been violently cut short both recently and just in general in the history of America.

Go and be the church this week. Amen.

BENEDICTION SONG - (get a previous one from another week or omit!)