

Sunday Sermon May 24, 2026

Come, Lord Jesus, send us your Spirit, renew the face of the earth...

Today is Pentecost, the day we celebrate the Breath of God. The Hebrew word for breath, wind or Spirit is **ruah** – say it with me, ruah! Breath, wind, spirit... it came from heaven and filled the house where the disciples were gathered, in the Book of Acts. It filled them and sent them out. It's the breath that Jesus breathed on the disciples when they were locked away in the upper room in the Gospel: "receive the Holy Spirit" Jesus said. Breath, wind, Spirit.

Our friend Barbara Brown Taylor has a marvelous reflection on the Breath of Pentecost. She reminds us that our gorgeous blue-green planet is wrapped in a protective veil we call the atmosphere. This atmosphere separates the air we breathe from the cold vacuum of outer space.

And within this thin veil of atmosphere is all the air that ever was. She says: "no cosmic planet cleaning company comes through every hundred years to suck out the old air and pump in new. The same ancient air just keeps circulating."

So when we breathe, we breath the air that God exhaled to bring order out of chaos at creation. We breathe in brontosaurus and woolly mammoth breath. We breathe air that has circulated through the rain forest of the Amazon and air that has turned yellow over polluted cities.

We breathe air that has swept across the deserts of Africa and over the Nile and Euphrates rivers. We breathe the same air that Plato, Mozart, Michelangelo, Mother Theresa, Francis of Assisi, the Daili Lama and Martin Luther King breathed.

Every time we breathe, we take in what was once a baby's first breath and a dying person's last. We take it in, we use it to live, and we breathe it out and it carries a tiny bit of us to someone else, and to a tree and a dolphin, and they use it to live, too.

Think about the last breath that Jesus breathed when He died, Taylor says. It hovered there in front of him for a second or two, and then it was set loose on the earth. That breath was so full of passion, so full of love, so full of God, that it didn't just dissipate. It grew until it became a mighty wind that God sent spinning through the cracks of the doors and between the window shutters and into an upper room in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost.

Jesus' friends breathed in that breath of new life, and they were set on fire with the love of God. They had worried about what they were going to do without Jesus, but the wind had begun to blow. Shy people became bold. Frightened people became courageous. Lost people found direction and purpose.

And as they spoke, they realized they sounded an awful lot like Jesus. It happened because they dared to take a deep breath on the day of Pentecost. They took God's breath into their lungs and they were transformed. They had become the church, the living, breathing Body of Christ.

Barbara Brown Taylor on the Breath of God at Pentecost. I love that imaginative telling of the Pentecost story. The conversion that those frightened disciples experienced that day was profound. They were filled with God's living presence and it sent them out into the world to share the Good News of God's love with everyone they met.

They sounded like Jesus as they proclaimed God's unconditional love to everyone they met. They realized that Jesus' mission – to heal the world with love – was too big for Jesus to handle himself. He needed them, he needed disciples, followers, imitators to spread the Good News of God's love for all –

They had known God's living presence in Jesus, and it would now be known through them. Having breathed in the breath of His love for all, they would now go forth to breathe it on everyone they met, so that love would continue to circulate and grow.

At Pentecost, diversity becomes a gift rather than a threat. The breath of the Spirit builds communion across differences and, oh, how we need this communion, this Spirit, in the times we live in.

As Pentecost people, we know that God is not in some far off heaven in the vast vacuum of outer space, God is as near as our next breath, filling us with life, the gift of God's love and sending us forth to build beloved community.

Do you remember the word? What's the word? "Ruah" – Breath. God's breath filling us and sending us out to tell, to proclaim, to live in the power of the Spirit.

The miracle the Holy Spirit alive -around and within us- is that we can embrace and share God's grace through acts of kindness, mercy, goodwill, service and compassion at any moment of our daily lives.

The Spirit pushes disciples out onto the streets to proclaim the Good News. To serve. To heal. To listen. To love.

Like the air around us, the Spirit gives life. It breaths through ordinary people like you and me. It speaks through acts of kindness and mercy. Moves in communities of compassion. Renews the church and sends us forth to be the hands, feet, heart and voice of Christ.

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