

Welcome to Worship June 5, 2022

Suamico United Methodist Church

Suamico United Methodist Church
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Preparation for Worship

*"All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit ... Amazed and perplexed,
they asked one another, "What does this mean?"*

(Acts 16:9)

* Please stand as you are able

Prelude and Welcome

***Worship Preparation Hymn** UMH 62 *"All Creatures of Our God and King"* v. 1, 4, 5 & 7

***Call to Worship** (*Responsively with people reading bold print*)

Creation refreshes as we anticipate the beauty blossoming around us.

Chirping birds and spring flowers awaken hearts and souls to God.

Human love touches us with tender grace and the warmth of community.

The Spirit comes upon us, and we give praise to God.

***Hymn** FWS 2123 *"Loving Spirit"* v. 1-4

***Unison Prayer** (*unison*)

Almighty and most gracious God, the beauty of your creation inspires us with awe, wonder and praise.

The season blesses as the bulb's shoot pushes through the clay sod and the trees shimmer green.

Tender hearts, smiling faces and loving gestures remind us of your grace as Christ inspires us with love.

We get bogged down, O God, so we pray for the renewing of your Spirit with refreshing grace.

Breathe upon us, and fill us with your life and love that we may serve Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Scripture Acts 2:1-13

Special Music *"Holy Spirit, Living Breath of God"* by Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend,
Eva Finke, soloist

Sermon “Fresh Breath” - The Spirit is a breath of fresh air, so breathe deeply! Graham N. West, pastor

Offering FWS 2031 *“We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise”*

***Prayer of Dedication** *(Responsively with people reading bold print)*

The promised Holy Spirit is a breath of fresh air for the faithful.
Send power, send love, send life upon us, O God. Amen.

Prayers of the People ~ *Sharing our Joys and Concerns*

The Lord’s Prayer

**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 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, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn W&S 3174 *“Christ, We Are Blessed”*

The Sacrament of Holy Communion

Prayer of Confession (unison)

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Words of Institution

Serving the Sacrament

***Hymn** UMH 404 *“Every Time I Feel the Spirit”*

Benediction and Postlude

UMH - United Methodist Hymnal (blue book)

FWS - Faith We Sing (black book)

W&S - Worship & Song (green book)

Announcements and information

June 7 9:00a Friends of Patricia in Fellowship Hall

June 8 2:00p Book Club in Room #5

June 9 6:00p Missions Committee in Fellowship Hall

You can take a turn hosting with a friend or another family by signing up in the narthex.

Following the Church Council meeting in May, the sanctuary is now all open seating. Hand sanitizer remains available at door entrances as well as cleaning products in rooms and gathering spaces as needed. Room sign in sheets are no longer required. Masks are optional, please respect each other's comfort level.

June Noisy Can Mission of the Month: Peace with Justice. Contributions help support this mission which is dedicated to seeking peaceful solutions, creating and supporting peace-related ministries around the world.

Help the Pulaski Pantry in June by adding an item to your shopping:

- * boxes of Hamburger Helper™
- * boxes of macaroni and cheese
- * canned fruit

Collection bins are in the church narthex entryway and the shelf by the church offices.

Book Club meets to discuss: "I Am Watching You" by Teresa Driscoll on Wed., June 8th at 2pm, room #5 in the church office hallway.

If you have a gift for music to share during these summer months, please sign-up on the narthex sign-up sheet, or speak with Eva at the piano to discuss offering "Summer Special Music"

Fresh Breath

The Spirit is a breath of fresh air, so breathe deeply!

Fresh Air

They sang and danced with exuberance

Vance Ross, *Loving Taking Over* in *Alive Now* (January/February 2010), p. 44-46

One evening recently, while attending the Hispanic Latino caucus of The United Methodist Church, I watched as shared worship spontaneously broke out. This was not usual worship: no liturgy, sacrament, proclamation, well-rehearsed choir, and no hymnals.

What happened was that our sisters and brothers of the Spanish-speaking Diaspora began to sing songs of their homelands, from Mexico and Brazil, Puerto Rico and El Salvador, Costa Rica and Honduras, from Cuba and Peru. The songs were different. Not everyone knew them all but all sang.

People of all ages and gender, of every hue and hair texture, of every possible wrinkle and blemish: they all sang! Preachers and immigration workers sang and danced ... with enthusiasm, with zeal and boldness, with spirit and soul. It was an unabashed and unapologetic joy. Praise from people outside their homeland.

Here were a people who had experienced unmerited rancor and arrogant discrimination, who had watched families strain to stay together and seen them break under the stress, who had watched loved ones suffer for want of health care and perish for lack of food. They had felt the stinging whip of labor abuse and unfair discrimination. They would return to jobs to experience nobodiness or dread even hate; to a society that gladly uses their gifts and labor but too often refuses to love them or offer them hospitality; to a system that tramples their humanity.

Still, they sang. They danced. They flung their voices and bodies into an era beyond time, an aura beyond space.

"Tonight we celebrate," told Miguel Balderas. "Tomorrow many of us will cry because of how the system will treat us, but not tonight. Tonight we celebrate that God is with us. And we will make it THROUGH tomorrow."

A breath of fresh air needed

Church life can get awfully stuffy. Our history pitches us in the past. Our ritual practice is rote by design. Our worship can feel like it is from another age. Younger people feel it is too slow-moving, too predictable and too boring. Middle-aged people say the church is after one thing only, their money. The graying of hair entrenches us in yesteryear. Some say the gap between the church and its people is so wide that only the faithful would venture to cross over. It speaks a different language, sings a different song, and acts differently in society. It is homogeneous, lacking the diversity which is so much part of American culture. As far as desegregation is concerned, 11:00 am on Sunday mornings is, in many places, still the most segregated hour in America. The church stands accused of being inhospitable, unwelcoming, and prejudiced by those of different sexual orientations. In some churches, women have been relegated to the fringes.

Frankly, the church in many quarters lacks integrity, and is seen as part of the problem and not the solution. It is accused of being a source of discord in our culture, our politics and our social life.

Individual believers, followers of Christ, disciples often find themselves without fervor, passion and intention that, for all our church-attending, we lack spiritual health, spiritual growth and spiritual vitality. A breath of fresh air is needed. Like me, you may want to throw open the windows so the Spirit may blow through, kindle faith anew, inspire our hope and invigorate our love.

Pentecost breathes

The Spirit came that first Pentecost as dispirited disciples gathered together as a band bereft of hope for the Christ they trusted had been crucified, dead and buried; raised, yes, but now ascended. It came as a fierce wind, as flames resting on those gathered, as people speaking languages they had not learned, and becoming animated like never before. Promised by Christ, the companion Spirit assures us that God is with us in ways we never imagined.

The Spirit especially gathers us to God as the community of the church, a diverse body held together by our affinity to Christ. The church on the neighborhood corner or at the crossroads of society is a sign of God's new creation.

As a people, we set aside human frailties, like pride, arrogance, divisions, hatred, brokenness and sin, and become the body of Christ in the world, a body of healing and restoring love, where people find a welcome and a place, where life and love are given and shared. More so, the body of Christ is entrusted with forgiveness and salvation, transformation and renewal, compassion and justice.

It's a challenge for those living in American society where we are reared on rugged individualism. The body of Christ is a corporate entity that brings us together in Christ's name. The Spirit unites believers in God's healing love, which is at the heart of the gospel of Christ.

Vance Ross' account of love taking over as people of Spanish tongue breathed; they sang, danced and celebrated the life they had together, a life that was a foretaste of the heavenly kingdom. They faced the reality of this world, a reality that brought people of all ages, cultures and stations to the stinging whip of labor abuse and unfair discrimination. Whatever tomorrow held, now they were together and celebrated, declaring the wonders of God in their own tongues.

So on this Pentecost Sunday, as we gather together as those first disciples, we pray for God's Spirit to come anew upon us so we may be God's people. We pray, O God that the airwaves breathe with your life, that the breeze of your Spirit picks up, and the breath of God spreads among us. Some were amazed, others accused the disciples of being "*filled with new wine.*" They were of course but not the wine that makes you drunk but with new wine that Jesus spoke of.

Breathe Deeply

Gasping for breath

<https://chicagohealthonline.com/gasping-for-air-covid-19/>

The phone call came Monday morning, but by then, Kevin Keane already knew what he was about to hear. The 67-year-old Northbrook resident barely slept the night before, his sleep constantly disrupted as he struggled to take a deep breath without coughing. His body shook from chills underneath three sweatshirts.

He answered the phone and heard the news: He had tested positive for Covid-19. "It was obvious I needed oxygen, and I couldn't breathe normally," Keane said. "I only had short breaths and then had to try to gasp for air."

Covid-19 ravages many parts of the human body, but the virus takes its biggest toll on a person's lungs. Infected lungs appear patchy, with no one spot seen as the central source of the virus. The patchiness can stretch across both sides of the lungs and from top to bottom,

indicating inflammation and tissue damaged areas. This happens because the coronavirus attacks cells in the millions of tiny air sacs in the lungs. They then start to leak fluid, and the air sacs become fluid-logged and inflamed, making it difficult to breathe.

Keane was admitted to the hospital. During his first few days, he was too weak to get out of bed, even to go to the bathroom. His medical team put him on oxygen to monitor his breathing. "I had never experienced anything like that," he said. "All I wanted to do was lie there."

God's breath gives life

The coming of the Spirit is associated with life, with energy, imagination and courage but as always, spiritual life is subjective. It's more than the head; we need especially the heart. We cannot see the Spirit, control the Spirit, or direct the Spirit; certainly, we shouldn't domesticate the Spirit by making it serve our purposes rather than God's. As the life of God in us, no one can prove the reality of the Spirit; at most, we can only point to the transformation initiated by the Spirit. It's a deeply personal experience as we learn to hear the Spirit's whisper, discern the Spirit's movement within and trust the empowering of the Spirit.

Those attentive to the Spirit will discover the movement of God within, as the Spirit touches our spirit, renews us in Christ, and enriches our way. Every believer is enriched by the fruit of the Spirit, fruit like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. These are the attributes of Christ, and display a growing Christlikeness in us.

The life that the Spirit imparts has also to do with the gifts of the Spirit by which we do the work of God. So God gave some to be apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers, some to be workers of miracles, gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Some gifts are given to serve, encourage, give generously, show mercy, and do so cheerfully. It is the Spirit that gives us the capacity to serve God with various gifts in the church and the world. The gifts build the body of Christ and accomplish God's mission.

Take deep breaths

The coronavirus left many gasping for life. Our propensity for fresh air has us praying for the Spirit to come anew upon us. Take deep breaths so you may fill your heart and life, your soul with the life of God. Breathe deeply.

Adopt spiritual practices that open you to the Spirit of Christ. Anything can become a practice. Mother Teresa used prayer and compassionate action to both receive and offer the love of Christ. Brother Lawrence washed dishes, breathed deeply and received the divine presence. Martin Luther King, Jr. used social justice practices to move this nation closer to God's will. Archbishop Desmond Tutu stood up to the forces of *apartheid* to bring about a more just South Africa. The Spirit serves to share God's life with us.

Practice opening yourself to the divine through prayer, scripture and worship, through service, care and generosity. Recognize that the Spirit is all around you and even in you. Breathe for life is given, love is shared and we are renewed. Pay attention for the Spirit envelopes us, nudges us, cultivates Christ in us, and fills us with life and love. So breathe deeply and allow the wind of God to fill your heart and soul afresh.

On this Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate God's fresh air—so breathe deeply!

Graham N. West