

Acts 2:1-21

John 20:19-23

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

“When you send forth your Spirit we are created;  
and you renew the face of the ground.” AMEN!

Breathe, breathe in the air  
Don't be afraid to care

Leave, don't leave me

Look around and choose your own ground

For long you live and high you fly

And smiles you'll give and tears you'll cry

And all you touch and all you see  
Is all your life will ever be.”

Mmm... That's a good one from Pink Floyd.

Poetic and gripping lyrics that  
come to us on the morning of Pentecost.

50 days after Passover,  
the Jewish community came  
together in Jerusalem to celebrate the  
feast of the harvest and God's goodness.

It is good to know this event was entirely Jewish  
and not the first time the Holy Spirit

came into the world.

People then gathered to celebrate creation,  
like we gather to celebrate creation,

wholeness and inclusion  
and God's healing... they did, also.

We breathe in the same air as our ancestors.

And the breath that came  
to the followers of Jesus came to them  
on an evening of the first day in John.

The first Easter breath (breathe, breathe in the air)  
but not the first Holy Spirit breath, came  
when they'd gathered together...

not wearing red and celebrating like we are,  
but insecure of the future and afraid  
to be linked with this Jesus who

was crucified for letting  
God/His Spirit show through.

The breath reminds them (and us)  
to not be afraid of caring. (Pause)

There's a story about a little girl who,

on her way home from church,  
turned to her mother and said,

“Mommy, the preacher said something today  
that was confusing.”

Mom nodded thoughtfully and asked,  
“Oh, what was it?”

The little girl replied, “Well, she said that  
God lives within us.

Is that really true?”

Mom smiled, and said,  
“Yes, that’s true.

I believe God is inside of all people.”

The little girl went on to say that  
the pastor then said that

“God is bigger than all of us. Is that true?”

Mom replied, “Yes, that is true.”

“See, that’s the confusing part.

If God is inside of us and bigger than all of us,

wouldn't God show through us?"

Mom smiled to herself at  
the words of wisdom from her daughter. (Pause)

See? The little girl revealed the presence of God.

God showed through her.

No matter where we are or to whom  
we are speaking and  
to whom we are listening

we are always surprised by the Spirit showing through.

Some saw Her at the AED and CPR training last week.

The instance for me was when we practiced  
the AED machine that we have in  
the event someone has a cardiac arrest.

We learned to turn on the machine and  
follow the direction of the voice speaking  
calmly and assuringly.

Directions to place the pads as shown on the diagram.

One pad can go here (right breast) and  
the other here (lower left rib cage),

the important thing here is  
to “sandwich the heart” so the jolt of  
electricity targets the right place.

Now, it was probably just the dorky pastor  
that noticed it, but that “sandwiching of the heart”  
struck me as a revealed God presence.

Of course, we were just practicing on  
a paper cut-out of a human being but  
practicing the act of potentially saving  
a person’s life still makes you nervous.

The voice was assuring, the directions were sound,  
surround the heart and stand clear.

God was revealed.

Other revelations of the Spirit  
you can discern, in your life.

They are in our readings, too.

People secluded in fear and Jesus  
entered in to proclaim “Peace to you all.”

He said it twice.

Why, I wonder?

Sure they were afraid of the authorities,  
but they were also afraid that Christ  
had abandoned them... and now seeing

Him in their presence they're likely  
afraid of His condemnation.

Was it pay back time for the way  
they'd abandoned Him?

Hardly, God's way is not human way.

Instead, Jesus in the text, beautifully shows  
that in order to move away from fear,  
the community must constantly expect  
Christ to show up beyond our fears  
and beyond our sin.

The Spirit's intrusion into the fear-filled room,  
sandwiched them with a double dose of "Peace."

And this is the first thing the Spirit brings...  
a promise of peace.

Now, the Spirit is a mystery but that doesn't mean  
we do not have some understanding of it.

A sensing experience...  
a metaphor is often the way...  
we use metaphors of fire or  
images of a dove,

but the Spirit is not fire nor a bird.

It's just that words fail to entirely describe Her  
so we use metaphors.

Some prefer to name the Spirit with  
a feminine pronoun and that's ok, but the Spirit  
is beyond gender.

There's an internal vitality which moves  
inside of us and affirms hope...  
nudging us to respond.

Leading us to the second thing  
that the Spirit brings... and that is joy.

When it is truly Christ's Spirit  
there is always joy.

John 16:20 notes for us that when  
Jesus spoke about his coming crucifixion  
he said,

“Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn,

but the world will rejoice; you will have pain,  
but your pain will turn to joy.”

Then a little later in verse 22:

So you have pain now,  
but I will see you again, and your hearts  
will rejoice, and no one will take  
your joy from you.” (Pause)

Finally, the Spirit means being sent.

“Just as the Father has sent me.  
So I send you,” Jesus said.

“I send you into the world.”

“But to do what?” we ask.

Surely to recognize the Spirit at work  
in the world and in others, and also to bear  
and bring the presence of Jesus in all we do.

Where, or how are we blocking people  
to be in the presence of Jesus?

It’s a Spirit-led question, not a shaming one.

Let us, St. Stephen, continue our work in finding  
a place bigger than the tragedy of the world



and may God always show through in  
all you touch and all you see.

AMEN!