

# ENCOUNTER

A MID-WEEK SERVICE OF PRAYER AND PRESENCE

**“Come, Holy Spirit” is Our Theme for August 31-October 5**

**Week 6: October 5, 2022**

**“Spirit of the Future”**

Gathering Music

Welcome

Gathering Hymn: In the Lord I'll Be Ever Thankful

Jacques Berthier

*The leader sings first. Afterwards, all repeat.*

Voice

In the Lord I'll be ev - er thank - ful, in the Lord I will re - jice! Look to

5  
3  
God, do not be a - fraid. Lift up your voic - es the Lord is near, lift up your voic - es the Lord is near.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in 3/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The melody is written on a single line. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The second staff starts with a measure rest, followed by a triplet of eighth notes, and continues with the melody. The lyrics are also placed below the notes.

Gathering Prayer (*Prayer to the Holy Spirit* by St. Augustine)

One: Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy.

**All: Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.**

One: Breath of God, that swept in power, in the pentecostal hour,

**All: Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy.**

One: Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy.

**All: Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit, that I always may be holy.**

Sacred Reading: Words from Leonardo Boff

Meditation

Reflection and Response

Concluding prayer and Benediction

Hymn: Be Thou My Vision

Slane

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;  
naught be all else to me, save that thou art.  
Thou my best thought, by day or by night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word;  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou and thou only, first in my heart,  
great God of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**Great God of heaven, my victory won,  
may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!  
Heart of mine own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

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Reverend Brandon Baxter, Associate Pastor for Spiritual Formation  
Matthew Phelps, Minister of Music

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Our theme for these six weeks, "Come, Holy Spirit," is based around the work of Grace Ji-Sun Kim and her book *The Holy Spirit: Hand Raisers, Han, and the Holy Ghost*

## **At Home Reflection Prompts**

During our time of Reflection and Response, those worshipping in person in the 4<sup>th</sup> Story Theater will be invited to engage in a variety of prayer stations. Those worshipping at home are invited to choose any of the following options for reflection and response. Each week, you may choose a different option or utilize the same one repeatedly. You may also use these practices to center yourself on God and welcome the Holy Spirit anytime during the week.

### **Option 1: Breath Prayer**

Ruach, one of the Hebrew words for breath, can be translated as Spirit. This type of prayer reminds us of the ways God continually breathes life into our souls. Choose a simple word or phrase to help focus your attention on God. This might be a simple phrase from our Scripture for the evening, a simple one sentence blessing you know, or even just two words that God has given you. Sit or lie comfortably, allowing your breathing to be natural. As you breathe in, focus on the first word or first part of the phrase. Then as you breathe out, focus on the second word or second part of the phrase. Repeat continually. Two examples:

Inhale: Spirit of life

Inhale: Peace

Exhale: fill my soul.

Exhale: Love

### **Option 2: Holy Fire, Light of the World**

Find a candle in your home, office, or wherever you are worshipping. Light the candle. Gaze at its flame. Watch it dance and flicker. Feel its warmth and radiance. As you gaze into the fire, contemplate the ways that you have seen the light of Christ shine in your life this week.

Remember the large and small ways that you have seen the Spirit of God present and moving in your life; in the smile of a child or grandchild, in a chat with a friend, in a good meal, on a beautiful hike, etc. Ponder these things, give thanks to God for being with you in those moments, and pray to be open to the presence of God's Spirit in the coming week.

### **Option 3: Postures of Presence**

Throughout the centuries, Christians have recognized the power of bodily posture to help us connect to the Spirit of God. As we seek to encounter God's in-dwelling presence, one of the most common ways to open our bodies and souls to the spirit has been to raise our hands in praise (in a V, similar to a touchdown call in football). This pose is called the orans. It can be seen in some of the earliest of depictions of Christian worship and people still raise their hands in praise to this day. Raise your hands in praise. Close your eyes and breathe calmly. Feel the presence of God as you open yourself to the Spirit. Offer your prayers, be they joyous praises or heartfelt laments. Give it to God, and let God fill your body and soul with love and grace. If you are uncomfortable raising your arms in praise, an alternative can be to place your hands together in front of you, palms up and open. Give what you need to give to God and expect to receive God's spirit in return.

### **Option 4: Spirit Words, Spirit Images**

Find some blank paper and some pens, pencils, markers, or colored pencils. Spend a moment breathing deeply, asking for God's Spirit to speak to you. As you are ready, begin to write or draw whatever comes to your heart or mind. There is no right or wrong here. Simply allow yourself to be guided by the Spirit. Once you have written and/or drawn whatever God has placed on your heart, spend time meditating on these words and images. Give thanks for what God has revealed to you.