

**Easter 6 C**

Acts 16:9-15

Psalm 67

Revelation 21:10, 22-22:5

John 14:23-29

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May 26, 2019

Grace and peace to you from the risen Christ. Amen.

***Blow Holy Spirit! (TS)***

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Send us to places far and near,  
to the depths of our hearts  
untangling the web of our confusion.

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Peel away the layers of ego  
or shame that has built its house around us  
and rebuild the foundations of love and trust  
that we used to know so well!

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Spike the waters of baptism  
with a free-pour of grace unhindered  
break the bread of Christ, release  
a fragrance fresh with call and vision.

For a new day is today  
it has to be when Christ comes in!  
The old is sloughed away  
and the new comes  
without our being prepared.

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Temper our senses to the rhythm of your breath  
breathe into our dry cracked churches  
Let your people live! Let us live again!

Driven by the Holy Spirit, Paul was on a mission to teach and preach the risen Christ who had transformed his life to such a degree that it now came pouring out of him in word and witness as he traveled and taught. He wasn't afraid. Even when the authorities arrested him, even when he was tortured and criticized and abandoned by his own Jewish family, No, Paul wasn't afraid.

In Acts we hear not of an exotic travel itinerary, but of Paul following the direction of the Holy Spirit. Scholars have mapped out his distant travels to Phrygia, Greece, Troas, Mysia, Bithynia and more. Interestingly, in the sentences just before today's passage from Acts, he had tried to go to Asia, but the Spirit wouldn't let him. God has ways! Then he had the vision of a Macedonian man asking for help. Paul goes into this Roman territory where he finds a group of women outside the city. It was a convoluted missional journey that culminated for Lydia in baptism and a changed life.

The preached word has that kind of power – the power to move and change us. I feel that it's because God's word is quite unlike most of the words we hear. The Bible never tells us to earn more money or buy a larger home. God's advice never includes things that hurt or harm us or others. It's the same with the bread and the wine – those mysterious agents of healing and change that ferment on our tongues and in our bellies reminding us every week that with God things are different. We are not of the world. And so when the waters of baptism crash over us we have no need of a lifejacket, because there is no threat, just a new beginning. When the end of life comes we look ahead and cling to the hand of promise. In the Word we hear and remember God's provision and adoption for us into a unique family. Like Paul we are, in our best moments, unafraid of the storms that life blows our way.

And oh yes there are storms. We are surprised daily by the evening news of bullets shredding through peaceful neighbourhoods, of violence that no longer seems to erupt in "fits and spurts," but is more of a continual mantra. We are awakened by worry of security and finances and health, Googling the latest cure, stock pick or home alarm system. We are stressed and worried about the future.

Today is what I might call a "stormy day" for us here too. There is tension and concern - and lest the elephant in the room edge us off our seats, we ought to name it and bring it into the open: yes, we meet today to discern and decide on our future direction and whether Pr. Lindsey will be called into it alongside of us.

We ask: How should I vote?

It's a challenging moment, because Pr. Lindsey has loved us and we love them; that is not in question. We are concerned over realities like finances and budgets. We worry about letting go too easily or hanging on too defiantly.

How shall we vote?

We shall do so knowing that God doesn't ask us to make perfect decisions, only trustful ones. We gather together, listen for the movement of the Spirit, remember the desperate need of the world for God's message, we faithfully seek a will that is not our own.

The work of ministry given to us is not governed by principles we know well. We cannot treat the work here as if we were consumers of a product, seeking the best price or easiest means of production. Facing the realities of life, pain, and death take great courage and determination unparalleled by our own strength and imagination, but only fueled by God's direction, purpose and will. That is why we ask for and pray for God to help us.

In every time of decision or difficulty this is to be our path. It's never the wide, paved one, but the conscious choice in favor of love as Christ modeled for us. The first resurrection morning demonstrated the effect of God's determination to love under any circumstance, even violence and death. And so we, with a litany of saints behind and before us, do not need to be afraid.

Peace to you Pr. Lindsey. Peace to you Holy Spirit. Peace is ours, the gift of a loving God who has promised to be (and is) alongside us. Peace was God's declaration from the angels song at Christmas to Jesus' knowing crucifixion was at hand. This peace, like God's love, is not easy to carry. It doesn't mean everything will be smooth and easy. God's peace isn't like a drug prescribed to dull our senses or lessen the worry and pain we experience. God's peace is here to remind us that no matter what comes, we belong, we are accepted and we are loved. All because of a radical God who wouldn't give up on the idea that love changes everything.

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Be the wind of change we need  
but seldom want for fear  
that we will be asked to  
do more or do different or do less.

For we yearn to trace the lines  
of our lives onto the map of your body  
setting our course to the ways  
established by generous sacrifice  
a course as unfamiliar as it is beautiful.

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Remind us of the balm of love  
that soothes our fear and trepidation  
as we doubt your presence  
and purpose in our lives.

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
Gather your people from their own ego or despair  
lift us out of the baptismal waters  
so that life may begin again  
and again and again.

Blow Holy Spirit! Blow through us!  
When we are lost or  
think you have forgotten us  
let us taste and see, touch and live  
the glory of our resurrected lives.

Amen.