

PENTECOST

May 23, 2021

A "Word Out" audio transcript



Prelude

Chorale variations on PUER NOBIS
Jean-François Dandrieu (1682–1738)

Welcome

P: Welcome, this Day of Pentecost to Queen Anne Lutheran Church.

Wherever you are listening, whatever challenges you might be facing, we invite you into this space: one where you can hear the good news through proclamation, spoken and sung; a time where you can be still, and know God is God.

Fifty days after Easter we celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. Jesus promises His disciples that the Holy Spirit will accompany them, and that the Spirit reveals the truth. This Spirit, as we heard last week, is the “glue” that binds us together in our community of faith, crossing all boundaries that would separate us. But who is the ruler of this world that Jesus mentions at the end of the reading, and how might the Spirit enable us to face him?

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: All-Knowing God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

P: Most merciful God,

C: **we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.**

P: Gracious God, rich in mercy, has given his Son to conquer sin and death and forgives us accordingly of all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by His authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.


Greeting


P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

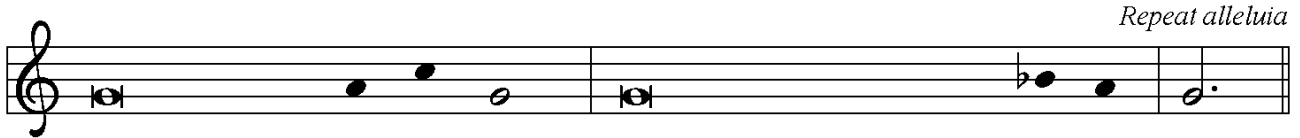
C: **And also with you.**

Gospel Acclamation

liturgical text


G: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.



Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

A: 

Repeat alleluia

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
and kindle in us the fire of your love.

G: 
Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.


Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia.

The Holy Gospel:

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

A: The Holy Gospel according to John, the fifteenth chapter.

G: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

A: [Jesus said,] ²⁶“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. ²⁷You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

^{16:4b}“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks

me, 'Where are you going?' ⁶But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. ⁷Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹about sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; ¹¹about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

¹²"I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.

¹³When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. ¹⁴He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

📖: The Gospel of the Lord.

🙌: Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Pastor Dan Peterson

On Clearance: A Holy Spirit Story

Michael entered the room. It was dark. He turned and faced the dimly lit hallway from which he came. On his wall to the left was a bank of switches. He flipped each one methodically. The sound reverberated through what felt like a colossal auditorium. "Thank God," he thought to himself, at least we're now using electric lights."

Turning to face the contents of the room, Michael felt the burden of his task. Before him stood row after row of metallic gray file cabinets, each one stretching back as far as the light would let him see. He closed his eyes to contemplate his options. "Now, let me think," he said to himself quietly. "Is it under 'H' or 'S'?" A false start could cost him minutes, even hours – time he clearly did not have.

“It must be ‘S,’” he concluded as he opened his eyes. “What a nightmare,” he grumbled as he scanned the cabinets to determine which row it would be. “At least the Vatican keeps a library. We’re still using file folders.”

Fortunately, Michael’s hunch was correct. The file he wanted was under “S.” Soon he was back upstairs, ready for all those awaiting reassignment, including the One whose file he had just procured.

Just Another Day in Paradise

Most of the morning progressed as usual. “No,” he explained to one lost soul after another, “you need to get back in the elevator, go to the ground floor, and cross the street. That’s the Office of Admission, the one with the gate at the front entrance. We do reassignments here.”

“Oh,” Michael would periodically add, “the gate opens by itself. Just be sure and ask for Peter.”

Michael rarely looked up during these encounters. He viewed them as a nuisance and had grown weary of redirecting people. Besides all that, there was always paperwork that needed to be done.

There was a time when things were different. He remembered when his staff would retrieve the files he needed. Unfortunately, after nearly a third of the department’s employees lost their jobs due to insubordination (Rev. 12:7-9), much of the work he would delegate became his own. Now he was accompanied by merely a handful of clerks. The rest were transferred elsewhere.

Once the company completed its reorganization, the CEO appointed Michael and the small band of clerks he supervised with the task of overseeing all subsequent reassignments. The paperwork was tedious, but the work was routine and typically without incident.

There were exceptions, however. One of them came to mind that morning as Michael was thumbing through a stack of files beneath the one he had

retrieved earlier. He saw the letter "G," which immediately made him think of Gabriel.

Gabriel was one of the highest ranking "ethereal luminaries," to use the company's official nomenclature. Most of his time was spent observing, looking at broad historical trends, patterns, and then reporting what he saw directly to the CEO. He had never visited the Office of Reassignment, nor did he know why he had been summoned. But there he was a few eons back, standing before Michael on the other side of the counter, looking confused.

"So, I've been reassigned to the Earth?" Michael remembered Gabriel asking.

"Yes," Michael replied, without emotion. "You are to deliver a message."

"A message?"

"Yes," Michael said. "And you'll have to make a couple appearances, at least for a few months their time."

"Okay," Gabriel said, wondering why the CEO had not communicated this to him directly.

"It appears to be pretty straightforward," Michael continued, taking off his glasses as he looked up momentarily from Gabriel's file. "All you have to do is appear to an unwed teenager and tell her she will conceive out of wedlock and without having sexual relations, and that the child she will bear will be the Savior of the World" (Luke 1:26-38).

Gabriel was silent, skeptical. Michael picked up and put on his glasses as he looked down again at the details of the reassignment.

"Oh, you'll need to appear to her fiancé as well, but in a dream. You have to warn him that he and his future wife will need to take the newborn and flee from Egypt where they will be staying" (Matt 2:13ff).

"This is straight from the CEO," Michael added uneasily, as if an appeal to authority would somehow make the task more reasonable. Now he could really sense Gabriel's displeasure.

Suddenly, Gabriel slammed his fist on the counter. Michael could see fire in his eyes. "When I'm finished doing the work of a delivery boy," he said,

consciously restraining himself, “I want a comfortable job up here – maybe yours.”

“I’ll see what I can do,” Michael replied, shaken by Gabriel’s action but quickly returning to his original, detached demeanor. “They always need luminaries over at Admissions,” Michael added as Gabriel left the suite. The door latched loudly behind him.

The Big One

Just then Michael heard the latch again as the door opened. He was now back in real time. “It’s probably another lost soul,” he thought as he scribbled something illegible on the file he had opened.

“Yes?” he asked indifferently, still looking down at his paperwork as the individual who entered approached the counter. “What do you want?”

“I’m here for reassignment.”

Michael froze. The voice he heard came neither from a lost soul nor an ethereal luminary. This was the big one, the client he was anticipating, the one whose file name began with “S.”

“My God,” he realized, “*this was God.*”

Michael’s hands began to quiver as God – or at least a “spiration” or “procession” of God – stood before him. “Now don’t look up,” Michael thought. “Just stick to procedure. Just stick...to procedure.”

“Okay,” Michael said as he opened the file, “let’s see what we have here. Your history. These notes tell me that you have been assigned a variety of roles in the past. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” the figure standing across from him said, “although I wouldn’t quite use the word ‘assigned.’”

“Semantics,” Michael replied, still looking at his notes. “Now let’s see. Ah – as the creative expression of God’s power, you swept over the waters of primeval chaos at the dawn of creation. *Ruakh elohim*, to cite our mother tongue

in Genesis 1:1, “the wind of God” or “God’s Spirit” (Powell, ed., Harper Collins Bible Dictionary, p. 387).

“Yes,” the voice replied, “I was with God from the beginning, though I was without form, unlike I am now. ‘The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,’ as Proverbs 8:22 says. ‘Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth’ (8:23).”

“I see,” Michael replied, slowly lifting his gaze only to confirm that indeed the figure standing before him now resembled in outline a human form, although the cloak it wore concealed its face and features. “But the passage you cited in Proverbs,” Michael continued, “refers to you as ‘she’ whereas Genesis 1:1 speaks of you in gender-neutral terms. It makes it sound like you are an impersonal force.”

“All true,” the Spirit replied. “Christian art often depicts me as masculine, while the Bible alternatively describes me in feminine or gender-neutral terms. The Greek word that Jesus uses for me in John’s Gospel – *pneuma* – is likewise gender neutral.”

“And yet Christian theologians, including the great Clement of Alexandria, refer to you as feminine,” Michael said. “You even have a song about you by the rock band U2 titled ‘She Moves in Mysterious Ways.’”

“All of that is true as well,” the Spirit observed. “Yet quite literally from day one, despite the various pronouns that have been attributed to me, I have and continue to be the animating source of life, the breath that makes the molecules of every living thing dance with vitality.”

“It’s too bad many people on Earth don’t see you in that capacity,” Michael replied with uncharacteristically positive emotion. “They would probably better appreciate life, indeed a whole planet teeming with life, if they knew it came from you – that it was sacred *because* of you.”

Michael paused.

“Fortunately,” he said, breaking the silence, “we are not reassigning you when it comes to your primary task of animating or inspiring life. Nor do we deny your creative inspiration when it comes to the production of Holy Scripture. (Although we think Martin Luther was right to question whether you had *any* role in producing the Book of Revelation!) We are, however, questioning your contemporary relevance, particularly when it comes to Christianity in America.”

A Reckoning

“My relevance?” the Spirit replied.

“Yes, that’s what the file says,” Michael said nervously. It seems, at least when it comes to your capacity to instill peace, you have become increasingly irrelevant in America since the beginning of the second war in Iraq.”

“But Jesus gave me that role,” the Spirit interjected. “He told his disciples that I would reside among them in his absence, that I would console them and continue to teach them on his behalf. He even called me the *Paraclete*, which – if you remember your Greek – means “the one called to be alongside them.” That’s why modern English translations sometimes use the word ‘Advocate’ instead.”

Michael was silent. It was true. Jesus himself gave the Spirit this assignment.

The Spirit continued. “After Jesus died, he appeared to his disciples again and said, ‘peace be with you.’ Then, alluding to my function in Genesis 1:1, he breathed upon them my Spirit, the breath of a new creation, and with it, what Dietrich Bonhoeffer calls “God’s peace among men.”

“That’s all true,” Michael replied, “and I appreciate your reference to Bonhoeffer. Of course, we all know that Paul spoke of you in a similar way. ‘The fruit of the Spirit,’ he wrote in Galatians, ‘is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control’” (5:22).

“Oh no,” the Spirit groaned. “I think I see where you are going. All the internal conflict we’re seeing in America, the divisiveness, the partisanship, the

complete and total lack of civility just goes to show that I am no longer in vogue.”

“That seems to be the point,” Michael concurred.

“You said all of this goes back to the second war in Iraq. How so?”

“Well, according to our records, that was when the kind of partisanship we are seeing now really became visible. American turned against American.

Christians no longer saw themselves as ministers of reconciliation, as Paul calls them in 2 Corinthians 5:18. Instead, they divided themselves. They forgot the call from Jesus to be peacemakers (Matt 5:9). We became aware of this, in part, after one of our scouts returned from visiting Christian bookstores. What he



noticed was striking: the dove, the symbol of peace, *your* symbol, had been relegated to clearance merchandise.” Except for Pentecostals, who still appeal to you as the ground of their religious experience, you were forgotten. Even the Lutherans, who customarily hung banners with the symbol of a dove during Pentecost, did so with less frequency. You were on clearance everywhere. The Followers of the Way, it would seem, had lost their way” (see Acts 18:25).

“By the Trump presidency,” Michael added, “you – the bringer and bearer of peace – had been forgotten. Look at America now. Violence. Turmoil. Mass shootings. White supremacy. Racism. Strife.”

“So that’s why I’m being reassigned?” the Spirit said. “The world, including those who claim to be Christian, who rejected the Prince of Peace have now rejected me?”

From Reassignment to Recommitment

Moments passed. The Spirit found herself in a state of disbelief. It wasn’t the first time that Followers of the Way had exchanged the ploughshares of peace for swords of wrath. Neither was it the first time her symbol, the dove, had

been relegated (albeit figuratively) to the status of clearance merchandise. It was, however, the first time she had been summoned for reassignment.

“What now?” she finally asked.

Michael looked confused. “That’s odd,” he said. “It doesn’t say. I have the rationale for why we are reassigning you, but apart from your continued role in sustaining creation, I have no idea what comes next.”

“I think I know why,” the Spirit said with sudden realization.

“Why?”

“Just as creation will fold without me,” she answered, “so will the church. Sure, the church turns away from me when it fails to live out its mission of bringing peace to a broken world, but I cannot turn away from the church. I will not give up on the church. The Father and the Son have pledged me to the church, and neither they nor I break our promises. Indeed, as John 16:11 says, God has condemned the ruler of this world. The ruler sows discord. I sow love and peace.”

“So, you *will* continue to commit yourself to this assignment.”

“Correct,” the Spirit said.

“Then why are you here?” Michael asked.

“I don’t know, entirely,” the Spirit said. “Maybe it’s to recommit myself to the world as the bearer and bringer of peace.”

Michael nodded.

“Oh,” the Spirit said, reaching into its cloak. “On the way up to your office I was given an envelope that I was supposed to deliver to you.”

Michael took the envelope and raised an eyebrow as he opened it. Inside was a slip of paper with a memo which read, “Archangel Michael, Ethereal Luminary. By direct order of the CEO and with the aid of the Holy Spirit, you have been reassigned to Admissions. Report to Peter immediately.”

The End



Hymn of the Day

O Holy Spirit, Root of Life

ELW 399

1 O Ho - ly Spir - it, root of life, cre -
2 E - ter - nal vig - or, Sav - ing One, you
3 O ho - ly Wis - dom, soar - ing pow'r, en -

a - tor, cleans - er of all things: a - noint our wounds, a -
free us by your liv - ing Word, be - com - ing flesh to
com - pass us with wings un - furled, and car - ry us, en -

wak - en us with lus - trous move - ment of your wings.
wear our pain, and all cre - a - tion is re - stored.
cir - cling all a - bove, be - low, and through the world.

Text: Jean Janzen, b. 1933; based on Hildegard of Bingen, 1098–1179

Music: PUER NOBIS, European tune; adapt. Michael Praetorius, 1571–1621; arr. hymnal version

Text © 1991 Jean Janzen, admin. Augsburg Fortress.

Arr. © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.

Nicene Creed

**☩: We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of the Church

A: 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.

A brief silence.

A: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: God of the nations, at the sound of the rushing wind, people speaking different languages proclaimed and heard together your deeds of power. Fill the leaders of nations with your Holy Spirit, so that they exercise your gracious will in the lives of people. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: 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. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: God of love, fill this congregation of Queen Anne Lutheran Church with gratitude for the gifts we have received from you. Renew our ministries, heal our divisions, and open us to the needs of our neighbors. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: For whom or what else do the people of God pray?

A silence is given so that your prayers may be offered.

A: Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: God of hope, those who have died in you raise their eternal song of praise. We give you thanks for the many gifts of your people and rejoice in the witness of your saints. Lord, in your mercy,

G: **hear our prayer.**

A: 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.

G: **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

P: Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

G: **Our Father in heaven,**

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread

and forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours,

now and forever.

Amen.

Announcements

P: We thank you for joining us for this service. If you would like to hear other services or access the newest edition of *the Quill*, our newsletter, we invite you to go to our website at queenannelutheran.org.

Benediction

A: Let us bless the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

P: Almighty God, the Father, † the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
bless and preserve you.

G: Amen.

Dismissal

P: Go in peace. Serve the Lord.

G: Thanks be to God.

Postlude

Chorale prelude on KOMM, HEILIGER GEIST (excerpt)
Matthias Weckmann (1616–1674)

About today's music

For today's Hymn of the Day, "O Holy Spirit, Root of Life" (ELW 399) poet Jean Wiebe Janzen (b. 1933) draws together imagery from three hymns by Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179). The text hearkens to our forum series on environmental stewardship, as we sing of the One through whom "all creation is restored" (stanza 2). The melody, often associated with Advent and Christmas, is brought forward to Pentecost, weaving together the festival portion of the liturgical year. Today's postlude is based on Luther's hymn, "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord" (ELW 395), which adapted earlier Pentecost text and music from Latin sources.

—Cantor Kyle



Queen Anne

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✦ *In Worship Today* ✦

Pastor	The Rev. Dr. Dan Peterson
Cantor	Kyle Haugen
Lector and Intercessor	Jacqui Darroch

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