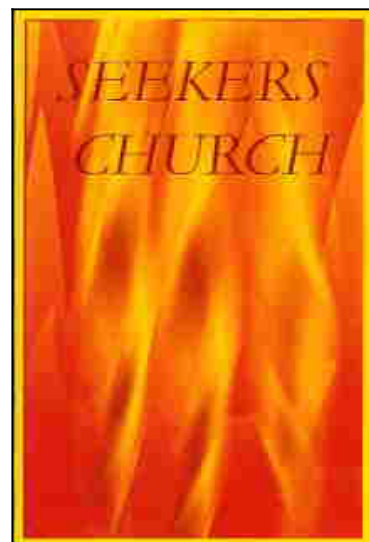


# **“Burn in Me Your Love” by the Artists Mission Group**

**May 11, 2008**



This service was prepared by the Artists Mission Group of Seekers Church. Rather than a more traditional sermon we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit with personal stories offered by members of the Artists Mission Group in the style of InterPlay, and full participation by the community throughout our worship time together.

## **GATHERING**

[Jean sets up the altar with many lighted candles.]

## **ENTRANCE**

[Roy plays keyboard quietly in the back until all are in the sanctuary, then comes forward, reading “God is Alive, Magic is Afoot,” joins Artists Group in front.]

## REFLECTION

[Peter reads]

I, the highest and fiery power  
have kindled every living spark  
and I have breathed out nothing that can die...  
I am the fiery life of the divine essence...  
I flame above the beauty of the fields:  
I shine in the waters;  
in the sun, the moon and the stars.  
I burn. And by the means of the airy wind,  
I stir everything into quickness  
with certain invisible life which sustains all...

–Hildegard of Bingen

## CALL TO WORSHIP

[Peter leads]

Leader: Come Holy Spirit, Come Breath of God!  
Voice 1: Light of our hearts, Peace of our souls.  
Voice 2: Come Generous Spirit, renew and strengthen us.  
All: Enter the inmost depths of our hearts!

## INVOCATION

[Peter]

O God, how great is the variety of your creation – the cardinal and the credit card, the rhododendron and the roadside restaurant, the polliwog and the professor – In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures, and the earth itself is your loving creation.

Holy maker of this wonder-full universe, You have called us here to be your body, consciously alive and loving in this time and place – loving this time and place even as we reach for your realm, which is so close we can feel it; loving this time and place even as we know that you have much bigger things in mind.

Come, let us sing to God. Let us praise our God with song and dance and celebration, our God who is creating this body we call church, and who has gathered us together in the name of Jesus, who is our hope and our salvation. Amen.

## HYMN

Spirit, Spirit of Restlessness, # 286 in New Century Hymnal.

[Roy at keyboard]

## WORD FOR THE CHILDREN

[Anna and Kate Amoss help the older children offer a presentation of the story of Thomas' doubt and belief (John 20)]

## **SILENCE**

[Younger children leave, older children stay]

## **CHANT**

[Simple tune will be rehearsed in circle time. Roy gives pitch.]

All: Burn in me your love, sing in me your song

Holy Lover of all, Holy Lover of all.

## **SILENCE**

## **PRAYERS**

[Peter leads prayer time following the somewhat different format below]

## **PRAYERS**

## **COMMON CONFESSION**

Leader: How can we hear the voice of God?

Voice 1: I am convicted by each morning's news

Voice 2: I too am one unable to act

All: How can we hear the voice of God?

Voice 1: Watching the murder of earth and creation

Voice 2 By gun, by bombing, by terror, by torture, by war,  
by hunger, by AIDS, by disease—

All: How can we hear the voice of God?

Voice 1: By ignorance, loneliness, exploitation, over-  
consumption, greed and fear—

Voice 2: In all the noise, the world seems deranged—

All: How can we hear the voice of God?

## **INDIVIDUAL PRAYERS OF CONFESSION**

### **ASSURANCE:**

Leader: You are our only Comforter.

You refresh us. In our trouble

You strengthen us.

Shower your gifts on us. Give us lasting joy.

## **PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING AND**

# INTERCESSION

[Peter leads, ends with "Amen"]

O holy cleansing wind that blows the storms about like dandelion fluff, teach us to love your heavenly disruption even when we do not understand what you are doing. Mover of the green tops of the trees and the freshly minted grasses, open us to your mysterious breath, the fire that consumes us and yet lets us live on, the holy source beyond all understanding.

How wonderful is the spirit of growth and change, the Holy Spirit that will not let go of life. We rejoice in the gifts you give so carefully to every creature, the strengths and vulnerabilities that give such rich variety of shapes and energies, to our environment and our community of relationships.

Call forth our thanks for births and graduations, for ears that hear you call in fresh, new ways; for eyes that see the hunger and the pain that call us to be followers of you. Lift us up above our selfish interests, spread our concerns as far as our awareness ... and beyond, to new understanding of what it means to be your loving, co-creating people.

Hear now, O holy wind of all creation, our prayers of praise and thanks –

[Prayers of praise and thanks from the community.]

Holy maker of community, God of life and love, we carry in us cares for those we know and love, for those who face an unknown future and need to learn to live each day as gift from you. So many of us carry deep within some new life that struggles to be born, some sense of call to love and serve this rich reality in ways that we have not yet had courage to

imagine. We pray for those who face some painful new reality that they have not expected... and those whose opportunities are so much bigger than the courage they have known before.

Today, o holy maker of community, we carry cares so heavy we fear that we may not be able to carry them alone. We pray to know your presence in these needs, to feel your holy, healing touch, to know that we are not alone in caring for the needs of others.

Holy maker of new life, giver of unexpected energy for action, we bring to you the cares that burden us, our loving hopes for those in need, and for ourselves, for we would be your servant people. Hear now, O God of all reality, our prayers for those in pain and need ... and for ourselves, for we are hungry for your healing deep within.

[Prayers of intercession and petition from the community.]

Wind of inspiration, creative spirit of God, teach us not to forget that you always come as gift. Remind us always to be ready to receive, and love, and dance with joy each time your presence is revealed, or risk the possibility that you will love, and dance with joy without us.

O gentle breeze of hope, we raise our prayers, believing that you are here among, within us, calling us to be your people, the people of the risen Christ. Amen.

## **BODY PRAYER**

[Billy, Sue, and Kathy move to the second stanza of Kathy's poem with shape and stillness. Roy at keyboard, Jean reading.]

## BODY PRAYER

Body Chorus: Walking alone on silent retreat

Before golden evening fades to dusk

I am seduced, at meadow's edge.

A cherry tree in early bloom—

Whose bright rosy buds like tropical birds

Nest in soft petals of blushing white—

Its balm engulfs my aching soul.

Behind this vision of fragrant excess

The cherry's younger sister lags—

A dogwood half a season behind

And drab in its greenness; not yet ripe,

Its blossom petals, like battered cups

Burnt at the edges, the shade of dried blood

As if just singed

By tongues of flame.

In silence you speak, Holy Lover of all.

Burn in me your love.

Sing in me your song.

Send me.



# **HYMN Spirit of the Living God # 283 in New Century Hymnal**

[Roy plays keyboard]

## **THE WORD**

## **SCRIPTURE**

1 Corinthians 12:3b-13

[Emmy Lou reads]

## **SERMON**

[SKIP the customary introduction and let the sermon begin! Jean begins with an introduction, in her own words to the effect of "We read in Acts 2:1-21 that the Holy Spirit comes to us in the midst of our brokenness. As the day of Pentecost dawns, we are aware of the times that we do not hear or understand each other."

[Following this Roy, Kathy and Sue (as guided by the Holy Spirit!) tell personal stories of brokenness.

[Then begins the following reading of Acts 2:1-21 a few lines at a time. Content of responses to the readings should be spontaneous, as the Holy Spirit works. Roy reads first:]

1When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that

separated and came to rest on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

[After these verses come 3 rounds of babbling led by Billy with congregation participating. Simple words like fire, wind, etc. to be used.]

[Kathy reads:]

5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in their own languages. 7Utterly amazed, they asked: "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them in our own native language? 9Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11(both Jews and converts to Judaism Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

[Here, Billy and Kathy do a gibberish speech with translation by Roy. "We're all speaking English!"]

[Billy reads:]

12Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?" 13Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine.[b]" 14Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning!

[Here, Sue initiates ensemble movement with Kathy and Billy with Roy offering musical accompaniment]

[Sue reads:]

16No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17" 'In the last days, God says,

I will pour out my Spirit on all people.

Your sons and daughters will prophesy,

your young will see visions,

your old will dream dreams.

[As Sue finishes the last two lines, Billy, Kathy, and Jean repeat the last two lines overlapping as a chorus while Roy exhorts the congregation to name their dreams and visions.

Artists Group members (and a few "plants" in the congregation—Kate and Ken, Else, Muriel

and Emily)—model by naming their own dreams and visions in response and then fall silent and listen for congregation's dreams and visions.]

After an appropriate time for this, Jean begins by reading 18, Kathy reads 19, Roy reads 20, and Billy reads 21:

18Even on my servants, both men and women,

I will pour out my Spirit in those days,

and they will prophesy.

19 I will show wonders in the heaven above

and signs on the earth below,

blood and fire and billows of smoke.

20The sun will be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood

before the coming of the great and glorious day of  
the Holy Spirit.

21And everyone who calls

on the Holy Spirit will be made whole.'

[Following this, Roy, Kathy, Billy, Jean, and Sue offer stories of redemption from brokenness.]

## **SILENT REFLECTION**

[After the stories, Billy asks all to reflect on a question with words such as:: "As we offer our gifts, I invite you to reflect on the question of what in your experience, it has meant to be made whole."]

## **OFFERING**

[Billy will ask someone in advance to pick up offering. Silence, then Billy's chant to be sung here in parts. Artists Group members and others will form a small "choir."]

## **SHARED REFLECTIONS**

[Peter invites reflections about Billy's question or anything from the weekly readings and reflections, etc.]

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Peter leads]

HYMN "Every Time I Feel the Spirit" # 282 in New Century Hymnal

[Roy plays keyboard]

# BENEDICTION

[Peter]

Leader: Go into the world in peace, have courage, hold on to what is good, return to no one evil, strengthen the faint of heart. Support the weak, help the suffering, honor all people, love and serve God, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit, have courage, go in peace, have courage, go in peace.

[As Peter finishes the benediction, the Artists group (and others) pick up candles and Roy invites everyone to "please join us in bringing the light into the world." Billy (accompanied on keyboard by Liz Gould-Leger) begins a sung version of the benediction after Roy finishes speaking and the congregation exits, some with candles. Jean will set up a place to put the candles in the dining room.]

*Acknowledgments: "God is Alive, Magic is Afoot" lyrics by Leonard Cohen; words to Chant, Common Confession, and Body Prayer from a poem, "Pentecost Eve" by Kathy Tobias; Chant music composed by Billy Amoss; Call to Worship and Assurance from Taize; Invocation and bidding prayers by Peter Bankson.*