

THE FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN HARTFORD
*An Open and Affirming Congregation of
The United Church of Christ*

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

May 11, 2008

10:30 AM

Welcome-Bienvenidos

WELCOME TO WORSHIP AT CENTER CHURCH. We are glad you have joined us for this service of worship and the fellowship of this congregation. We hope that you will be both comforted and challenged by the Word of God for us today. If you are new to our community, we hope you will consider making this your church home. Any of our worship leaders or ushers will be able to help with your questions. If you are already a member, be sure to extend a friendly greeting to those around you, starting with someone you don't know...yet.

PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP

*"God's Pentecost project is far from finished. You and I are in the thick of it."
~ David Schlafer*

*Please silence all cell phones, beepers, pagers and
other electronic devices before Worship begins.*

*Childcare is provided in the Church House for infants and toddlers
up to three years old. Parents, please know that there is a nursery in the
basement of the Meeting House, where there is a speaker system through
which you may listen to the service.*

WE COME BEFORE GOD

PRELUDE for Organ

"Nun bitten wir den den Heiligen Geist" [BuxWV 208] Dieterich Buxtehude (c. 1637-1707)

(Buxtehude's work at the Church of St. Mary in Lübeck was admired by many, including the young J. S. Bach, who traveled – legend says – 250 miles by foot to study with him. The title of this chorale translates from German to English thus: Now We Pray to the Holy Ghost. Perhaps Buxtehude had this stanza of the chorale in mind for this setting)

*O sweetest Love, your grace on us bestow;
Set our hearts with sacred fire aglow.
That, with hearts united, we love each other,
Every stranger, sister, and brother.*

GREETING AND HIGHLIGHTING OUR MINISTRIES

THE PASSING OF THE PEACE

Leader: Look around at all this wonderful red. It symbolizes the passion of the Spirit in our lives and in the church. Greet each other with that same passion and joy, and celebrate that you are all here this joyous Spirit-filled morning. The love of God, the Peace of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Let us exchange that Peace with one another.
(*You are encouraged to extend the Peace to those near you.*)

INTROIT for Choir “Breath of God, that Swept in Power”

music: Plainsong melody,
adapt. Johann Walther (1524);
harm. Melchior Vulpius (c. 1560-1616)
text: Albert F. Bayly (1901-1984), alt.

Breath of God, that swept in power
in the Pentecostal hour,
Holy Breath, be now in me
source of vital energy.

Love of God, your grace profound
knows not either age or bound.
Come, my heart's own guest to be;
dwell forevermore in me

*CALL TO WORSHIP

Leader: Listen, can you hear the wind?

People: Come, Holy Spirit; come!

Leader: Look, can you see the dancing flames?

People: Come, Holy Spirit; come!

Leader: Can you hear the message in a language you can understand?

People: Come, Holy Spirit; come!

Leader: Do you see the visions? Can you dream the dreams?

People: Come, Holy Spirit; come!

Leader: Come let Pentecost become real in our lives this morning. Come and worship our God who sends the Spirit to touch us and transform us into Pentecost people.

*HYMN TO INVOKE THE HOLY SPIRIT

“Come, O Spirit, with Your Sound”

No. 265

BOUNDLESS MERCY

* *Those who are able are invited to stand.*

UNISON PRAYER OF INVOCATION & THE LORD'S PRAYER

Spirit of God, we want to be open to your being in our church and in our lives. Fill us with your wind and fire, that we might be happy and joy-full. Help us hear the words as if for the first time, that they might touch us in a new way. Give us visions and dreams of what you expect from your creation, that we might begin to help them become real. Come, Spirit; come into our worship, into our church, into our very selves as we praise you with the prayer Jesus taught us:

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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

(= traditional wording, but you may use alternative wording, such as "God," "Creator," or "Mother," as seems fitting.)*

CALL TO CONFESSION

Before the wonders of God, we live too often as bored and skeptical people. We doubt what we cannot see, and resist what we do not understand. We hide behind closed doors while a needy world awaits our witness and our hope. The God who created us calls us back into a relationship of trust, courage and witness.

UNISON PRAYER OF CONFESSION

O God, giver of the Spirit, we sit surrounded by red, and hear the amazing story of Pentecost this morning. But we've heard it so many times before. It is so familiar; we've ceased to be amazed and surprised, or filled with excitement. Forgive us for our complacency. Blow us out of our indifference. Draw us back into right relationship with you, so that we may remember to share your forgiveness with the world. Fill us with the Spirit's exciting power that the flames of passion may dance in our lives. Inspire us with visions and dreams. Help us appreciate each gift you give us. Help us be truly Pentecost People. Hear now those things that are for you alone as we confess our sins in silence.

ASSURANCE OF PARDON

God has promised to send us the Spirit, that we might know fully God's presence in the world and in our lives. Know that the Spirit of forgiveness and understanding flows over us this day and always. Praise be to God.

*Congregational Response “Glory to God the Creator”

music: Ronald A. Nelson (1986)
text: 3rd/4th century Latin, transl.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

PROCLAIMING GOD’S LIVING WORD

READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE Numbers 11: 24-30

NRSV [Burgundy]: Old Testament, p. 129
KJV [Blue]: Old Testament, p. 133

Acts 2: 1-21

NRSV [Burgundy]: New Testament, p. 116
KJV [Blue]: New Testament, p. 109

SERMON

“Out of Bounds”

The Reverend Paul F. Goodman

RESPONDING IN FAITH

*HYMN FOR THE SPIRIT’S CONSTANT PRESENCE

No. 288

“Let It Breathe on Me”

BREATHE ON ME

THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

Congregational Response

“Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying”

music and text: Ken Medema (1973)

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THE OFFERING OF GIFTS AND TITHES

Music for Organ “Come, Holy Ghost, Our Souls Inspire”

Malcolm Archer (1991)

A NOTE TO VISITORS: *We are thrilled that you are with us today. If this is your first time visiting, please don’t give an offering. You are our guest and we’re overjoyed to have you with us. Come back soon and often.*

*DOXOLOGY and UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

OLD HUNDREDTH

text: Thomas Ken (1674), alt.

music: Louis Bourgeois (1551)

UNISON PRAYER OF DEDICATION

For all you have given, for all we have received, we give you thanks. We bring before you our gifts of substance, and the gift of our lives. We bring our passion and joy and surprise; our visions and dreams. May they refresh and enliven our church and community, as the wind of your Spirit did long ago and again today. And may these gifts and the ministry they support speak a word in a language that all will understand, and that will blanket the world with Christ's love and peace. Amen.

GOING FORTH

*HYMN FOR RENEWAL, MISSION, AND UNITY

No. 263

“O Spirit of the Living God”

ST. MATTHEW

stanza 4 organ harmonization: Noel Rawsthorne (1996), alt.

*BENEDICTION

Go forth now as Pentecost people, filled with the Spirit, dreaming dreams, and seeing visions of God's possibilities. We go forth, knowing we are beloved and blessed by a God who never leaves us alone. Go, to be surprised by the Spirit in all that you do and everywhere that you go. We go, claiming our identity as Pentecost people—people of wind and fire, dreams and visions, people filled with that most amazing and transforming Spirit. Amen.

POSTLUDE for Organ

“Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland” [BWV 661]

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

(This is a setting of the melody to which the choir sang the introit. The melody itself is more associated with words used during Advent, “Now come, Savior of the Nations.” Bach's setting complements the words found in stanza one of hymn no. 64, “Fire of God, Undying Flame.”)



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