

Good Sunday and Pentecost Morning,

Pentecost Sunday in the early Christian Church was a time to celebrate the gift of God's Spirit to bring about new life, new ideas, and new practices for the spreading of God's Word. In that same spirit on this Pentecost 2020, we have something new for you to experience. This week, we have recorded, on video, a modified worship service which includes the sermon. It runs about 30 minutes in length, and in addition to the sermon, there are prayers, the lessons are read, and there is a closing benediction and dismissal. A words of thanks goes out to Paul Brown from Ascension Lutheran who recorded the service for us and Mary Ann Clark who is the reader. So you have a choice this week of watching a service, or reading through it as has been the format in weeks past ... or you can do both. Again, this is our first stab at doing the worship service in this way, but I already have plans for how we can enhance it with music and additional participants. So, this is a work in progress. The link for the video is at the beginning of the service after the "Preparation for Worship".

Next Sunday, we will have a sermon given by Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is Trinity Sunday and her message will be available for all the ELCA Lutheran Congregations in the United States, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. So, next week we'll go back to the written worship with a video presentation of the sermon. On the following week, June 13th, I hope to again provide a video of the worship service, as well as, the written format.

In the meantime, I pray that your worship experience this Sunday is a meaningful one no matter the format in which you experience it. As always, keep the faith, stay in prayer, serve God, be kind to one another, and one day we will be back together in worship. God is present, we are a faith community, and we are all connected by the presence of Jesus and the power of God's Holy Spirit. Blessing to you all,

Pastor Rick Lawrence
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Worship – May 31, 2020

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

- If you choose you can click the link for the video worship service
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SewMNeLdig>
- or
- Continue with the Call to Worship after your preparation for worship

CALL TO WORSHIP

Come, Holy Spirit. Inspire our hearts with your fiery presence!

Let your flame burn within us, stirring us to action.

Come, Holy Spirit. Energize our lives to work for God.

Let your wind of hope swirl around us, lifting and moving us from complacency.

Come, Holy Spirit. Pour your blessing on us.

Let your presence challenge us to proclaim God's presence and love in everything we say and do. AMEN.

A BRIEF CONFESSION

In the surety of the Risen Christ, we are confident to make our confession to God.

Lord of Life, hear the prayers of your people.

In the surety of the Risen Christ, we confess our failures and brokenness.

Lord of Life, forgive and heal your people.

In the surety of the Risen Christ, we seek God's mercy and compassion.

Lord of Life, renew for service, we your people.

God forgives, heals, and renews us for blessing in the world. Amen.

GREETING

The peace of the Lord be with you.

May God gift you with the energy and guidance of the Holy Spirit

We want to be filled with the Spirit of God. Come Holy Spirit, Come.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1st 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 deeds 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."*

2nd Reading – Psalm 104:24-34,35b

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable they are, living things both small and great.

There go the ships, and Leviathan that you formed to sport in it.

These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works—who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

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

May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the Lord.

Gospel reading – John 7:37-39

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.”’ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

SERMON

Pentecost Sunday

DREAMS

May 31, 2020

Acts 2:1-21

I don’t normally give the title

of my sermon ‘outright’, but today in order to coax you to focus on “*a way*” that God’s Spirit can speak to us and be active in our lives ... I will give you the title outright.

The title is ...

DREAMS

screen 1

Did you have a dream last night?

If not last night, can you remember having a dream recently?

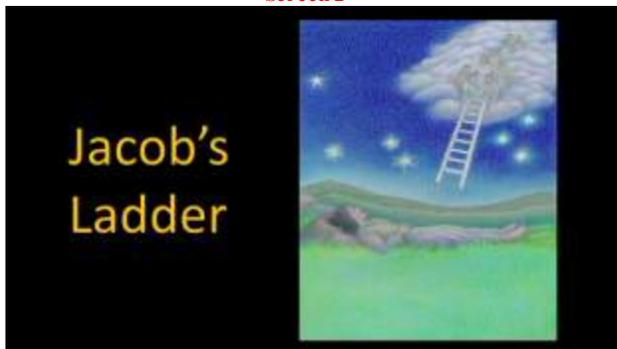
We are told that we dream every night, but just don't always remember the dream upon waking

Polysomnographic Technologists (scientists who study sleep) say that we dream more than 2 hours out of each night's sleep.

The Bible attaches a particular importance

to dreams as being a way that God speaks to make known divine will or to announce future events.

Screen 2



Jacob's dream at Bethel from Genesis 28, here he dreams of a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of the ladder reaches to heaven.... it was a dream that foretold that the land of Israel was given to Jacob;

before “Israel” even existed.

screen 3



Joseph had a dream, where he was assured that Jesus' birth is of God and that he is to take Mary as his wife and that Jesus will be called Emmanuel, "*God with us*".

In scripture, dreams

function as a way that God speaks ... dreams offer inspiration, vision, and direction as to what God desires and what God can do.

For us, of course, our sleep dreams are complicated and their contents can confound us,

they are not necessarily God speaking, though that is a possibility ... **but, there are other ways to understand a dream, besides the kind we have when we sleep.**

For instance, ever heard these phrases before ...



Follow your dreams
Dream big
Don't let your dreams die
May your dreams always come true

screen 4

Follow your dreams,
Dream big,
Don't let your dreams die,
May your dreams always come true.

The dreams referred to in these

phrases are not a reference to the dreams we have in our sleep, but rather they refer to

that for which we hope, the
goals for which we strive, the
ideas we want to make happen and become reality.

PAGE 3

Graduation cards,
Coming of age birthday cards,
Birthday well wishes on *Facebook* pages ... are filled with references to dreams of this kind.

I would say, we speak of dreams more so

in this way than we do of our sleep dreams ...so I don't believe we have to limit our
understanding of dreams only to those we have when we put the lights out at night.

Our "conscious dreams" (as I will refer to them) are very important for our creativity, they

“Conscious Dreams”

are important in giving vision for where we want to go and who we want to be, they are important to embrace the potential of what can be & do.

“Conscious Dreams”

can be the voice of God’s Spirit
in communities of faith like ours

**“Conscious dreams” can be the voice of God’s Spirit
in communities of faith like ours.**

The reading we hear today

from the 2nd chapter of Acts is the standard reading for this Christian observance called

Pentecost Sunday



screen 7

Pentecost Sunday ... In a nutshell, it is a Sunday set aside to celebrate the gift of God's Spirit (we call it the Holy Spirit) giving us the energy, the courage, the wisdom, and the skills to be effective communities of faith for good in the world as God desires.

OK, that's a mouthful, so let's parse it down ... we could say, Pentecost Sunday proclaims the gift of God's energy in us to make a difference in the world, to be a blessing in the world.

In the reading from Acts, there is a reference to

dreams ... **after all the hullabaloo that the disciples were able to speak in the many languages of the people who were in Jerusalem for the Jewish observance of Pentecost (which commemorated God's giving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai)** ... after all the hullabaloo, Peter addresses the crowd, quoting the Prophet Joel, he says:

“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.

The word “*dream*” in the Hebrew language is *chalam* (pronounced – *Ha-lam*) ... it means

“*to cause to dream*” ... There is no reference to dreams as in “*sleeping*. *Dreams*”, in other words, are something that God **causes** to happen.

Sleeping dreams, conscious dreams ... no matter ... when dreams are instigated and provoked by God's Holy Spirit,

GOD CAUSES THE DREAM

they become dreams for the community of faith ... dreams for the community of faith
to stretch & to reach for
what & who God is calling them to be & do ... GOD CAUSES
THE DREAM.

PAGE 5

Well, that being said ... a lot of faith communities have a reluctance to dreaming and

#1 Dreaming is for kids

here are some reasons why: FIRST:

screen 9

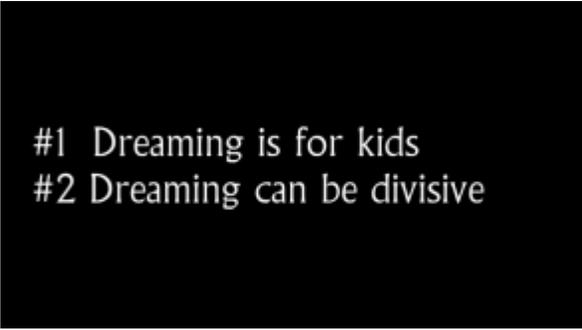
Maybe somewhere down the road we learned that dreaming is for kids.
That dreaming isn't something responsible adults do. Innovative companies

like Disney and Apple encourage their employees to think like a child and re-learn how to question assumptions. For the church, such questioning might look like this:

Who says our congregation can't grow?

Why do we assume people in the neighborhood won't come to our church?

Where did we get the idea we have nothing to offer our community?



#1 Dreaming is for kids
#2 Dreaming can be divisive

SECOND:

screen 10

Sometimes there's the worry that dreaming can be divisive.

What if your dream and mine are different?

How do we decide which dream is "better"?

What if I think your dream is a bad idea, too disruptive?

While some of that may happen ... it's important to remember that diversity is a strength not a weakness. As for bad ideas, those can be weeded out in community through respectful & honest discussion.

#1 Dreaming is for kids
#2 Dreaming can be divisive
#3 We might be disappointed

Third:

screen 11

Sometimes we're just worried that if we dream we might be disappointed. If we just stick with the status quo, we won't be surprised by how things work out. Dreaming, for some, feels like getting your hopes up. And if things aren't going to end well, why immerse ourselves in false hope. That's probably how the disciples felt after the resurrected Jesus had appeared to them ... they continued to huddle in a room with the doors locked. But, Jesus sought them out, finding them even though they'd shut themselves behind locked doors. He found them to empower them with the courage to risk for the sake of continuing his ministry.



screen 12

David Lose ... a Lutheran Pastor and former dean of the Philadelphia Lutheran Seminary and who was a presenter at the preaching conference I attended in San Antonio a number of years ago, said this:

Jesus has more in mind for us than fear. He wants to breathe upon us the same Holy Spirit he gave his first disciples and set us loose to forgive sin,
share the good news,
work for the welfare of our community, and
provide strength to the weak and courage to the fearful.

In all these ways, we are called to share with those around us the dream and vision of Christian community. Might we fail? Yes. But rather than let that possibility paralyze us, perhaps we can remember that God seems to have way to wrest, to pry out, to seize surprising victory from what looks like utter failure.

PAGE 7

Remember about 10 years ago when we

dreamed of starting a meal program here at the church for the homeless folks in our
community ... we had a vision to provide a hot meal one day a week.

We did some footwork planning meals, adjusting calendars, and securing volunteers.

We put flyers up in and around the neighborhoods of our church.

We did the same at the social service agencies in Scottsdale seeking to get the word out.

One week went by ... no one came, but those of us serving ate well.

A second week went by ... maybe one person came and we all ate well again.

A third and fourth week came ... same scenario, the volunteers ate well and maybe two or
three, at best, homeless persons availed themselves of the
meal we provided.

The next month we gathered on the same day of the week, had a meal ready in case
we had some homeless guests; but more so, we met to decide how we wanted to proceed
since this didn't seem to be materializing as we had envisioned.

It was from that gathering that the idea of working with Family Promise surfaced ... and
from there the rest is history ... we have hosted families now for going on over ten years
and have contributed thousands of dollars (this year another
\$1000 was donated) to that agency ... we support their work

in caring for homeless families with children.

There are other dreams in the works

here at Bethany ... dreams for the back forty and how that land can be used to serve our neighborhood; there are dreams about involving our own people, in ways they are able, in the life and ministry of our church; there are dreams about ministries we can do that both have a local as well as a world-wide reach.

We can dream here at Bethany ... even though we tip the age scale to reflect the twilight years of life.

Remember what God said: *I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh and your old men* (or as we like to put it – your seasoned saints) shall dream dreams.

PAGE 8

As a Bethany member, what is your dream for our church?

What is your dream for churches all over the world?

What is your dream for the world and how can the church be a part of that dream?

As you think about that, bear these things in mind:



screen 13

When God causes us to dream ... It's always for the faith community to bear God's blessing.
When God causes us to dream ... It's not about numbers of people in the pew & budgets,
it's about continuing the ministry of Jesus – if that be done,
God will provide the people & the dollars.
When God causes us to dream ... It's about faithfulness, not results ... like sleeping dreams,
conscious dreams too can take us down roads we've never
imagined.

I am interested in your dreams for the church and for the world.
If you would like, email me your dreams ... who knows what God might do with those dreams.
Email me at pastor@bethanyscottsdale.com

God pours out the spirit upon us all for the good of
the faith community to be bearers of Jesus' light in
the world. AMEN

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

*We believe in a loving God,
who is life's breath for all of earth's creatures,
who is the ground in which our lives flourish,*

*who is the mystery toward which we are drawn.
We believe in the risen Christ,
whose life is the way we see God made real,
whose death bears witness to the power of love,
whose presence nourishes our spirits each day.*

*We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who flows as a refreshing spring of life,
who comes as divine fire to energize the faithful,
who creates communities of joy and justice.*

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PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Empowering God, giver of the Holy Spirit ... You cause us to dream dreams for the sake of the faith community. We pray today that we be open to the dream, receive it, and then work to make your dream become flesh and blood in the world. Fill us with creativity, courage, and energy to make dreams come true so that the church can be the body of Christ in the world bringing hope, healing, forgiveness, and peace. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Empowering God, giver of the Holy Spirit ... we pray for our world, our communities, our friends and loved ones. For those who are ill, for those who have lost loved ones, for those who live in fear, for those who struggle with the basics to live each day, for those who live amid the violence of war and conflict, for those who are homeless, for those unemployed, and for those with ailments and difficulties of which we do not even know ... fill them with the gift of your spirit and wrap them in your arms of grace, mercy, and healing. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Empowering God, giver of the Holy Spirit ...we pray for those on the Bethany prayer list. For the twelve step groups beginning to meet again renewing their road to recovery. For our own Bethany homebound members. For our church leaders and Task Force seeking how best to safely begin in person worship again. Fill us with your wisdom to begin again in-person worship amid this CORVID-19 pandemic. We pray for safety as we seek to be faithful in worship. We pray for faith communities everywhere seeking to do the same, we pray for healthcare workers, leaders of governments (domestic and international) that your guiding presence give them wisdom and compassion to lead and serve well. Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Empowering God, giver of the Holy Spirit ... we each come to you now in a moment of silent prayer ... Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Hear us now as we pray the prayer Jesus taught us to pray:

(You may say the traditional Lord's Prayer or the Aramaic version printed below.)

O Creator, the one who gave birth to the universe, You are the sacred source of our being.

*Focus Your ways, Your light, within us, make us useful for Your purposes here on earth so that
Your desire and our lives become one.*

Grant what we need each day in bread and insight.

Loosen the cords of mistakes binding us, as we release the strands we hold of other's guilt.

*Do not let surface things delude us, snare us, and lead us away from You and Your purpose.
But free us from what holds us back, give us power to live as you intended and created us to live.*

*From You comes the all-working will, the lively strength to act,
the song that beautifies all and renews itself from age to age. AMEN*

OFFERING *(Please mail your weekly offering to the church.
4300 N 82nd St. Scottsdale, AZ 85251)*

PRAYER OF BLESSING

*Good and gracious God, you are the source of all blessing. In generosity, you provide all we
need for the living of our lives. We, in turn, are called to be generous ourselves. We pray that
what we give be used as an expression of your presence and healing in the world. We thank
you for this opportunity to give back something of the blessings we have received from your
hand. AMEN.*

BENEDICTION

*Go out into the world,
and labor to bring forth new life.
Dream dreams, pursue visions
and speak of God's goodness
in the words of those who would hear.*

*And may the God who breathed life into creation be your delight.
May Christ Jesus give hope to your dreaming,
and may the Holy Spirit, your advocate and supporter,
.....set your hearts ablaze with a passion for peace.*

*We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,
In the name of Christ. Amen.*

DISMISSAL

*Calling upon God's Holy Spirit to empower us, we go out from here to serve the Lord.
Bless us Lord. Thanks be to God.*