

- Pilgrims, I love Pentecost; I'm also deeply frustrated by it as a minister because it is so challenging for me to figure out how to talk about it. It is really hard. You can tell how hard it was because there is no sermon text available today for those of you who like to follow along with me. I'm preaching more extemporaneously today. Pray for me.
- What I love about Pentecost, and what makes it hard to speak about, is the mystery of the Holy Spirit. The mystery of God is the doorway for me. While I appreciate clarity of practice, or the historical significance of our faith, I feel profoundly touched by the mystical nature of our God, and the way I have access to the mystery of God is with my body. I believe this isn't just me: our faith is an embodied one, because God came to us in a body. The body—its imperfect, temporary, changeable nature, is vital to our understanding of our faith.
- So as I read and reread and reread the second chapter of Acts, and John 14, the lectionary readings for Pentecost, I kept trying to find a way to put into words the meaning and the importance of the Holy Spirit and the way She works in our bodies: should I tell a story about a spiritual experience I've had, a moment when I felt the Spirit of God working through me or speaking to me? Is there a saint that I want to call in as an emblem or a model of how we know or connect to the Holy Spirit? Julian of Norwich, Theresa of Avila, Hildegard of Bingen, our history is full of them. But I just kept getting stuck, and I think the reason for that is because the Holy Spirit is embodied.
- I prayed about it: *what do you want these people to hear from me, God?* I asked. And as I kept trying to **write** and **reason** and **intellectualize**, an idea came to me, *what if this isn't about what you say? jess, can you offer them an embodied experience that can help communicate what you mean?*
- So that's what we're going to do. I know this is new for some of us, and that new things are sometimes scary. I also know that you've done several things that are new for you with me, and you've been great sports about them, and I feel hopeful about our practice today. I hand you the phrase that is allegedly in scripture 365 times: Do not

be afraid. I recently asked our Bible study folks to share with one another those scriptures that come unbidden to their hearts, and one of them shared Do not be afraid, Fear not. I appreciate this as encouragement and instruction, especially when we're talking about the Holy Spirit.

- Can you find comfort in the body right now? For some that will mean resting against the pew, or changing the cross of the legs, or it might mean letting both feet rest on the floor. It might mean letting your hands rest in your lap. If it's okay with your nervous system, close your eyes. If closing your eyes means you'll fall asleep, then keep your eyes open, but rather than looking at me, look at a point about a foot in front of you, maybe in your pew, for me it's the floor. Let your gaze be soft.
- Turn your awareness to your breath. Watch your breath. Feel your body breathing in and breathing out.
- Bring your awareness to two places: the space between your eyebrows and the low belly. It can be helpful to bring one hand to your low belly, and the other to your forehead, so you have a little tactile sensation. Once you have those two spots in your awareness, you can rest your hands in your lap again.
- **Continue to watch your breath, and watch your breath moving between these two places. Imagine with every breath in, you are drawing the holy spirit into your belly, the breath of God that is God is entering you, and moving down to center. Every exhale, the holy spirit is moving up your body and filling your heart and your head with light, with warmth, with offering of energy.**
 - **Some of us might have awareness of our spine, if so, inbreath of Holy Spirit moves down to tip of tailbone, outbreath of Holy Spirit moves up to skull, filling the mind with light and energy and expansion.**
- **If your mind has wandered, that's okay, draw your mind back to watching the Holy Spirit fill you and move down into you on inbreath, and rise up to move up and out the crown of your head on outbreath.**

- I'm going to hand you a phrase to repeat internally, inside yourself, with your breath. As you draw the Inbreath of Holy Spirit: Be still, and know that I am God; Outbreath of Holy Spirit: I will be exalted upon the earth (4x)
 - Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted (4x)
 - Be still and know; that I am God (4x)
 - Be still; and know (4x)
 - Be; still (4x)
- Before you return to the space around you, ask yourself the following: what does it feel like in my body to experience closeness to God? What am I doing when I feel close to God? How can I trust the mystery of God's presence in my daily life?
- Open and close hands, rock body gently from side to side: three humming breaths with me.
- I don't know what this experience was for you, and it's none of my business. However it was, whatever it was, I invite you to open your heart and your day-to-day life to the companionship and the movement of the Holy Spirit.