

TRINITY BUCKINGHAM CHURCH

*Sharing God's love and serving God's people
with Christ in our hearts and God's work through our hands*



image: frontal, Wells Cathedral, UK

Spirit is Moving!
Pentecost in a Time of Pandemic

The calamity of COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on countless lives. Yet the world's citizens have valiantly attempted to unite in the common efforts of care and concern amid grievous fatalities, frayed nerves and fears that have cut us to the core, leaving us to wonder what life will be like when this pandemic no longer dominates the Earth. Now a spirit of compassion, generosity, ingenuity, hospitality and creativity bonds the human family together, inviting us to recognize that despite our diversities - ethnic, economic, social, geographic, philosophical - we are one in this global experience.

This “oneness” invites us to discover and examine what truly binds us. For Christians, it is nothing less than the Spirit of God, saturating all creation. **Pentecost needs to be more than a liturgical feast - it needs to be a way of life.** We are called not merely to proclaim we are one in the One, but to live it out loud. Otherwise, there can be no lasting peace which is the gift Jesus offered those gathered on the first Pentecost, the gift Jesus offers us and waits for its fulfillment.

Pentecost (meaning *50th day*) is the Greek name for the Israelite feast of Weeks, the second of Israel's three pilgrim feasts—Unleavened Bread/Passover, Weeks and Booths. Pentecost was originally an agricultural feast celebrating the end of the grain harvest. Later it became associated with the giving of the law at Sinai. For Christians, Pentecost became known as the “birthday of the church.” An earlier Genesis narrative describes a group scattered all over the earth, speaking different languages that none could understand. In the gospels, a group of Galileans are gathered in one place. They receive the gifts of the Spirit; their language is diversified and they proclaim divine deeds. Diversification, not commonality, becomes the source for understanding and the impetus for drawing people together. Diversity, rooted in the gift and movement of Spirit, becomes the foundation for unity.

Psalm 104, traditionally proclaimed on Pentecost Sunday, invites us to celebrate, to fully embrace this gift, this power, this movement of Spirit.

Take the 104 Challenge! Will you pray Psalm 104 for the next 50 days, celebrating God's glory in the works of creation, and recognizing the interdependence of all living creatures? Suggestions for deeper reflection are included on pages 5 - 7.

This booklet and its ideas for keeping the season of Pentecost alive at home is a loving collaboration by Martha Dudich and Nancy Dilliplane for the people of Trinity Buckingham.

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More suggestions for celebrating Pentecost at home:

Party hearty! Just as you would any other birthday - break out the ice cream and cake! Rather than “Happy Birthday,” you might offer any of the following brief prayers.

During this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, we might be overwhelmed by feelings of loneliness and anxieties within us in the midst of so many uncertainties. We yearn to hear afresh the promise of God’s Spirit who moves to comfort, renew and strengthen us. Even more, a significant characteristic of the Spirit promised by Jesus is TRUTH. In times of crisis, many voices are ready to promise solutions, promote viewpoints and theories, sometimes spreading disinformation and falsehood. The Spirit of Truth is within us now, helping us discern what is honest, authentic and trustworthy. We are bold to pray:

God of all goodness, in our baptism we hear the promise of an advocate, your Spirit that companions our life. By this gift, grant us the grace to know you, and your abiding love for us, through Jesus, who lives with you and the Spirit, one God, now and forever. AMEN.

Loving God, we are certain of your care for each one of your children. Be certain of our love for you. We are grateful we are not alone. By your ever-present Spirit, heal the hurts of our weary and wounded world, and touch every life with the peace of our Brother Jesus. AMEN.

Move, Spirit of Wisdom!

Guide our actions so they tell of God’s love.

Move, Spirit of Truth!

Open our eyes to see the world as it really is.

Move, Spirit of Comfort!

May our hands and hearts embrace all in need.

Move, Spirit of Power!

Enthuse us to work for justice throughout the world.

Move, Spirit of Love!

Inspire us to respect the dignity of every person.

Move, O Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful.

Move us and fill us!

Wear RED! Clerical vestments worn on the feast are red, symbolizing the tongues of fire said to appear over the heads of the apostles. And don't stop there: use a red tablecloth for dinner, light red candles, eat red food. See how many ways you can incorporate the color red into your celebration.

Reach out! Before Spirit moved on the first apostles, they were afraid to go out and share the good news. After receiving Spirit's gifts, they found themselves able to converse with everyone despite their different languages. While you may not literally speak a different language, you may sense contrasts with people of different ages, with different interests, even different religions. Make an effort to overcome these differences. Try conversing with someone you've previously avoided or haven't understood. Just be respectful and celebrate the things you have in common!

Go fly a kite! Wind is one of the primary symbols of Pentecost. What better way to experience the wind than to fly a kite? There are instructions within these pages for making your own. If you'd rather tackle a smaller project, make a pinwheel and watch the wind at work. Or make a paper airplane. See how far you can go when the Holy Spirit is the wind beneath your wings. Here are some instructions for making kites, pinwheels and paper airplanes, or you can search for your own:

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Kite>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Simple-Paper-Airplane>

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-a-Pinwheel>



image: Jeb Mooze via Upsplash

Praying with Psalm 104: *FOR THE BIRDS!*

What makes the Psalms so powerful is that they are prayers in God's own words. The divine words are given to us in human dress, and they express the most fundamental thoughts and emotions of human beings: the joys, the sorrows, the ups and downs, every adventure of the human heart. Even though humans composed the Psalms, they always look to God. While deeply personal, the prayers are seldom, if ever, individualistic and convey a deep sense of being one with God's people.

The word psalm means "hymn of praise." The Book of Psalms contains hymns of praise, but also petitions, laments, thanksgiving songs, prayers of confidence, wisdom psalms, and royal psalms. While attributed to David, he probably wrote only a few. In fact, psalms are ascribed to a number of other individuals and groups.

Taken together, the Psalms eloquently tell God's story. Look at Psalm 104. While the first chapter of Genesis offers us a solemn and stirring dramatization of creation, Psalm 104 takes a beautiful, lyrical approach: *Bless the Lord, my soul! Lord, my God, you are great indeed! You are clothed with majesty and splendor, wearing light as a robe. You spread out the heavens like a tent; setting the beams of your chambers upon the waters.* Then we see mountains popping up and thrusting their peaks into the sky and water rushing up and down the mountains. We see God providing food for animals and humans. A nice touch is that God provides "wine to gladden our hearts."

What a joyful and renewing experience it is to pray a Psalm in its natural setting. The beauty of God's creation draws us to delight in God's goodness and presence in the moment. And the prayer of the Psalmist gives voice and shape to our struggles and longings, connecting us to God's loving heart.

Consider making a mini-retreat - some intentional time of extended solitude - with Psalm 104 in a small part of its natural setting. You may want to bring along a pad or journal.

Practice:

Look and listen for the birds. Notice how joyfully they sing! The same Creator that cares for them cares for you. Let the sounds of the birds prompt you to give grateful praise to God, joining God's love song – who sang love over you first!

Linger with these verses: O my God, how great you are. . . The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. . . When you open your hand, they are satisfied with good things. . . You send your Spirit and all is created; you renew the

face of the earth. . .I shall sing to you all my days, make music for my God while I live.

In these days of anxiousness, fear and frustration, have you been appreciating God's goodness and care? Right now is a good time to smile, sing, and give thanks to God!

Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great.
You are clothed with honor and majesty, wearing the light as a robe.
You stretch out the heavens like a tent, you set the beams of your chambers
on the waters, making the clouds your chariot, riding on the wings of the wind;
you make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it shall never be shaken.
You cover it with the deep as with a garment; the waters standing above the
mountains. At your rebuke they flee, at the sound of your thunder they take to
flight, flowing over the mountains, running down the valleys, to the places you
appointed for them. You set a boundary they may not pass, that they might not
return to cover the earth.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; running down between the hills,
giving drink to every wild animal; the wild asses quench their thirst.
By the streams the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the
branches.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains; earth is satisfied with the fruit of
your work. You cause grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for people to bring
forth food from the earth, wine to gladden the heart, oil to make the face shine, and
bread to strengthen the human heart.

The trees of the Lord are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that God has
planted. There the birds build their nests; the stork has its home in the highest
branches. The high mountains are for the wild goats; in the rocks the coney find
refuge.

You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.
You bring on darkness, and night falls, when all the animals of the forest come
roaming out. Young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God.
When the sun rises, they withdraw and lie down in their dens.
People go to their labors, working until evening falls.

How manifold are your works, O God!

In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

Yonder is the sea, great and wide, teeming with creatures both small and great.

There pass the ships, and Leviathan whom you formed for play. These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you provide, they gather; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

Turn your face, they are dismayed; take back their breath, they die and return to dust. Send forth your spirit and all is created; you renew the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may God rejoice in every creature — who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to you all my days; I will make music to my God while I have being.

May my meditation be pleasing, for my joy is in my God.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and the wicked be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.



image: Jozef Sedmak

WORDS FOR PENTECOST PEOPLE

How might we live as Pentecost people, filled with God's Spirit? What does it mean, in the midst of our relationships and daily activity, particularly in these challenging days of COVID-19, to be genuinely empowered, cultivating an Easter imagination

and practicing a Pentecost life right where we are? Here are a few words from scripture that can point us toward this energizing companionship. Take a few minutes each day to reflect on a word and simple action, attentive to the ways Spirit may be moving. Be ready for some surprises!

STONE

After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. Suddenly, there was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from the heavens, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. Matthew 28:1-2

The resurrected Jesus desires each of us to rise up into the fullness of our lives. At the start of this journey, we need to remind ourselves that this is the good news the risen Christ wants us to experience. Stones blocking this newness of life - grief, resentment, failure, guilt, negativity - need to be rolled away.

Practice: Go outside and pick up a stone. Let it represent whatever it is that stops you from living fully. If you are able, write on it one word describing the stone in your heart. Offer it to God with the request that God will help you roll it away. Then throw the stone as far as you can.

AHEAD

“Then go quickly and tell his disciples, ‘He has risen from the dead and now he is going ahead of you to Galilee; that is where you will see him.’ ” Matthew 28:7

Where are you going in the next few hours? Chances are quite good that you are sheltering in place. Yet our Galilee represents what we are moving toward. Whether or not you are physically in motion, whatever situation may serve as your Galilee, Christ goes ahead of you and promises to meet you there. More good news of the Resurrection! This can cultivate a certain curiosity: *What is he doing there? What is he saying? How can I become a partner with this new life?*

Practice: Imagine the next situation into which you will enter. Nurture a sense of expectancy and anticipation. Ask Jesus to help you to recognize what he is doing there and to help you with the Spirit to respond through your words and actions.

JOY

Filled with awe and great joy, the women hurried away from the tomb and ran to tell his disciples. Matthew 28:8

Fullness of joy characterizes Easter people. Even when weakness, failure, disease and sadness break into our lives, “the joy of the Lord is your strength.” (Nehemiah 8:10) How do we open ourselves to this resurrection joy? Certainly we can’t manufacture it for ourselves. It is produced in our lives by God’s Spirit, though that does not mean we sit back and do nothing. It’s our responsibility to *choose life*, focussing on that amazing grace and abundant love of the One who raised Jesus from the dead.

Practice: Spend just a few moments in quiet reverence. Simply praise God. Press the words of Psalm 92 to your heart: *You make me glad by your deeds, O God; I sing for joy at all that your hands have done.*



<https://www.hscc.us/>

CRYING

[Jesus] asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” John 20:15

Mary Magdalene is overcome with anguish and heartache. Unable to perform her last act of love by anointing Jesus’ body, she has come to the end of rope. It is precisely there that the risen Jesus comes to her. This is always where he comes to us, encountering us in our heartbreak, asking “Why are you crying?” Like Mary, we need to hear this question and respond, to express our pain and help it find its voice in order to heal. When we take Jesus’ question seriously and share our response with him, Spirit moves, that we may experience his risen presence in the midst of our tears.

Practice: Experiment with your imagination in prayer today. Go with Mary to the tomb. Stand with her as she weeps. Watch the risen Jesus come and ask her his question. Listen to her answer. Now Jesus turns to you and asks the same question. Respond from your heart. Listen to his response.

BURNING

They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” Luke 24:32

We know this gospel scene well. Two heartbroken disciples, out of hope, are returning home to Emmaus from Jerusalem. Their Messiah has been crucified. As they walk, the risen Jesus joins them and when they share a meal with him, they recognize him. Suddenly, life is restored and hope renewed. This personal meeting with Jesus is available to all of us. Spirit moves and Jesus comes to us, walks with us, desires to enter into conversation with us. He opens our minds to words of scripture, that they may speak directly to our situations. He makes himself known when bread is broken and wine is poured. In moments like these, our hearts, too, burn with new faith, hope and love. But none of this happens without our involvement. We must open the doors of our lives and our homes to his resurrected presence.

Practice: Take a short walk today. Keep the Emmaus story in your mind. Invite the risen Christ to companion you. As you stroll your own Emmaus road, bring a problem you are facing to him. Think of your favorite scripture story and put it in conversation with what you are going through. Hear what the Spirit may be saying to you.

TABLE

When [Jesus] was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and shared it with them. Luke 24:30

Have you ever noticed how often in the gospels Jesus sits at table for a meal? And it always shared with others, whether they are Pharisees, tax collectors, dear friends or his disciples. We learn more of his teachings on these occasions than from when he speaks in the synagogue. Meals around the table are some of Jesus’ favorite settings to make the good news of God’s love and mercy visible. Mealtimes can also become resurrection moments at our tables as well. These are down-to-earth, sacred moments when we gather with others, share what’s on our hearts, listen to one another and enjoy the blessing of food and drink in good company. These are times of connection and celebration and hospitality, and even more, creating the space to experience the risen One, present in one another.

Practice: The next time you sit at the table to share a meal, keep your inner eyes open to how Jesus may be present. If you usually eat alone, invite someone to join you.

DOUBT

[Jesus] said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." John 20:27

Most of us experience doubt on our spiritual journey at one time or another. It can enter our lives through repeated disappointment, what we perceive to be unanswered prayer or, quite commonly, suffering. Our own suffering, that of a loved one, or the pains of our wounded world can affect our faith. Brother Thomas represents those of us whose faith has been shaken by doubt. His story shows that when we honestly acknowledge our doubt, it can lead to deeper faith. While we are not given the same powerful evidence Thomas receives, there are many experiences to help us move beyond our doubting: the intricate structures and overwhelming beauty of creation, our own sense of right and wrong, and of course Spirit moving. As it transformed the first disciples from fear into boldness and disbelief into trust, so, too, let us open ourselves to this encounter.

Practice: Write down your own confession of faith in Christ today. Use your words, not Thomas'. What language or images come to mind when you think of what Jesus means to you? After you've done this, take Thomas' words with you into the day - "My Lord and my God" - and repeat them as often as you can.

MORNING

Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize it was Jesus. John 21:4



<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/psalm-104-3-j-michael-orr.html>

Are you a morning person? Our experiences differ greatly. Some of us love greeting the new day, filled with a sense of eager expectation. Some of us take a bit longer to get going. Still others wake with a sense of heaviness and fatigue, wondering how

we'll make it through the day. So how did you feel first thing this morning? As the first Easter morning dawns, the disciples are despondent. Out fishing all night, they've caught nothing, all their efforts fruitless. Then as the sun rises, they glimpse a figure waiting for them on the shore. When he calls out with instructions, they recognize it is Jesus. There is a promise for all of us in this encounter. The risen Jesus wants to meet us every new morning. Whether we wake with feelings of joy or sadness, Jesus greets us by name and offers direction for our day. As Spirit moves, Jesus accompanies us through whatever challenges the day may hold. Pentecost people start each morning with this assurance.

Practice: Think about how you can develop a simple ritual around the moment you open the curtains each morning. Perhaps just "Thank you," or "Grant us peace" or another short phrase that expresses your hope for the day.

PUT ON

Put what is offensive and destructive behind you. . .you have taken off your old self with its practices and put on the new self, being renewed according to the image and plan of God. Colossians 3: 8-10

Putting on our clothes for the day is a morning ritual we all take part in, though perhaps pajamas have held more appeal in our pandemic isolation. Generally, there are factors we take into account: *What is the weather forecast? Hot, cold, rainy, sunny? What tasks must be accomplished? Am I working, relaxing, out in the garden, entertaining friends?* The choice of what to wear usually boils down to this: *Will I be dressed suitably or not?* As people who have been raised with Christ, we're now part of the new creation God is bringing about, and are called to clothe ourselves in such a way that we reflect more visibly the image of our Creator. Take a good look at the clothes hanging in God's closet waiting for you to put on. Inspect each item one by one: compassion, humility, kindness, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and, above all, love.

Practice: The next time you get dressed for the day, consciously choose one item of clothing from God's closet to put on. Ask for Spirit to move in making this virtue more visible in your life. When you get undressed, reflect on how it went throughout the day.

WHERE

Where can I go from your Spirit? When can I flee from your presence? Psalm 139:7

Many of us live with a split spirituality. This happens whenever we divide our lives into what we call *sacred* and *secular* compartments: the religious compartment (when we go to church, read the Bible, make a retreat) and the nonreligious compartment (going to work or school, spending time with friends, playing a sport, going on vacation). We tend to think Spirit moves in the first part and not the second. When we gather for worship, we can hear or make statements like “Isn’t it good to be in God’s presence today?” as if we weren’t beforehand and won’t be later in the parking lot. The psalmist encourages us to see our lives and our God differently. We are *always* in the presence of Emmanuel - “God WITH us.” Spirit is *always* moving with God’s love and grace in moments of beauty, intimacy, joy, heartbreak, concern. That’s where the practice of “noticing” comes in. As Pentecost people we know there are no compartments to be created. God is present in every breath, every task, every morsel savored, every hug shared, every tear we shed.

Practice: Reflect on the past hour. Where and how has God’s Spirit been present and active? Whisper a word of thanks.

Suggestions for deeper reflection of Psalm 139 are included on pages 23 and 24.

FELLOWSHIP

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. 2 Corinthians 13:14

There are 13 epistles in the New Testament traditionally attributed to the apostle Paul. These letters were written to the earliest Christian communities, often in response to specific crises. The church in Corinth, which he himself planted, received two such letters: the first an admonishment of their divisiveness, and the second one of reconciliation. Imagine yourself in Paul’s place as he finishes this second letter. It has been one of comfort and blessing, affirming his loving relationship with these first faithful and emphasizing those characteristics framing the Trinity. His meditation on the Father focuses on *love*, his thoughts on Jesus speak of *grace*, and the Spirit is marked by *fellowship*. In its Greek translation - **koinōnia**, meaning “communion” - fellowship is quite powerful, and not at all vague. It speaks of an intimate sharing of ourselves with one another and with God at all levels of our lives. Spirit moves in our loving and genuine relationships, drawing us into this gift of fellowship and prompting practical response: hospitality to strangers, playtime and pray time with dear ones, sharing our material resources with those who struggle, and generally learning how to live a deeper, shared life.

PRACTICE: Do something practical today that expresses your belonging to others in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.



<http://ee.umc.org/what-we-believe/ideas-for-celebrating-pentecost-at-home>

REMIND

“The Advocate, the Spirit whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you.” John 14:26

One of our most prevalent transgressions is forgetfulness. We suffer from large doses of spiritual amnesia. We forget who God is. We forget who we are (not God).

We forget who we are called to be. We forget who our sister or brother is. The effects of this negligence reverberate through our lives. Called to worship God, we worship things. Called to be sons and daughters of God, we live as orphans. Called to love without condition or partiality, we remain self-centered. Spirit moves as the antidote to our loss of spiritual memory, helping us remember all Jesus has taught us, reminding us of the rich treasure of these teachings, and revealing their personal meanings in our lives. In this way we comprehend more fully who God is, who we are and are called to be, and who our neighbor is.

PRACTICE: Ask the Spirit to remind you of one thing that Jesus teaches in the Gospels. Share this word with one other person.

TRUTH

“The Spirit, who is truth, comes to guide you to complete truth, speaking only what has been told, and declaring to you the things that are to come.” John 16:13

We hear much today about fake news. As we watch TV, read the papers or catch up on the headlines on our mobile phones, we are never too sure if what we are hearing or seeing is true. And this uncertainty about what is truth extends far beyond the daily news. Think about some of the big questions we ask: *Who is God? Who am I? How does God want me to live?* There are plenty of answers out there. Which ones are untrue? Which can we trust? Deciding what is truth with regard to these questions determines the ultimate shape of our lives. Spirit moves to guide us into all truth. Jesus tells his followers: “I am the way and the truth and the life.” Some people of his day were drawn to truth found in Jesus while others resisted it, to the point of wanting to do away with him. Still today, announcing that truth can be found in a single individual raises powerful questions. Whatever your response to Jesus’ claim, will you allow Spirit to be your guide?

PRACTICE: Make some specific requests of the Spirit in prayer: *Reveal to me the truth of who God is. Show me how much I am worth to my Creator. How do you want me to live?* You can be sure God’s Spirit will take your prayer seriously.

BODY

Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Spirit, who is within you, whom you have received from God? 1 Corinthians 6:19

It’s rare that we meet people who are totally comfortable with their bodies. How do you feel about yours? Provocative images reminding us we live in a culture that worships a youthful body and physical attractiveness bombard us every day. Not surprisingly, we struggle with any sign of bodily decay or diminishment that signals we’re getting older. And sadly, there can be a tendency in some Christian circles to view the body as an enemy of the spiritual life. Paul encourages us to view our bodies from a different perspective, to see them as temples of the Spirit. In Jewish thought, the Temple represents that sacred place where earth and heaven come together, where the Holy One abides, where we offer ourselves to God. This awareness that we should treasure our bodies as places where God wants to take up residence can be a certain challenge, especially as we consider the ways we damage our bodies, through overwork, less-than-nutritious eating, substance abuse and verbal disparagement. Pentecost people honor their physical sacredness.

PRACTICE: Spend some time expressing care for your body. Whatever you may do - lying down to rest, going for a walk, announcing (aloud!) your worth - give thanks for your temple of God's Spirit. You are loved. You are enough.

DESERT

Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil.

Matthew 4:1

Pretty much everything we are able to do competently in this life requires some hidden preparation. Think of the musician playing a piece of music beautifully, the surgeon successfully performing a delicate operation, the athlete achieving their personal best, the teacher presenting a masterful lesson, the plumber effectively fixing a blocked drain. Each of them, in order to capably do their tasks, have dedicated many hours of practice and learning that no one sees. We see Spirit moving in this same dynamic in Jesus' life. Before the curtain opens on Jesus' mission, Spirit leads him into the desert, where Jesus wrestles with three crucial temptations regarding the shape of his public ministry. No one witnesses these moments. His engagement with God takes place in solitude. How is Spirit moving to better prepare you for your everyday walk with Jesus? It's unlikely it will involve forty days in an actual geographical desert, but whatever shape it takes, you can be sure Spirit will be present and you will be transformed.

PRACTICE: Carve out a desert moment of solitude today. Allow it to be a time when you can simply be alone with God and yourself. It doesn't need to be long: between 10 and 15 minutes will be enough.

WATER

"Let anyone who believes in me come and drink! As scripture says, 'From that heart shall flow streams of living water.'" John 7:38

Biblical writers often associate the Holy Spirit with water. Living in arid areas often characterized by drought, they would know firsthand a dependence on the availability of water. Where there is water, there is always the possibility of fresh life. So in their search for symbols that speak to the life-giving activity of God's Spirit, they naturally think of water. Water will come to symbolize the pouring out of Spirit, bringing life to a dry and thirsty land. Jesus promises the gift of living water, that life which is always flowing and never-ending, a bold claim that, through the movement of Spirit, he can satisfy our thirst forever. We thirst in so many ways: for

meaning, intimacy, affirmation and acceptance. Jesus' invitation is simple: *come and drink*.

PRACTICE: With every glass of water you drink today, be attentive to the living water Jesus promises.



<https://www.ldsliving.com/FHE-Living-Water/s/90144>

LISTEN

Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the faithful.

Revelation 3:6

This may surprise you: with over 1,500 references to the words *listen* and *hear* in the Bible, scholarship maintains God's biggest complaint is that people do not listen. Not that God's people don't pray enough or fast enough or are not good enough. If we do not live as God's daughters and sons, it is testimony we have not truly listened. The God we worship constantly wants to communicate with us, and a significant means of God's personal exchange occurs within scripture. We can find it easier to read the Bible to gain knowledge. Listening to Spirit speak to us in the Bible is something we learn. We begin with a small portion, reading unhurriedly and with care, waiting for a word, a phrase, a sentence to get our attention. We consider it more deeply and speak with God about what it may mean to live out in our lives what we have heard. For Pentecost people, listening and willingness go hand in hand.

PRACTICE: Intentionally listen to the Spirit today. Take your favorite scripture passage and read it, following the steps outlined above.

WITHDREW

While [Jesus] was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven.

Luke 24:51

Goodbyes are painful. They happen in so many different ways. Someone we love gets transferred or leaves for college far away. We ourselves follow a dream, leaving dear ones and experiences that have shaped and sustained us. In these pandemic days there have been multiple losses, significant goodbyes. And perhaps the hardest parting of all, the death of someone we have loved and who has loved us. Grief, paralysis, incredulity and heartbreak can mark these moments. We all know departures too well. Yet there is something strange and wonderfully different about Jesus' goodbye. Luke tells us that when he withdrew from the disciples, "they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem full of joy." At last they grasp who Jesus was and is, recognizing that in him they have encountered their Creator in a direct and personal way. Their only adequate response is joyful worship. In the devastation of our goodbye moments, let us draw courage from the ascended Jesus, available to each of us in our pain, who understands what it means to say goodbye.

PRACTICE: Bring to the risen and ascended Jesus a recent goodbye. Share your feelings and listen to what he may say to you. Through the day, keep an image of the ascended Jesus in your heart.

ROOM

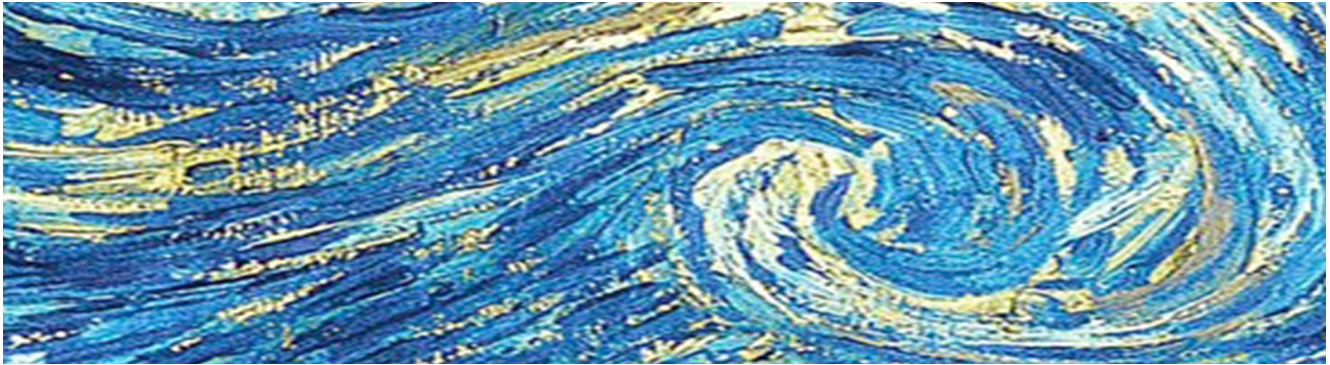
When [the apostles] reached the city, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Acts 1:13

The upper room plays an important role in Jesus' preparation for Pentecost. Almost immediately after his ascension, when the disciples return to Jerusalem, they go to the upper room, where they can pray and wait for the promise Jesus has given them: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you." Waiting with the women who followed Jesus, they all want to encounter him anew in the power of his Spirit. This should be our desire as well, that fresh strength giving life to our hearts and our bodies. Maybe we, too, need an upper room.

PRACTICE: Find a few minutes today to go into your room, close the door, and ask God to prepare your heart to receive a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

WIND

Suddenly a sound like the rushing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. Acts 2:2



<https://www.citychurchphilly.com/calendar/2017/6/4/pentecost-adult-ed>

Who has seen the wind? Neither I nor you. But when the leaves hang trembling, the wind is passing through. So writes Christina Rossetti, beloved Victorian poet (among her best known, “In the Bleak Midwinter.”) And while we cannot see the wind, we can most certainly experience it, listening with our ears, feeling it on our skin, breathing it into our bodies. Around us, we witness it moving grass, bending trees, stirring up waves and blowing up dust. We know well its devastating power in hurricanes and tornadoes, certain that it can never be tamed or controlled or manufactured. When Luke describes that first Pentecost moment, he compares the coming of Spirit to the blowing of wind from the heavens, a metaphor vividly demonstrating some of the creative and transformative power of God. Pentecost people seek to stand in the Wind, opening our lives to Spirit as heaven comes to earth, beginning in and with us: energizing our bodies, renewing our minds and our hearts, transforming our lives.

PRACTICE: Experiment today with an exercise of the imagination. Sit quietly and in the stillness imagine the Wind of God blowing into every part of your life. What might your life look like?

FIRE

[The apostles] saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. Acts 2:3



<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/heat-saina-art.html>

What thoughts or images come to mind when you think of fire? Warming yourself on a cold winter's night? Sitting with family or friends in front of a fireplace, enjoying good conversation? A childhood memory of toasting marshmallows around a campfire? Perhaps a dangerous forest fire, or you may have watched a piece of iron being held in a fire. First, its rust is burned away; then it turns red and then white, until it looks as if it is part of the fire. However you respond, we can all agree fire is not only something good to be cherished but also something dangerous to be respected. On the first Pentecost, Spirit moves not only as wind but also as fire. What do these flames resting upon the early disciples represent? Is it not an outward sign of what Spirit is doing within their lives? Think of the associations we make with fire. Can we recognize the fire of God's Spirit is warming cold hearts, uniting the family of believers, bringing erring tendencies under control, burning away the rust of hardened attitudes and characters until they are blazing with God's love?

PRACTICE: As a symbol of Spirit's fire, light a candle near where you will spend your day. May it remind you that Jesus wants to baptize you with Spirit and fire.

ASK

"If you then, in your wrongdoing, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask!"

Luke 11:13

Raise your hand if you've ever asked for help at work or at home. Raise your hand if you've felt shy, silly, even stupid doing so. (Believe that hands are waving wildly!) Many of us can have difficulty asking for what we need. We may not have been given sufficient instruction or witnessed good example, so we do it poorly: using guilt

or coercion, soliciting pity when we want assistance. In a society largely based on helping yourself, it can appear or feel we are surrendering control. Yet asking is at the heart of our interaction with God, and with good reason. While God really wants to give good gifts to us, God will never force them on us, instead respecting our freedom, waiting for us to ask. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus often speaks about the importance of asking. Notice how the Lord's Prayer is a litany of requests Jesus invites us to make our own. There is always more of God's love and mercy and Spirit to be experienced. In our asking, we need to come to God simply, vulnerably and honestly. You can begin where you are, right now.

PRACTICE: Meditate on these words: "How much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask." Receive them today as an invitation from God for you to ask. Respond by making a simple request from your heart for the gift of God's Spirit.

PENTECOST

When the day of Pentecost came, [the apostles] were gathered together in one place. Acts 2:1

We need to face the simple fact that trying to follow Jesus without the Pentecostal power of Spirit doesn't work. From a biblical point of view, it appears everything that happens before Pentecost is a preparation for this gift of Wind and Fire. God-made-flesh lived, died and rose so that our eyes would be opened to the amazing grace of God and the unfathomable depths of God's love, and we would be ready to receive God's Spirit. We're invited to think deeply about the place of Spirit in our lives. Is Spirit really at work in you? Are you growing in your capacity to love as Jesus loved? Do you have some sense of God working through your words and actions? Even as the pandemic has prevented us from "gathering together in one place," may we experience the continued love and support of the Trinity family as we hold one another in deep affection and fervent prayer. We are indeed Pentecost people. Spirit is moving!

PRACTICE: From your personal place of prayer, your "domestic Church," speak a word of love and gratitude for God's gift of the Trinity Buckingham community, and offer your best blessing.



<http://incarnationchurch.net/sermons/pentecost-2>

Praying with Psalm 139: from the Songbook of God's People

Central to our prayerful integration of body and spirit is psalmody - in Hebrew תהלים, Tehillim, "songs of praise" - the passionate poetry of ancient Israel spilling down through the ages to become the Church's true manual of adoration and devotion. When we recite and pray them together and on our own they teach us how to form our own personal prayers. Together they model an open and authentic way of relating to God.

Psalm 139 is one of the great treasures of the Psalter, exploring as it does the mystery of who we are and of our relationship to God. Here is expressed our conviction that God knows all about us, and has done so from the moment of our conception. But there is nothing to suggest that God is controlling or manipulating us. We are free agents, always responsible for our actions.

This is a musical setting of Psalm 139 by Bernadette Farrell, one of Britain's leading liturgical composers. (She gave us "Christ, Be Our Light," a Trinity Buckingham favorite!) The making of metrical hymns from the prose psalms of our translations of the Bible was the beginning of English hymnody, a practice that continues. Something of the fullness and subtlety of the psalm is always lost, and excellent though this poetic version is, it should drive us back to reflect on the original. It leaves out entirely the prayer in verses 19–22 that God will slay the wicked, and the declaration that the psalmist stands alongside God in his hatred of them. This was part of ancient Hebrew thought, but it is genuinely difficult for the Christian today. "Make a joyful noise" this day - whether in song or speech - with Psalm 139. Ask Spirit to move and make these words your prayer.



Psalm 139

1. O God, you search me and you know me.
2. You know my rest-ing and my ris-ing.
3. Be-fore a word is on my tongue, Lord,
4. Al-though your Spir-it is up-on me,
5. For you cre-at-ed me and shaped me,

1. All my thoughts lie o-pen to your gaze.
2. You dis-cern my pur-pose from a-far,
3. You have known its mean-ing through and through.
4. Still I search for shel-ter from your light.
5. Gave me life with-in my moth-er's womb.

1. When I walk or lie down you are be-fore me:
2. And with love ev-er-last-ing you be-siege me:
3. You are with me be-yond my un-der-stand-ing:
4. There is no-where on earth I can es-cape you:
5. For the won-der of who I am, I praise you:

1. Ev-er the mak-er and keep-er of my days.
2. In ev-'ry mo-ment of life or death, you are.
3. God of my pres-ent, my past and fu-ture, too.
4. E-ven the dark-ness is ra-diant in your sight.
5. Safe in your hands, all cre-a-tion is made new.

You can listen to this on YouTube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEGc3_D19Vo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Bsc5icCOf8>

Praying with the Poets: *A Sonnet for Pentecost*



Today we feel the wind beneath our wings
Today the hidden fountain flows and plays
Today the church draws breath at last and sings
As every flame becomes a Tongue of praise.
This is the feast of fire, air and water
Poured out and breathed and kindled into earth.
The earth herself awakens to her maker
Translated out of death and into birth.
The right words come today in their right order
And every word spells freedom and release.
Today the gospel crosses every border
All tongues are loosened by the Prince of Peace.
Today the lost are found in His translation.
Whose mother-tongue is Love, in every nation.

Malcolm Guite

Consider spending some time with these words as *LECTIO DIVINA* (literally *divine reading*), the ancient practice of becoming personally immersed in sacred language. The chosen text is read (often aloud) several times, allowing for deeper thinking and response. The four stages below can be imagined as compass points around a circle, with Spirit moving seamlessly between them. Allow 30 minutes for the process of reading, reflection and response. You might like to light a candle, as flame and fragrance can serve as gentle reminders when collecting our thoughts and calming our minds. A simple prayer, “God, let me hear from you,” or “Spirit, move” can open us to the experience.

LECTIO (Read) - the first reading introduces the passage; we listen carefully for any word or phrase that seems to jump out; it’s important not to force things, but wait for gentle prompting and guidance.

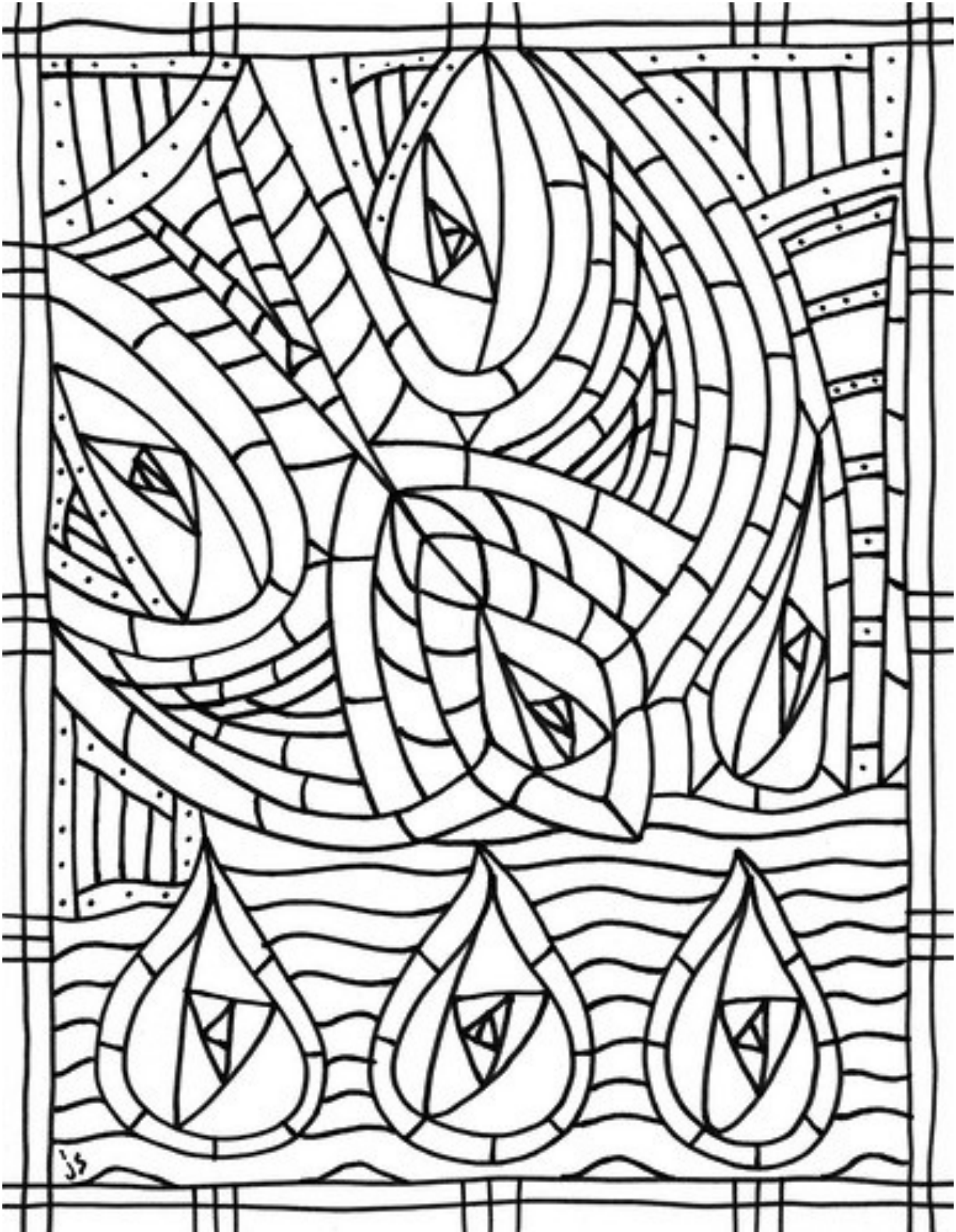
MEDITATIO (Reflect) - a repeated reading focuses on those points we became aware of the first time; without analyzing or “studying,” we simply listen to what God might be saying (it can help to ask God to be as clear as possible!)

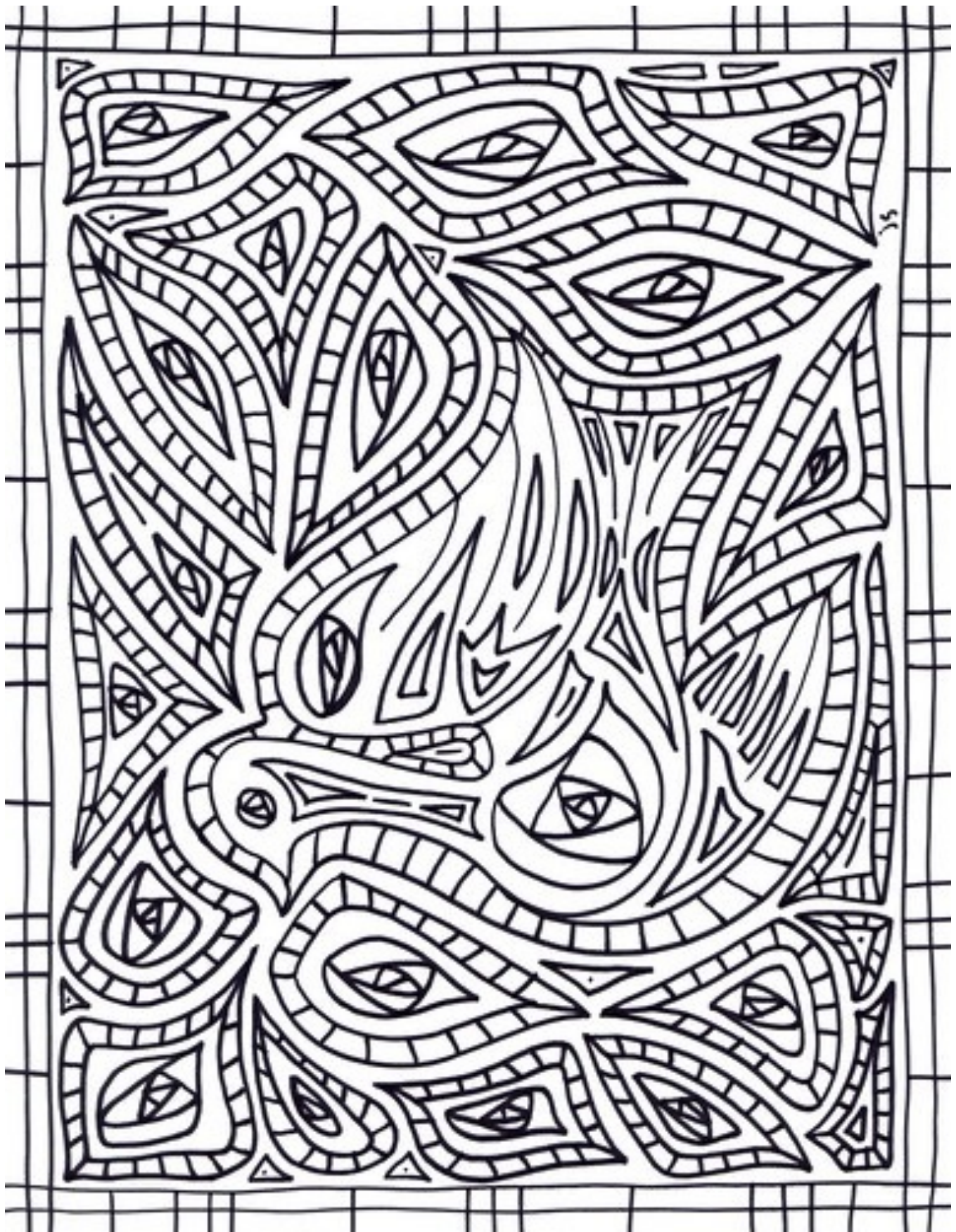
ORATIO (Respond) - after another reading, it’s time to respond; writing out our thoughts can be helpful; we can respond in prayer, too - conversation with God is always a gift.

CONTEMPLATIO (Rest) - you may option another reading before a time of silent contemplation - not prayer or meditation, just stillness that allows us to become absorbed in God’s presence as we’re called into deeper, more personal engagement.

Praying with crayons

Coloring is a way to get still on the inside and prepare for a time of intercessory prayer and listening to God. It can even *be* your prayer. Begin by asking God to be present, and when your words run out, simply begin coloring. If words come, pray them, if not, enjoy this quiet time with God.





Visit <https://prayingincolor.com/> or <https://www.guideposts.org/faith-and-prayer/prayer-stories/pray-effectively/pray-with-a-coloring-book> to learn more about praying by drawing or coloring.

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