

**St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland**  
**Pentecost, May 23, 2021**

**Welcome and Introduction** – The Rev. Charles Rowins

**Hymn 531, stanzas 1-2 and 4**

*O Spirit of the living God*

**Opening Sentence:** The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.

**Confession**

*Almighty and most merciful Father,  
we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep,  
we have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts,  
we have offended against thy holy laws,  
we have left undone those things which we ought to have done,  
and have done those things which we ought not to have done.  
But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,  
spare thou those who confess their faults,  
restore thou those who are penitent,  
according to thy promises declared unto mankind  
in Christ Jesus our Lord;  
and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake,  
that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life,  
to the glory of thy holy Name. Amen.*

**Absolution**

The Almighty and merciful Lord grant you absolution and remission of all your sins, true repentance, amendment of life, and the grace and consolation of his Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

**Invitation to Venite and Psalm**

O Lord, open thou our lips,  
*And our mouth shall show forth thy praise.*

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.*

**The Venite - seated**

*O come, let us sing unto the Lord;  
let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation.  
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,  
and show ourselves glad in him with psalms.  
For the Lord is a great God,  
and a great King above all gods.  
In his hand are all the corners of the earth,  
and the strength of the hills is his also.*

*The sea is his and he made it,  
and his hands prepared the dry land.  
O come, let us worship and fall down  
and kneel before the Lord our Maker.  
For he is the Lord our God,  
and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.  
O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;  
let the whole earth stand in awe of him.  
For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth,  
and with righteousness to judge the world and the peoples with his truth.*

**Psalm 104:25-35, 37 – see lesson insert**

**First Lesson – Acts 2:1-21- see lesson insert**

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

**Second Reading – Romans 8:22-27 - see lesson insert**

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God*

**Hymn 524, stanzas 1-2**

*I love thy kingdom, Lord*

**The Gospel - John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

**Sermon – The Rev. Charles Rowins**

**The Apostles' Creed - standing**

*I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;*

*And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell.  
The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father almighty.  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.*

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

## **The Lord's Prayer - seated**

*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,  
for ever and ever. Amen.*

## **Suffrages - seated**

O Lord, show thy mercy upon us;  
*And grant us thy salvation.*  
Endue thy ministers with righteousness;  
*And make thy chosen people joyful.*  
Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;  
*For only in thee can we live in safety.*  
Lord, keep this nation under thy care;  
*And guide us in the way of justice and truth.*  
Let thy way be known upon earth;  
*Thy saving health among all nations.*  
Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;  
*Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.*  
Create in us clean hearts, O God;  
*And sustain us with thy Holy Spirit.*

## **Collects for Sundays, Pentecost, and Sharing**

O God, who makes us glad with the weekly remembrance of the glorious resurrection of your Son our Lord: Grant us this day such blessing through our worship of you, that the days to come may be spent in your favor, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

O God, who on this day taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgment in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Dear Lord, we thank you for the Gift of your Son, Jesus, and for the Gift of your Holy Spirit. We are mindful that your Son and Spirit are but different dimensions of your Love for us and all Creation. We also recognize that this Love carries an expectation to share the Love. Be with us, O Lord, as we do our part in this sharing enterprise. *Amen.*

## **The General Thanksgiving**

*Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy servants do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up our selves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen.*

## **Announcements and America**

*My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing;  
Long may our land be bright with freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by thy might, great God, our King.*

## **Prayer of St. Chrysostom**

Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication unto thee, and hast promised through thy well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name thou wilt be in the midst of them. Fulfill now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

## **The Grace**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

## **Hymn 516, stanzas 1 and 3**

*Come down, O Love divine*

## **Dismissal**

Alleluia! Alleluia! Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.  
*Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia.*

**Sermon preached by The Rev. Charles Rowins at St. Christopher-by-the-Sea, Gibson Island, Maryland, the Feast of Pentecost, May 23, 2021.**

After Jesus had risen from the dead, he spent 40 days with the disciples. No doubt, he spent much of this additional time preparing the disciples for yet another transition. This additional transition would involve Jesus maintaining a relationship with the disciples, but not in an in-person fashion.

“In-person.” A term given new life, and probably everlasting life, thanks to CoVid. If we couldn’t meet in-person, we would meet on-line. But we would still meet. We would still worship. The relationship was still intact. Teachers still earned a salary. Students still earned credits. Parents still received bills, and institutions still received compensation. The intersection, the relationship, between two parties was maintained.

Think of the Risen Christ as one party. And think of the disciples, including you and me, as the other party. And then think of the mechanism by which we stay in touch with one another over long periods of time.

Well, what we come up with – and it’s especially appropriate on this particular Sunday – is God the Holy Spirit. The third leg, the third dimension, of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In the case of Jesus and those first disciples, this staying together mechanism occurred 50 days after the Resurrection. Hence the name Pentecost. Fiftieth.

Easter – the Resurrection - is one mechanism for staying together. Until the Ascension, the disciples had 40 days to be in-person with Jesus. They could see him. They could engage him in conversation. These were powerful moments.

Then the Risen Christ ascended. He returned to the Father. Don’t ask me to explain. The disciples didn’t understand. We don’t understand.

But God understood, and God played another remarkable card. An in-touch mechanism, if you will, that was spiritual in nature. From John’s Gospel (**John 16:7**): “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send

him to you.” The Holy Spirit was and is God’s means of sharing Christ with places and centuries and circumstances beyond the Promised Land and beyond on the 1<sup>st</sup> century.

Without this additional dimension of God’s Love, Jesus would be confined to a history book. But you and I know that the Risen Christ is timeless. God is in personal touch with you and me right this minute. We don’t see Jesus in the flesh. But we know he’s here, with us and for us and through us.

I don’t want us to be alarmed, but we need to recognize that the Holy Spirit is in each of us. God is present right this minute, helping us do our part in the maintenance and growth of God’s Kingdom.

Pentecost is not an academic exercise. It’s for real, and it is on-going. Look at today’s lesson from the Acts of the Apostles (**Acts 2:1-21**). It is a report of an event. People from different backgrounds receive the report in their respective languages.

Centuries later, you and I are part of that reporting and receiving process. Not just receivers of God’s Love, but conveyors of God’s Love. We are not unique as recipients – God’s Love applies to all - but we are part of a unique group of people who honor that designation. That’s what the Church is and who the Church is at its best: people who honor God’s Love by sharing it.

God could act without us, but clearly God has elected to act through us. We are spokespeople. We are not the Father. We are not the Son. And we are not the Holy Spirit. But we are part of the Triune Team. We are its foot soldiers, if you will. From today’s Psalm (**Psalm 104:31-32**): “You send forth your Spirit, and they – that would be you and I - are created; and so you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure for ever; may the Lord rejoice in all his works.”

Is this assignment too much to handle? Is it overwhelming to the point that we might not accept the assignment? After all, the Big Picture can be overwhelming. And therefore it’s tempting to decline the assignment. We conclude that we simply are not equipped sufficiently to get the job done.

Well that conclusion doesn't fly with God. He does not give up on us. He does not let us wallow in our limitations. Rather we are equipped by God to comprehend an alternative approach. God tries all sorts of things to get through to us, to assure us of His Love and his understanding of our challenges. From Paul's Letter to the Romans (**Romans 8:26-27**): "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words."

The Good News is that we are not left helpless. Rather we are rescued yet again by a Divine approach that reinforces the birth of Christ. The Holy Spirit is part of God's strategy of salvation. SOS. Strategy of Salvation.

Thank you, Lord, for all the different ways that you express your everlasting Love. It makes us, in the words of our final hymn today, want to be "a place wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling."

Pentecost. The Gift of the Spirit. With us, not just at the 50 day mark, but always. How special of God the Father to join us, not only as God the Son, but to stay with us as God the Holy Spirit.

Remarkable. Truly remarkable. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

## Lessons for Pentecost – May 23, 2021

**Collect:** 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.*

### **First Reading: Acts 2:1-21**

When the Day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs – in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deed of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the Prophet Joel: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'"

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

## **Psalm 104:25-35, 37**

O Lord, how manifold are your works!

*in wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*

Yonder is the great and wide sea with its living things too many to number,  
*creatures both small and great.*

There move the ships, and there is that Leviathan,  
*which you have made for the sport of it.*

All of them look to you  
*to give them their food in due season.*

You give it to them; they gather it:  
*you open your hand, and they are filled with good things.*

You hide your face, and they are terrified;  
*you take away their breath, and they die and return to their dust.*

You send forth your Spirit, and they are created;  
*and so you renew the face of the earth.*

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;  
*may the Lord rejoice in all his works.*

He looks at the earth and it trembles;  
*he touches the mountains and they smoke.*

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;  
*I will praise my God while I have my being.*

May these words of mine please him;  
*I will rejoice in the Lord.*

Bless the Lord, O my soul.  
*Hallelujah!*

## **Second Reading: Romans 8:22-27**

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with signs too keep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

**Gospel: John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15**

Jesus said to his disciples, "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. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

The Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

## Hymns for Pentecost – May 23, 2021

### Hymn 531, stanzas 1-2, 4

### O Spirit of the living God

O Spirit of the living God, in all thy plentitude of grace,  
where'er the foot of man hath trod, descend on our apostate race.

Give tongues of fire and hearts of love, to preach the reconciling word;  
give power and unction from above, whene'er the joyful sound is heard.

Convert the nations! far and nigh the triumphs of the cross record;  
the Name of Jesus glorify, till every people call him Lord.

### Hymn 524, stanzas 1-2

### I love thy kingdom, Lord

I love thy kingdom, Lord, the house of thine abode,  
the Church our blest Redeemer saved with his own precious blood.

For her my tears shall fall; for her my prayers ascend;  
to her my cares and toils be given, till toils and cares shall end.

### Hymn 516, stanzas 1 and 3

### Come down, O Love divine

Come down, O Love divine, seek thou this soul of mine,  
and visit it with thine own ardor glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long,  
shall far outpass the power of human telling;  
for none can guess its grace, till Love create a place  
wherein the Holy Spirit makes a dwelling.