

Aren't these wonderful readings? Pentecost is right up there with Easter and even Christmas as a celebration of the amazing and astounding coming of God to heal God's world. At Christmas we remember the God-child born in poverty, at Easter we celebrate that the new life which has come into the world is not subject to death and now, here at Pentecost, we celebrate the fullness of God with God's people.

The Greek text has a play on the words fill and fulness – the day of Pentecost was fulfilled, the house was filled with a sound like a violent, gusty wind and they were all filled up with a spirit of holiness. This is such a contrast with the beginning of Ezekiel's vision where the valley is full of empty, dry bones.

What is filling you this morning? Are you filled with the spirit of holiness that is like the breath of God or are you more like a valley filled with a collection of very dry bones?

I imagine that most of us are a mixture of both. When I think about myself I notice that I am excited to be here speaking with you this morning. I am excited that things are moving toward us being able to gather in a larger group, perhaps even being able to sing quietly... but there are a lot of dry bones rattling away in my inner valley. Maybe that is the way it is most of the time – there are parts of ourselves that are lively and other parts that need inspiration.

But perhaps most especially now. We are tired and a bit discouraged. Change has been happening in our midst but we haven't been able to assimilate it or talk about it together. Several people have died. Others have moved away, either physically or emotionally. If you saw the email I sent out last night you will know that John will be stepping down as our Music Director and organist in a few weeks though we hope he will continue to be part of the congregation. These are sad and challenging times, even as the hope of the yellow zone comes, and even possibly the ending of most restrictions.

I imagine the disciples felt something similar. They had been through the rollercoaster ride of the triumphal ride into Jerusalem followed by a week of gathering threat and then Jesus' arrest, trial and unbelievable crucifixion, and just when the shock was wearing off and they were plunged into grief, the word of his resurrection and all those amazing and unexpected encounters with the risen Christ, only to have him leave again, ascending into higher realms. And now they gathered together. I expect they were sad and discouraged. How were they to go on? Who were they without Jesus?

Now we know from the gospel reading that Jesus had promised them an advocate, and the Spirit of truth to guide them into truth. But that probably didn't mean a lot at the time - it probably didn't make much sense.

We too, as his later disciples, have these promises. We have the promise of being filled with God's new life and we have the promise of the Spirit of God to witness to God's love and to lead us into the new.

And we have something the early disciples didn't have – we have the record and the promise of that day of Pentecost – when the wind of the Spirit swept through the room and they were filled with the spirit of holiness. Their emptiness was turned into fullness; they were literally inspired and began speaking as God gave them language. And the people around them were astounded as they heard God being praised in their own languages.

Just as Ezekiel must have been astounded when he prophesied to the bones, “Thus says the Lord GOD: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live.” He must have been astounded when he prophesied to the bones and, astonishingly, the breath came into them and they lived.

This is both our prayer and our inheritance, people of God.

We pray that the Spirit of God will breathe life into the bones which feel old and dry; and we know that we serve a God who is like a roaring wind; and a God who answers prayer.

Do we dare? Do we dare pray for the wind of God to blow through this church? Do we dare to pray to be filled? So we dare pray that new flesh will grow on the bones, that the valley of death will become a valley of flowing water and blowing wind? Do we dare see visions and dream dreams?

I hope so. I hope that we will pray for God to move among us in great power. St. Benedict's has always been a church that is willing to experiment. Willing to try new things, willing to fail and to learn from its mistakes. I hope that like the early disciples we will gather, but gather with expectancy that God is moving among us, that God is bringing new life, that God is filling us with God's grace and power.

But wait... are we attached to the dry bones? Have we gotten used to sitting among them? Do we actually find them rather beautiful? There is something special about fossils. People pay money to go to the Dinosaur National Monument in Utah and look at the bones of those long dead creatures, dry bones encased in clay.

But People of God, we are not called to be fossils. We are called to let go of the past and let go of the desire for solid ground under our feet and to allow ourselves to be taken up like paragliders, taken up by the wind of the Spirit and blown wherever God wants us to be blown. We are called to open the windows of our hearts and minds and invite God in, invite in the astounding God who can do more through us and in us than we can ever imagine.

This day of Pentecost, let us ask the Spirit of God to lead us and guide us into new hope, new life, new possibilities.

But notice in the gospel reading Jesus says, "When the Advocate comes... he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify." We also

are to testify. The reign of God is not a passive ride. Its not God taking over while we get to watch; the reign of God requires our active participation. We also are to act.

So let us ask the Spirit of God to fill our hearts and minds, our gatherings and our faith community. And then let us look with expectancy for how God is calling us to testify to the new life and amazing love which God shares with us and through us to the whole of Creation. And let us take action as we hear the Spirit of holiness prompting us to move.