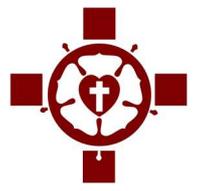




LUTHERAN PORT ELIZABETH FRIEDENSKIRCHE - CHURCH OF PEACE



Home Service for Pentecost 23 April 2021 The Holy Spirit gives peace.

Watchword:

Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty. Zechariah 4:6

Opening

Following the flood, Noah's descendants failed to spread out and fill the earth as God had spoken. Rather, they exalted themselves: with "one language and the same words" (Genesis 11:1) they spoke proudly and arrogantly. The Lord humbled them by confusing "the language of all the earth" dividing and dispersing the people (Genesis 11:9).

That dispersal was reversed on Pentecost day.(the fiftieth day after Easter), when God caused the one Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to be preached and understood in a multitude of languages. "At the sound, the multitude came together" (Acts 2:6), for the preaching of the Gospel of Christ is the primary work of the Holy Spirit, whereby he gathers people from all nations into one Church. The Holy Spirit teaches and brings to our remembrance the words of Jesus, which are the words of the Father who sent Him. These words bestow forgiveness and peace to those who keep and hold onto them in faithfulness and love for Jesus. " Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:27)

Opening Hymn Sup 889 1-4 Each morning with its new-born light.

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| <p>1 Each morning with its new-born light
proclaims the Lord of life is great!
His faithfulness will have no end;
to him our songs or praise ascend.</p> <p>2 The gift of light that fills the sky
helps us to see and choose our way;
then let us order our affairs
in praise of him who for us cares.</p> | <p>3 Lord, let our eyes, the body's light,
be drawn to what is good and right
and to yourself, the source of life,
our hope in fear, our peace in strife.</p> <p>4 You, Lord of all creation, are
as brilliant as the morning star;
light in our hearts your holy flame
and make us fit to hear your name.</p> |
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Introitus

P. In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

C. Amen.

P. Our help is in the Name of the Lord,

C. **who made heaven and earth.**

P. : Let us think of our unworthiness and confess to God that we have sinned with thoughts, words, and deeds, and that we cannot free ourselves from our sinful life by our own power. We therefore take refuge to our Heavenly Father's unfathomable compassion, and seeking mercy for the sake of Christ, we confess: God be merciful to me a sinner.

C. **The Almighty God have mercy upon us, may He forgive us our sins and lead us to eternal life. Amen.**

P. In mercy of Almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for you, and for his sake God forgives you all your sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ he gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit.

C. Amen

C: **Glory be to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forevermore. Amen**

Kyrie

L. Kyrie eleison!

C. Lord, have mercy!

L. Christe eleison!

C. Christ, have mercy!

L. Kyrie eleison!

C. Lord have mercy!

L. Glory be to God in the highest!

C. **And on earth peace, to all in whom He delights.**

All glory be to God on high! Who has our race befriended; to us no harm shall now come nigh, the strife at last is ended. God showeth His goodwill to us, and peace shall reign on earth again. O thank Him for His goodness!

Prayer of the Day

L. The Lord be with you!

C. **And also, with you!**

Great Physician and Healer of the Nations, You who taught the lame to dance with joy, the mute to sing songs of peace, and showed the blind rainbows of love and promise: We suffer, great God, with disease in the Body of Christ. **Heal us:** that the cancer of our internal divisions and jealousies may be cured. **Touch us:** that the blindness of our indifference to society's ills may be vision in ministry. **Anoint us:** that our deaf ears this glad morning may hear the invitation of your good news to all people and upon hearing become disciples of Jesus Christ, followers led by the light of the Holy Spirit which you send to us this Pentecost Sunday.

Amen.



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Epistle Reading

Acts 2:1-18

C: Hallelujah

Hymn LH 773 1-3

1 Spirit of God unseen as the wind,
Gentle as is the dove;
Teach us the truth and help us believe,
Show us the Saviour's love.
You spoke to men long, long ago,
Gave us the written Word;
We read it still, needing its truth,
Through it God's voice is heard:

Filled with the Spirit's power.

2 Spirit of God unseen as the wind,
Gentle as is the dove;
Teach us the truth and help us believe,
Show us the Saviour's love.
Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live this way:
we need your power, we need your strength,
following Christ each day.

Gospel Reading

John 14:23-31a

Apostle's Creed

Hymn Sup 776 1+2

1 Spirit of God unseen as the wind,
Gentle as is the dove;
Teach us the truth and help us believe,
Show us the Saviour's love.
You spoke to men long, long ago,
Gave us the written Word;
We read it still, needing its truth,
Through it God's voice is heard:

Spirit of God unseen as the wind.

2 Spirit of God unseen as the wind,
Gentle as is the dove;
Teach us the truth and help us believe,
Show us the Saviour's love.
Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live this way:
we need your power, we need your strength,
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Sermon

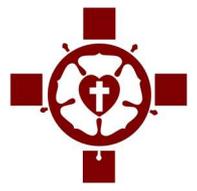
John 20:19-23

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, Peace be with you! ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. ²¹ Again Jesus said, Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you. ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.



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Peace be with you!

Words Jesus spoke to us into our situation now. Here we sit together this morning, men and women, coming from different cultural backgrounds, from different parts of this continent and the world, if you so wish, from South Africa, Germany, anybody from somewhere else, we are maybe also from different language groups? Indeed, the Church of Christ born on Pentecost day became a multicultural, multilingual congregation constituted by people with many different biographies.

And yet we are here together because we are celebrating Pentecost with one another. It is the day which our Lord has promised his disciples and us, and that came about, the day on which, as John says in chapter 15:26 "*when the Counsellor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father...*"

It is he who is present in you and me today.

Peace be with you! says Jesus. And with that he basically puts before us the agenda for the life as Christians, the way we ought to live.

We hear Jesus speaking also to us, at a time where people are increasingly getting worried, because there is so much change around us, in our society and the well proven systems of old. Our well-known paradigms have shifted. Our society has changed and continues to change. Just think about the increasing unemployment and with it, the financial crisis of the world, think of the rise of the cost of living. All this and more things certainly bring about restlessness in our society and no peace.

Jesus' word to us: Peace be with you! is spoken at the right time. We are in need of peace, inner peace! Maybe you are not in need of it? Peace doesn't mean the truce or quietness between two fighting parties, or when weapons are kept quiet.

I am looking for peace which enables me to continue to share God's word in a restless time. I am looking for peace which enables me to have a free und non prejudiced relationship with my neighbour. Peace where I do not have to fear, someone might stab me in the back. A peace in which other people don't feel intimidated by my presence because I am a Pastor. I am looking for peace where I can forgive the trespasses of others, and I can be forgiven.

Jesus spoke these words to the people who followed him, the disciples who were overcome by fear, and hence hid themselves behind locked doors. He also says these words to you and me, today and here. Yes, remember Pentecost. I kept my promise I did send the counsellor.

On Pentecost day people came from everywhere to gather at this one place. What is so amazing is, that everybody understood what was said. It was as if there were no differences between them. In the true sense of the word, they were TOGETHER, they were all on the same "wavelength" and each and every one present heard the Pentecost message in the same way.



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That is the great gift of Pentecost. In spite of the people being so different from each other, they were unified in what they heard. That is the unique gift to the Church of Jesus Christ on Pentecost day. The Holy spirit binds us together under the cross of Jesus and opens our hearts and senses for the word and for one another, and unites us in the worship service, and in our mission to be witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The world and other religions look at us Christians very critically because we seem not to be united. That is how they see us, Christians. They maintain that there is no peace among us.

We are one through baptism and united through the daily renewal of our baptism and together with most Christians in the word we confess: **"I believe in the holy Christian Church/catholic = all-encompassing universal church, communion of saints..."**

Are you at peace with what I have said up to now? There are still more things where we stand united as Christian denominations of the world. If we would just see and recognize that, then we would have and be at peace, not a peace which we have made or created, but a peace which our Lord has given to us through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I repeat, the Holy Spirit is in each one of you since your baptism.

Friends, show it to the world in your everyday life, show that you are gifted and inspired Christians. Don't be ashamed to show others that you are Christians, go against anything that wishes to divide the Christian community, Don't hide behind locked doors because of fear.

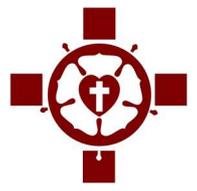
Our world and all that is within it, is exposed to two forces or powers. On the one hand is God's power and opposing that is the power of evil. For you and me there can only be one determining power, and that is the power of God., in other words the Holy Spirit who is among us even today.

The evil among us, surely is also a reality among us, which keeps on telling us; don't trust your neighbour, Think of and about yourself. You are number ONE. Leave the church, put your church tithes and collection into your own pocket, and spoil yourself. Look at the church and all her faults, there is no unity, all that church wants, is your money. How many falls for that?

God's Spirit however, and this we are shown by the Good News of Pentecost, brings together, unites, builds relationships in Jesus Christ, in spite of all the differences, which are nothing else but wonderful parts of God's magnificent creation. These differences are given to us that we edify each other, that we complement and enrich each other, and not to separate.



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Indeed, PEACE BE WITH YOU! dear Christians! That is what we are called to do in life. Jesus who tells us these consoling and encouraging words, also says: **As the Father sent me, I am sending you!**

He sends you into everyday life, where you live and work – as a spirit filled and inspired Christian, and not to sow dissension and strife. Let us not go out there today and look for and point out all the negative stuff.(look at the church, it is so selfish, and the government that is a bunch of so and so's, whatever they touch turns into...) you know what I mean. Let us not spread evil and mistrust amongst the people.

As inspired Christians let us be witnesses and missionaries of peace. Let us start building trust in each other, starting here in our church, and let us search for just ways, seek reconciliation where people are driven apart by evil spirits. Let us build positively together for a future in this country, and not break down. Every Christian citizen of this country, no matter where he/she comes from originally is called to make a positive contribution in building our nation and land; and should help people to bring about a harmonious community. Christ has called us to participate in that, and that is our mission today.

"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty" (Zechariah 4, 6)

Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you! Amen

Hymn Sup 772, 1-3

1
Come, Holy Spirit, come
O hear my humble prayer.
Stoop down and make my heart your home,
And shed your blessing there.

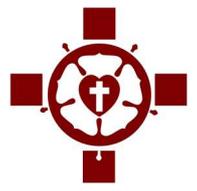
2
Your light, your love impart,
and let it ever be
a holy, humble, happy heart,
Your dwelling place may be.

3
Let your rich grace increase,
Through all my earthly days,
the fruits of righteousness and peace
to your eternal praise.

Come Holy Spirit come,



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Prayer of the Church

God, you have spread your gospel in a wonderful way, we pray you: Lead all people to believe in you, you the one and only God, so that we all may be brothers and sisters in your kingdom of peace.

Let your word be deeply rooted in our hearts and minds in order that we may act according to the words of your son and in this way proclaim your word realistically also to the next generations.

Protect your church from being idle. Help and guide us, who are the church, to trust you and follow your ways.

You have placed each one of us into this country. We have heard your word. Do not allow us to harden our hearts and turn away from you. There are many opportunities around us, where we should give heed to your commandment of love, and go to reach out to our neighbours, to the hungry, the homeless, the lonely, the ill and those who are downtrodden, the victims of the pandemic that has hit all nations of this world. We pray also for the many unemployed people who no longer know how to survive. Show each of us ways where we can make a positive contribution.

We pray for the world powers to act wisely on the war-torn Middle East. Let the leadership in those countries come to their senses to stop the bombing and killing.

Guide all nations of the world into ways of justice and truth, and establish among them that peace, which is the fruit of righteousness, that they may become the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

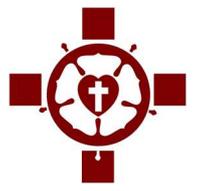
We also wish to pray for your Christian Church in this land, let us accept each other and unite ourselves in your mission to this land.

Bind us together as a nation and show us ways how we together can build a nation where we can live together harmoniously, without crime and violence, to be a people who are concerned with each other's welfare.

Amen



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Holy Communion

C. Create in me, o God, a clean heart, and renew the right spirit within me. Cast me not away, cast me not away from Thy presence, from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.

Preface, Sanctus, Our Father, Words of Institution, Agnus Dei Distribution

Post Communion Prayer

We thank you, heavenly Father, that you have given us one Spirit to drink through the body and blood of your Son. Let your Holy Spirit unite us all in the holy fellowship of faith and love and praise. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C. Amen.

L. Depart in the peace of the Lord

C. Thanks be to God.

Benediction

May the power of the Holy Spirit transform you with the healing fire that unifies the world. Let the wind of that first Pentecost teach you of God's grace, love, hope, and mystery. With tongues of flame, may you be marked for Christ. Go out in faith and abiding love

C. Amen.

Commissioning Hymn Sup 888 **May the feet of God walk with you,**

3. May the feet of God walk with you His hand holds you tight.

May the eye of God rest on you
and His ear hear your cry.

May the smile of God be for you,
and His breath give you life.

May the Child of God grow in you and His love bring you home.