



**The Pastor's  
Portion**

**May 17, 2020**

Spiritual Nourishment for the Soul



WHERE THE DOORS OF THE CHUCH SWING OPEN ON THE HINGES OF LOVE AND PEACE

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### ALONE BUT NOT ISOLATED

#### VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS:

This week, I will begin to have virtual office hours by zoom. My virtual doors are open for anyone who wants to talk, needs a listening ear, is lonely or in need of help.

WE CAN GET THROUGH THIS PANDEMIC TOGETHER!

YOU CAN CALL IN OR JOIN BY VIDEO:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87025161476>

Meeting ID: 870 2516 1476

OR DIAL IN:

646-558-8656

ACCESS CODE:87025161476#

LOVE ALWAYS WINS!

Rev Kris



#### In Memoriam:

We remember with love our own Nancy Schaefer. Sunrise 1927 Sunset 2020

Obituary is attached.

Whoever dies really does not die. We see them not; Therefore We feel that they have died. Death is only another shore Of the Reality-sea. Death is only another way To God-Reality's Shore.

– Sri Chinmoy

**NEW LOG IN CREDENTIALS FOR SUNDAY WORSHIP AND WEDNESDAY PRAYER/STUDY.**

Join Zoom Meeting BY VIDEO

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87330604676>

Meeting ID: 873 3060 4676

BY PHONE:

646-558-8656 ACCES CODE 87330604676#

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JOIN US FOR MID WEEK BIBLE STUDY ON WEDNESDAY AT 7PM

BY VIDEO

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87567605330>

meeting ID: 875 6760 5330

BY PHONE 646-558-8656 ACCESS CODE: 87567605330#

## THE HOLY SPIRIT:

### Scripture Reading: John 14:15-21

#### New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

##### *The Promise of the Holy Spirit*

<sup>15</sup> "If you love me, you will keep<sup>[a]</sup> my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,<sup>[b]</sup> to be with you forever. <sup>17</sup> This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in<sup>[c]</sup> you.

<sup>18</sup> "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. <sup>19</sup> In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. <sup>20</sup> On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. <sup>21</sup> They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

For the next couple of Sundays, I want to talk about the Holy Spirit. We are preparing to enter the season of Pentecost. Pentecost is the Christian festival celebrating the descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples of Jesus after his Ascension, held on the seventh Sunday after Easter. Pentecost celebrates the

reality that we are God-breathed beings. Pentecost was a monumental turning point in Christian history, considered by many to be the birthday of the church.

Pentecost is a great time to witness for your church. In this passage, Jesus is preparing his disciples for his departure. One can only imagine how scared they must have been knowing that their leader would soon be gone, even though they could not have comprehended the magnitude of his departure. But here in this passage, Jesus is preparing his disciples by telling them, soon I will be gone, but I will not leave you orphaned. You will not be alone to fend for yourselves...you will be given an Advocate to be your companion on the journey. But we know little of this companion that Jesus has left us.

The First testament prophets spoke often about the Holy Spirit, which I submit to you today that has existed from the foundation of the world with Jesus. In the book of Joel, the prophet says

**"Then afterward,  
(after their  
destruction) I will  
pour out my Spirit  
on all flesh; your  
sons and  
daughters shall  
prophesy, your old  
men shall dream  
dreams, and your  
young men shall**

**see visions. Even  
on the male and  
female slaves, in  
those days I will  
pour out my  
spirit."** (Joel 2:28-  
29 [NRSV])

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. They are One, and not to be parsed and divided through Trinitarian language as the third "person" of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is an experience of God's sacred love that kindles our hearts and inspires us towards a just and compassionate way of being. The Holy Spirit is God's revelation and relief, God's intimacy with humanity, and God's power and immanence in our midst. The Holy Spirit functions as the Divine lure that draws all beings together in an interconnected journey toward God.

I have experienced the Spirit as a wave of energetic light as I lay prostrate in the church in prayer; I have experienced Spirit as a storm, wind, power, unpredictability and surprise. The Holy Spirit is found both in the silence, and in the cacophony. She is ever present in all relationships. She is the fiber of the bond that brings us together in community, she is the Christ consciousness that we seek. God's spirit is the breath that passes between God, humanity and Herself. She is the essence of the shared experience, and the uniqueness of being, She is unpredictable variety, a frenetic dance and a slow waltz, the mambo and the tango. The Spirit ignites the flame of love within us, quenches the soul with understanding and knowledge, fills us with compassion and convicts us in anguish for the sake of drawing us closer to God, to one another and to all of creation.

God's spirit and the experience of God's spirit is what causes us to prophesy and to seek to transform our beloved community. Michael Welker distinguishes between the Spirit of the Western culture and the Spirit of God, recognizing God's Spirit in its "nearness and world overcoming power."<sup>1</sup> Welker says, "...the Spirit is a reality that, to be sure, becomes recognizable and attested in various times and various surroundings..."<sup>2</sup> For example, in the book of Joel, the Spirit of God, after foretelling of Israel's demise, assured the people of God's ultimate love, forgiveness and provision, and then assured the people, through the prophet, that after restoration and renewal, God would pour out God's spirit on all flesh (See Joel 2:28). The Spirit empowers and inspires the transformation of humanity.

And this is the truth: We desperately need the Holy Spirit in these days to empower us and inspire us to transform this sin sick world! While we focus on the pandemic, and how we can get back to "normal" we are bombarded by heinous atrocities being committed in our midst. A young man named Ahmad Abrey was gunned down in cold blood by white nationalists in Georgia while he was jogging for his outdoor exercise, a Black female EMT worker named Breonna Taylor was killed in her own home by police officers the victim of home invasion murder by an angry mob of white men in Louisville, armed nationalists groups that insist on their individual liberties are prancing around the states exposing themselves and others to a deadly

virus; our government leaders are playing politics with the lives of Americans, in an attempt to rush us back to some semblance of normal, ignoring science and good sense all at the expense of human life. Yes, we need a powerful movement of the Holy Spirit right now! We need the Holy Spirit, but we are scared.

Let's be honest. Many people are scared of the Holy Spirit. And I can understand why. People in mainline churches consider the Holy Spirit to be too Pentecostal, too charismatic, too unrefined to be incorporated into their spiritual framework. And if we are honest, we are scared by the Holy Spirit because we cannot control it. We don't want to speak in tongues or hear others speak in tongues, we don't want to be used as instruments of God, or as a prophetic voice speaking in the heavenly tongue. We don't want to lose control of our bodies and our emotions. We sing the song, all to Jesus I surrender, but what we really mean is I surrender one tenth, one third, just a part of myself. We prefer to have our worship programmed and orderly and predictable. But the Spirit is totally unpredictable. In the Bible the divine power of the Holy Spirit would overtake and possess ordinary people to achieve the purposes and intent of God and to even-- and especially-- to endow the prophets with their prophetic voice.

Take Ezekiel for example, the Spirit possessed the Prophet Ezekiel he wrote of the experience "As I looked, a stormy wind came out of the north; a great cloud with brightness around it and fire flashing forth continually, and in the middle

of the fire, something like gleaming amber" Bible verses like this scare us. And we are not quite sure why. In truth we have nothing to fear. From the beginning of our tradition, the Hebrew people understood the concept of the Spirit of God as being the *ruach*, or breath, of God. The Book of Genesis, which by the way was written while the Jews were in Babylonian captivity, in the midst of a chaotic times for the people of Israel, begins, in the Hebrew translation with the words in A BEGINNING God created the heavens and the earth, and in the second verse it goes on to reveal the Divine action: The Divine spirit – ruach (which in the Hebrew is the feminine ---**merechepeth** A Hebrew word which means.. PULSED OR HOVERED, OR FLUTTERED OR TREMBLED. God's Beautiful Feminine Spirit breath PULSED, HOVERED OR FLUTTERED ( like the wings of a bird) OVER THE FACE OF THE WATERS and eventually out of chaos, came order and beauty and life!

The Holy Spirit is the connective tissue that links God to the created order. We are called to open ourselves to that and to receive the power and companionship that comes from the Spirit, because the Spirit of God is always there, and manifests Itself in a multitude of ways. It can rush in like a mighty hurricane, or come quietly in the still small voice, but It is always there, and It is universal.

So in these uncertain times, in these chaotic times, in these challenging times, This God breath, gives us the

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Welker, *God the Spirit; The Public Person of the*

*Spirit*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press 1994), 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 309.

assurance that the protective hovering of our Mother God, that powerful energy of God **moves through all that have breath, keeping us and protecting us.** If the same God who was lifted up by the priests during the Babylonian exile, could tell an exiled people IN A BEGINNING the Spirit of God hovered over the face of the chaos and brought light and life, that same God can do it now, in the face of this chaotic world we are living in. This divine feminine is the shared element of all of humanity and connects us in dynamic and energetic ways through our bodies and our shared experience of breath.

How interesting that we are experiencing a pandemic that is spread by the droplets of the breath...I am not sure what to make of that yet. But I will share a message from God that I got last week,. At 3am, God woke me up sat me straight up in Bed and said (speaking about the virus) “ “ All you have to do is love it.” It is energy, and with love it can be transformed into a force for good. I am still contemplating this and praying that this chaotic event that we are in the midst of can be a force for good. I am praying that the Holy Spirit hovers and breathes on this world, and from that breath will come new life, new possibilities, real justice, real peace, genuine love.

Despite all the confusion, and the chaos, and pain and the death, I do believe there will be glory after this. For I am certain that there is no virus that can block or impede the movement of the Holy Spirit which always operates for our highest good.

In my prophetic imagination, this Spirit of God who journeys with all of humanity is moving in such a way as to enlighten us to our presence in God and God's presence in us. This

Spirit will awaken humanity to Itself: that which binds us, that which connects us irrevocably, and that which inspires the best in us for our collective good. It is our prayer that this Spirit will ultimately bring harmony to humanity, and reveal our interconnection to each other, the planet that we inhabit and are stewards of, and to God. The Spirit of God is moving and causing us to move. The Spirit of God will always be the flame of Divine Love--the invitational pull to God that will move us on our journey towards that which is lasting and true--that which is in us as we are in It: This is the Spirit that ushered our beloved Nancy into the next phase of her journey with God. Hovering, protecting, luring her to higher heights, to deeper depths with God, luring her to her eternal rest with God.

So when Jesus said, I am sending you an advocate, we are assured that this Spirit that lives and moves in us is a benevolent force that animates the people of God, and propels us forward in love towards God. Thank God, Jesus did not leave us with an adversary to come up against you at every turn, an adversary who will take account of all of your misdeeds and mistakes and blame and shame you. I am not leaving you with a Spirit to battle you and to take you before God to judge you. I am sending and leaving you an Advocate. This advocate will stand with you before God and take your petitions to God.

The Holy Spirit, our advocate abides with us and indeed is IN us. You may not see the Spirit, but if you stay still long enough you will feel it. You will feel that gentle wind, that rushing wave of emotion, that impulse to love or to laugh, the sudden urge to dance, that burst of joy, or that sudden need to cry for no apparent reason. This my beloved is the Spirit of God that rests on you and that is in you.

Nurture it, speak to it, embrace it. She is your friend, your beloved, your advocate and your companion. And she is waiting. Amen.



## **CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE OF NANCY SCHAEFER**

**Sunrise: 1927, Sunset:  
2020**

Long time West Center Church member Nancy Schaefer transitioned to be with the Lord at her home on May 10, 2020. She was 93. The cause of death is thought to be natural causes.

Nancy was a woman of many interests. She had keen interest in music and the arts. She loved playing her harp and piano. She was quite talented. In her early years she was a guest soloist of multiple symphony orchestras. She was very proud of her performances and enjoyed her invitations to be a guest soloist from the Mexico City Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony and the Symphony orchestra of Guadalajara Mexico, among others. She was well educated and well-traveled. She was a graduate of Miss Masters School, Finch Junior College, Vassar College and Columbia University. In more recent years she spoke fondly about attending her class reunion at Vassar.

Nancy leaves no immediate relatives. She was a fierce advocate for animals. In her early years, she

loved horses and on her death was the owner of two cats, one of whom was medically challenged. Her beloved cats have found new homes in her apartment building thanks to the kindness of neighbors and friends.

Nancy's spiritual life included a union with many local houses of worship. Her beautiful voice added to her worship experience. We will long remember Nancy as a talented musician, an advocate for animals, a devoted parishioner and a person with a passion for life. She will be remembered as a person who was spirited and passionate. You can always tell a Vassar girl...you just can't tell her much!

Rest in Peace. Rise in Power.  
You will be missed.

Friends, we gather here in our protective shelters of God's healing love.

We are free to pour out our grief, release our anger, face our emptiness, and know that God cares. We gather as God's people, conscious of others who have died and of the frailty of our own existence on earth. We come to comfort and support one another in our common loss. We gather to hear God's word of hope that can drive away our despair and move us to offer God our praise. We gather to commend to God with thanksgiving the life of Nancy Schaefer as we celebrate the good news of Christ's resurrection. For whether we live or whether we die, we belong to Christ who is Lord both of the living and the dead.

***Let us Pray:***

***Holy God, whose ways are not our ways, and whose thoughts are not our thoughts, grant that your Holy Spirit may intercede for us with sighs too deep for human words. Heal our wounded hearts made heavy by our sorrow. Through the veil of our tears and the silence of our emptiness, assure us again that our ear has not heard, nor eye seen nor human imagination envisioned what you have prepared for those who love you; through Jesus Christ the firstborn from the dead. Amen***