

LEADERSHIP LETTER FOR SUNDAY, MAY 23, 2021

Dear Zion Family,

In last Sunday's First Reading, Acts 1:15-26, the disciples prayed and then Matthias was chosen by casting lots to replace Judas. Gary Westgard, a retired ELCA pastor, contributed a devotion on this passage in "Christ in Our Home," page 47. He wrote, "Matthias reminds me of myself. Maybe he reminds you of yourself. Ordinary people chosen by God and claimed in baptism to let our light shine, doing the best we can. Like Matthias, you go about quietly doing good, God notices. And the people you help do too." Thank you for not being the Somebodies, Anybodies, Everybodies, and Nobodies in Rev. Janet's sermon; thank you for all the stepping up and saying, "Yes, Lord, here I am, send me."

JOIN US FOR IN-PERSON WORSHIP

ON **PENTECOST**, MAY 23, 2021 AT 10 AM

At Pentecost, we celebrate and welcome the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are encouraged to wear **red** (in church and on Zoom) to recall the **red** of the flames of the Holy Spirit and also as a sign that the Holy Spirit comes to all believers. Also, look for the **red** geraniums in the planters by Zion's front door.

Please remember to wear your mask and to turn your cellphone off while in the sanctuary.

To join the May 23rd service by Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84354840714?pwd=TDJGTkwvSTBER2lNb1o1Qzd6WGxDdz09> Meeting ID: 843-5484 0714, Password: 022654. Or by PHONE, +16465588656, 84354840714#, 1#, 022654#. If you are joining us on Zoom, please be sure you are on mute and that your video is turned off from 10 AM when the service commences until it ends and the "Joyful Chaos" begins.

To join the service by Livestream on our YouTube channel, you can do so by visiting our page at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWzOtbCe2z7-bIPvxp62IA>

The Service of the Word is available later in this newsletter.

May 23rd is also Global Companion Sunday. We are celebrating the Global Companion Relationship between the Upstate NY Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe (ELCZ) and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zambia (ELCZA) by including these brothers and sisters in Christ in our prayers on Pentecost Sunday. Learn more about the ELCZ at www.elcz.co.zw.

OTHER NEWS AND NOTES

Did you know? Globally, 1.8 billion people drink from contaminated water sources. Unsafe water leads to illnesses that claim the lives of 840,000 people each year, most of them children under the age of five. It claims more lives each year than war. **Our synod's World Hunger Team (Carole Grove is on this team) has challenged Mark, our congregation, and me to join in an effort to assist people around the world in dire need of clean water.** The campaign is called "Springs in the Desert" and we are challenged to raise \$400 by June 5th!! If you would like to donate, send a check to Upstate NY Synod, PO Box #160, Syracuse, NY 13214. Write "Springs in the Desert" and Zion Lutheran Church on the memo line. You may also make your check out to Zion with "World Hunger" on the memo line and bring/send it to church. Mark and I will be attending Synod Assembly on Zoom from June 3rd–June 5th.

The Rev. Ursula Meier is asking for volunteers to pack boxes of food and/or help at the food giveaways at Johnson Park Center. If you would like to volunteer, please contact Carol Blackburn for details.

Thirty-nine participants worshiped together on Zoom/YouTube on Mother's Day, May 16th.

The Task Force for Return to In-person worship will meet on Wednesday, May 19th at 7PM on Zoom.

The May 15th Red Cross blood drive went smoothly, with fourteen people donating blood. Thank you to all who helped with this program and to those who continue to give their blood.

On the table in the narthex, you will find copies of the devotionals, "Christ in Our Home" and "Hope-full Living." Please call the church office if you would like one sent to you.

Thank you for donating to World Hunger/ "Springs in the Desert." Don't forget to wear red on Pentecost.

In faith,
Laurel McCurdy, church council co-president



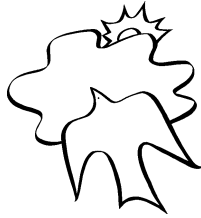
After over five years of serving as one of God's Housekeepers at Zion Lutheran Church, Evon Pinkos will be retiring as of May 31, 2021. Today, we honor Evon for all the loving care and thorough attention to details she has given to us and to our church building during this time. We are ever so grateful for her constancy and her faithful devotion to the necessary deep-cleaning tasks all through this pandemic. Thank you, Evon, for your service and may your retirement be blessed.



Zion Lutheran Church

New Hartford, NY

Pentecost



May 23, 2021

WELCOME

PRELUDE *Nearer My God to Thee, Stuart K. Hine - Marcus Corasanti*

Thanksgiving for Baptism

Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, the fountain of living water, the rock who gave us birth, our light and our salvation. **Amen.**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism, we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness. Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

Gracious God, all life is sustained by you, our Source. We praise you for Christ, the firstborn from the dead, who frees us from sin and raises us up to new life. Here at this font we touch the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing through the city of God. Here, death is washed away forever. Here, we are grafted into the tree of life, with leaves for the healing of the world. Pour out your Holy Spirit on this assembly, into this community, and throughout all creation. Cleanse us from our fears and drown our divisions. Grant that all may drink of your mercy and peace, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

We give you thanks, O God, O Living One, for you have created all, and you water the earth abundantly. Oceans and aquifers praise you. Rivers and streams bless you. **Amen.**

Opening Hymn: *Come, Gracious Spirit, Heavenly Dove, vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #404 - Marcus Corasanti*

Vs. 1 Come, gracious Spirit, heav'nly dove, with light and comfort from above. Come, be our guardian and our guide; o'er ev'ry thought and step preside.

Vs. 4 Lead us to heav'n, that we may share fullness of joy forever there; lead us to our eternal rest, to be with God forever blest.

Prayer of the Day

Mighty God, you breathe life into our bones, and your Spirit brings truth to the world. Send us this Spirit, transform us by your truth, and give us language to proclaim your gospel, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 2:1-21

Second Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Halle, Halle, Hallelujah

Hal-le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le, hal - le, hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah. Hal - le - lu - jah.

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

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon: *The Holy Spirit Calls Us... from Tomorrow* -Rev. Jennifer DeWeerth

This year as we come to these readings on Pentecost, here is the question I want to ask: do we hear them any differently than usual? The one thing that ties all the scripture together on this day is the centrality of the Holy Spirit. In Ezekiel, we have this strange and wonderful vision of the valley of dry bones, a place of death, desolation of hopelessness. The Spirit of God enters in, breathing new life and hope, bringing the bones to life.

And we have the familiar story from Acts, when Jews are gathered for the festival of weeks, 50 days after Passover to celebrate the wheat harvest with an offering of grain. The people who had followed Jesus and then been left behind, and many others, are gathered together for the Jewish feast, and they are filled with the Holy Spirit.

The thing is, Jesus had told them this would happen. That's in the Gospel of John that we just heard. He didn't talk to them about the Holy Spirit before, Jesus says, because he was with them. But now that he is leaving, he wants his disciples to know that *they will not be left alone*. In fact, there will be a benefit to Jesus leaving them, because that means that the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, will be sent to them. A spirit of truth will guide them through their grief of losing him, and out the other side, to their true purpose, which is to testify, not to their momentary sorrow, but to Jesus as the presence and righteousness of God.

As I read these familiar scriptures this week, what struck me was how different they sounded to me after more than a year of strange separations and closure, as we now begin to regather in so many ways—with friends and family, for food and coffee and sports and music, for school and work and worship. Here are just a few points that stood out to me, along with a lot of questions:

The Holy Spirit unites the diaspora

The Book of Acts begins with a very linguistically diverse group of people ~Jewish people—all gathered together to celebrate the bounty and justice of God according to tradition, but also in a very new moment, for they have been followers together of Jesus. And it is in this moment that God breaks in and announces good news to them. They are a people in diaspora, brought together through the Spirit of God. As Luther Seminary professor Matt Skinner notes, the Pentecost story in Acts is a great reminder that to be a dispersed people (as all churches have been in the past 15 months) is not necessarily to be an adrift people or an alienated people. The Holy Spirit gives shared meaning and purpose in the context of diversity and dislocation.

The Holy Spirit is how we will reconnect. As we come back together post-Covid, and it's definitely not all at once but little by little, we tend to share stories of how this time has been for us. We do that constantly as our social circles start to re-enlarge. As we tell those stories, and hear them, how will we identify the Holy Spirit as having been present over the past year? Can we help each other see the ways that we had God's presence or companionship during those times? As we hear those stories of our time of isolation and dispersion, times perhaps of loss or trauma, will we see that the Spirit has been a source of connection for us, a way that we have been united even in a time of separation?

The Holy Spirit gives us hope

As we come back together, some things may be the same, but many won't, not for a while, or maybe never again. Even as we have a tremendous sense of loss, as indeed Jesus' disciples did, will we also have a sense of hope? Will the Spirit breathe in us new ideas for moving into the future? How does that look for you as an individual? Have your ideas about what you want to do with your time and energy changed? Do you see new possibilities for your vocation or relationships? What about for Zion? Are there ways of being a church that you now see that you didn't before—ways of worshipping, of caring for one another, of serving the community?

The Holy Spirit comforts and provides companionship, and connects us as the community of God's people, breathing life into the body of Christ. But the Holy Spirit also, as Jim Manley says in his hymn, *Spirit of Gentleness*, calls "from tomorrow." In other words, the Spirit is *the lure of God* into the future. Like breath into flesh and bone, the Spirit lures the grief-stricken disciples into their future. Dreams, new visions, "bold new decisions"—these depend upon hope for new possibilities, a tomorrow worth acting on today,

The Holy Spirit "Breaks Ancient Schemes"

I don't think I ever gave much thought to this line in Jim Manley's hymn until this past week as I thought about post-Covid Pentecost. I can hardly open a religious publication or email lately without reading about how all the church forecasters and

leaders think the old ways of doing things have been well and truly disrupted and will never go back to that famous status: “the way we’ve always done things.” Some of you have told me that you think things will look different as Zion moves into its future. That you have learned to do church differently or seen that it can be done differently. Or you’ve talked to people who have been drawn to some of the new features of Covid and post-Covid faith community. Is that what is meant by “breaking ancient schemes?”

And perhaps another way of breaking ancient schemes is one that seems really important as we mark the festival of Pentecost. Pentecost, of course, is a Jewish harvest festival, the festival of weeks. It’s called Pentecost because the book Leviticus puts the festival exactly seven weeks and then one day (the “morrow”), or 50 (penta) days altogether, after Passover. It is a feast of thanksgiving to God for the bounty of the wheat harvest, and it’s why all those Jews from so many places speaking so many languages were gathered together in Jerusalem in the first place.

Here’s the point: The instructions about giving thanks in the Torah are followed immediately with instructions just as specific about how the harvest must be justly shared with those who do not have land. “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest; you shall leave them for the poor and for the alien: I am the Lord your God.” (Leviticus 23:22). Those with land were to consider their land, their trees, and their vineyards as a means of providing for the poor. The festival of Pentecost was essentially a day for those who had been lifted out of poverty and slavery to remember that abundance and freedom obligate us to those who continue to live in poverty and chains.

What resources, what bounty from God, are we called to share with those who have need? For so many people, the experience of a pandemic and the awakening to racism and injustice have combined to “awaken us from our slumbers.” How are we providing enough grain at the edges of the field for those who have no land? How are we moved by the Spirit of God to break ancient schemes of oppression, racism and exclusion, hunger and homelessness, excess wealth and the poverty that results from it?

God has a vision for the world, a beautiful vision of life and abundance and community and flourishing. It is the purpose that Jesus announced at the start of his ministry, “to preach good news to the poor....to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” When Jesus leaves his disciples, that purpose remains, but now we hear it from the Holy Spirit who calls from tomorrow, luring us into the future, God’s future, with dreams and visions, and hope.

Holy Spirit, connect us and reconnect us, breathe new life into us. Stir us from placidness and break old ways that were not working, that continue to stymie the flourishing of the poor, the immigrant, the excluded, the dejected, and the imprisoned. Lure us into the future that God dreams for us and give us the courage to make bold decisions that we will arise together from valleys of old injustices and bondage. Call us from tomorrow into the beloved community of joyous feasting for all people. Amen.

Apostles’ Creed,

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

ANTHEM: How Great Thou Art, words and music by Stuart K. Hine - Marcus Corasanti

Prayers of Intercession

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

Gracious God, you give the Holy Spirit to your church, filling it with many and varied gifts. In the church throughout the world, strengthen us in our visioning and dreaming, that it may discover anew the Spirit’s creative work. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of life, your mighty works are too numerous to count. The earth is full of your creatures, living things both great and small. Open your hand and give them the necessities of this life. Send your fresh Spirit over the face of the earth. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

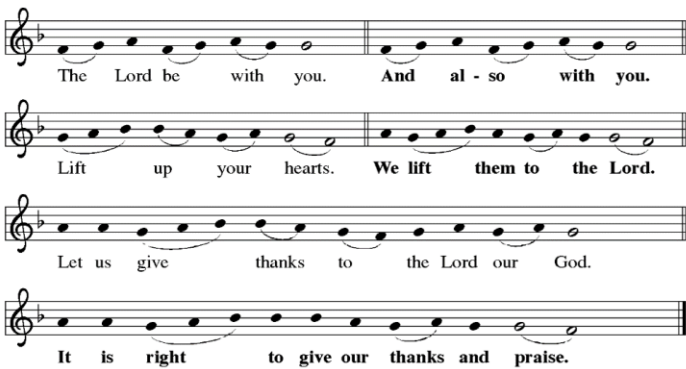
God of faithfulness, you tend to the needs of your people, even the sighs of our hearts. Hear those who cry out to you in distress. Restore to wholeness all who are in any need this day. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of love, we pray for our brothers and sisters in Zimbabwe and Zambia as they lift your name in praise and thanksgiving despite struggles with economic hardship and COVID-19. As they enter the cold of winter, keep them warm, fill them with hope, and keep them well. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Listen to the cries of your people waiting patiently for your healing hand and comforting Spirit, especially those who suffer with chronic pain and all cancer patients, Pr. Mary Etta, Gail, Kayleigh, Patsy, Claudia & Fran, Edie Marie, Ed and family, prayers for Michael Gilleece and family, and Theresa, that the light of Christ may shine upon them with hope. Hear us O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING DIALOGUE



The Lord be with you. And al - so with you.

Lift up your hearts. We lift them to the Lord.

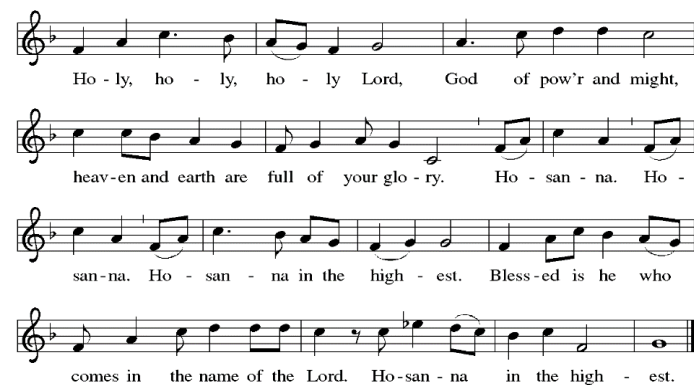
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy.... and join in their unending hymn.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

Thanksgiving at the Table

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age. Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth. Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood. Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea. Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey. Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus, your anointed one. Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ. Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night on which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this is my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup we remember our Lord's Passover from death to life as we proclaim the mystery of faith: **Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.**

O God of resurrection and new life: Pour out your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. Bless this feast. Grace our table with your presence. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread. Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world. Breathe new life into us. Send us forth, burning with justice, peace, and love. **Come, Holy Spirit.**

With your holy ones of all times and places, with the earth and all its creatures, with sun and moon and stars, we praise you, O God, blessed and holy Trinity, now and forever. **Amen.**

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 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, forever and ever. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION,

The risen Christ invites us to this table. Come, eat and be satisfied.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Wellspring of joy, through this meal you have put gladness in our hearts. Satisfy the hunger still around us, and send us as joyful witnesses, that your love may bring joy to the hearts of all people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

The blessing of the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, surround and sustain you, keep you from harm, and fill you with courage. **Amen.**

Sending Song: *Spirit of Gentleness, vs. 1 & 4 Hymn #396 -Marcus Corasanti*

Vs. 1 Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness calling and free; Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea. You moved on the waters, you called to the deep, then you coaxed up the mountains from the valleys of sleep; and over the eons you called to each thing: "Awake from your slumbers and rise on your wings."

Vs. 4 Spirit, Spirit of gentleness, blow through the wilderness calling and free; Spirit, Spirit of restlessness, stir me from placidness, wind, wind on the sea. You call from tomorrow, you break ancient schemes. From the bondage of sorrow all the captives dream dreams; our women see visions, our men clear their eyes. With bold new decisions your people arise.

Dismissal

You are the body of Christ raised up for the world. Go in peace. Share the good news. Alleluia! **Thanks be to God. Alleluia!**

Postlude: *God of Tempest, God of Whirlwind -Marcus Corasanti*

Thank you for being with us today!!

Worship Team Schedule

Greeters	
May 23 In-Person	Linda Bennett & Fran Holzberger
June 6 In-Person	Deb Murdock
June 20 In-Person	Jan Kowalczyk
June 27 In-Person	

Ushers	
May 23 In-Person	Laura Hilt & Caryn Carlson
June 6 In-Person	Doreen Nicholls & Jeanne Gymburch
June 20 In-Person	
June 27 In-Person	

Worship Assistant	
May 23 In-Person	Ryan Kulawy
May 30 Zoom only	Wendy Stevens
June 6 In-Person	Carl Schmitt
June 13 Zoom only	John Blackburn
June 20 In-Person	Wendy Stevens
June 27 In-Person	Fran LaGase

Greeters & Ushers: Please sign up in the Narthex or contact Jeanne Gymburch at jgymburch@aol.com or Barb Wilson B62950@aol.com

Worship Assistants: Please sign up in the Narthex or contact Jim Marscher at jmarscher@yahoo.com

Thank you for volunteering!

Many thanks to our editors, Laurel McCurdy & Wendy Stevens, for their proofreading eyes every week!! Your attention to detail is phenomenal and we appreciate all your time and work so much!



Garden Ministry - hundreds of cars pass Zion every day. To make our church more inviting, we maintain flowers in the planters by the parking lot doors, the playground, and the Prayer Garden (on the corner of French and Burrstone Roads - where the white stone cross is). When you see some bright, sturdy plants, please bring them to Zion by Sunday, June 13th, and plant them or leave them on the cart by the downstairs door. Donations of black mulch are also appreciated. Please contact Kim Marscher kmarscher@yahoo.com if you have questions. Remember the saying - "Flowers are God's laughter" - let's show that Zion is a happy place. Thanks for your help.



Social Media: Don't forget to like & share our posts, sermons, and pictures!! Share our YouTube clips, talk about our ministries and all that you love about your church home!

(Zion's Facebook & YouTube Page- Zion Lutheran Church, New Hartford, NY)