

August 21, 2022

*“When the Spirit of the Lord Leaves the Temple”*

FORT COLLINS MENNONITE FELLOWSHIP

300 E. Oak Street, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Worship: 10:00 AM

Pastor: Steve Ramer

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Welcoming the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in our congregations, we are liberated from a static understanding of the church, which often makes us allies of the status quo. As we open ourselves to the re-creating and animating power of the Holy Spirit, we become agents of healing and hope in the world.

## 1. GATHERING

### Musical Prelude (Stan)

### Call to Worship (Steve)

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit, come,

**People: come fill the hearts of your faithful.**

Leader: Come, Spirit of God, come, kindle in us the fire of your love,

**People: warm our hearts, and free us to act with kindness and care toward all humanity.**

Leader: Pour out your Spirit on your people, God of love,

**People: and we shall be revived, made anew in the image of Jesus.**

Leader: Come, gracious Spirit, come, guide and teach us,

### Opening Prayer

### Opening Song

### Welcome and Passing of the Peace:

- **Leader:** May the peace of Christ be with you.
- **People:** And also with you.
- **All:** Let us offer one another signs of peace, reconciliation, and love.

**People: so that by your light we may walk in the way of Jesus.**

Leader: Spirit of the living God, anoint your children afresh,

**People: fill our spirits with unquenchable hope, bathe our hearts with unbounded love, and nourish our souls with your peace.**

**All: Reveal yourself within us, great Spirit of God, so that we may better see ourselves and more truly reflect your light and truth. Amen**

*“Revenge, lust, ambition, pride, and self-will are too often exalted as the gods of man's idolatry; while holiness, peace, contentment, and humility are viewed as unworthy of a serious thought.” — Charles Spurgeon*

## 2. HEARING GOD'S WORD

### Scriptures: Ezekiel 8: 5-18 (Steve)

He said to me, "Son of Man, look north." I looked north and saw it: Just north of the entrance loomed the altar of the sex goddess, Asherah, that makes God so angry. 6 Then he said, "Son of Man, do you see what they're doing? Outrageous obscenities! And doing them right here! It's enough to drive me right out of my own Temple. But you're going to see worse yet."

He brought me to the door of the Temple court. I looked and saw a gaping hole in the wall. He said, "Son of man, dig through the wall." I dug through the wall and came upon a door. He said, "Now walk through the door and take a look at the obscenities they're engaging in." I entered and looked. I couldn't believe my eyes: Painted all over the walls were pictures of reptiles and animals and monsters – the whole pantheon of Egyptian gods and goddesses – being worshipped by Israel. In the middle of the room were seventy of the leaders of Israel... Each held his censer with the incense rising in a fragrant cloud. He said, "Son of man, do you see what the elders are doing

here in the dark, each one before his favorite god-picture? They tell themselves, 'God doesn't see us. God has forsaken the country.'" Then he said, "You're going to see worse yet."

He took me to the entrance to the north gate of the Temple of God. I saw women sitting there, weeping for Tammuz, the Babylonian fertility god. He said, "Have you gotten an eyeful, son of man? You're going to see worse yet."

Finally, he took me to the inside court of the Temple of God. There between the porch and the altar were about twenty-five men. Their backs were to God's Temple. They were facing east, bowing in worship to the sun. He said, "Have you seen enough, son of man? Isn't it bad enough that Judah engages in these outrageous obscenities? They fill the country with violence and now provoke me even further with their obscene gestures. That's it. They have an angry God on their hands! From now on, no mercy. They can shout all they want, but I'm not listening."



### SERMON: "When the Spirit of the Lord Leaves the Temple" (Susie Ford)

In today's world, we often worship a nondescript God. It makes sense. We don't want our definition of God to be too narrow, for God is the creator of the universe and loves her creation. But do we go too far and worship other gods? Do we too easily give up on God's desire to act with hope and love? Ezekiel's gloomy outlook may not be appealing, but it speaks a naked truth about what might happen when we continually irritate God.

*"The ignorant mind, with its infinite afflictions, passions, and evils, is rooted in the three poisons. Greed, anger, and delusion." — Bodhidharma*

*"In our daily life, we encounter people who are angry, deceitful, intent only on satisfying their own needs. There is so much anger, distrust, greed, and pettiness that we are losing our capacity to work well together." — Margaret J. Wheatley*

## 3. RESPONDING TO GOD'S WORD

### a. Congregational Singing

### b. Response (everyone)

### e. Sending

Leader: Into a world filled with beauty and with suffering, the Spirit bids us go.

May the Spirit open your minds and hearts

**People: so that we do not miss the beauty or ignore the suffering;**

Leader: may the Spirit inspire you to let go of cynicism and indifference

**People: so that we become agents of forgiveness, grace, and God's reconciling love;**

Leader: may the Spirit anoint your eyes

**People: so that we may see the face of God in that of our neighbor;**

### c. Joys and Concerns (everyone)

### d. Offering & Music (Stan)

Leader: may the Spirit fill you with God's love,

**People: enabling us to embrace all God's creatures;**

Leader: may the Spirit touch your lips

**People: so that we can speak words of peace, truth, and kindness;**

Leader: may the Spirit animate your hands

**People: so that we may reach out with compassion and care to all our neighbors.**

Leader: Go now, companioned by the God of wind and fire, and guided by the Spirit,

to be agents of healing and hope in all the places the Spirit leads you to go.