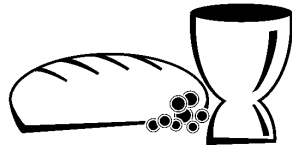


So the truth about assurance comes out like this: Our heavenly Father intends His sons to know His love for them, and their own security in His family. He would not be the perfect Father if He did not want this, and if He did not act to bring it about. His action takes the form of making the dual witness that we have described part of the regular experience of His children. Thus He leads them to rejoice in His love. The dual witness is itself a gift—the crowning element in the complex gift of faith, the element whereby believers gain “feeling knowledge” that their faith, and adoption, and the hope of heaven, and the infinite sovereign love of God to them, are all “really real”.

—J. I. Packer, *Knowing God* (1973)



Sing Alleluia to the Lord

By Linda Stassen

Words are in the print version of bulletin.

We celebrate the Lord's Supper weekly—and in a circle, at the end of worship. A word of direction is given, and with this everyone stands and moves to the walls. The cup is passed in two forms: in a chalice and then in small individual cups. You are free to choose.

And as this is the Supper of the Lord Christ, please listen to the instructions we give as to what qualifies a visitor to participate. **But whether you intend to take communion or not, please join us in the circle.**

“Sing Alleluia to the Lord” © 1974 New Song Creations. All rights reserved.
Reprinted with permission. CCLI # 188763

Pentecost



And if the Spirit of him
who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,
he who raised Christ from the dead
will also give life to your mortal bodies
through his Spirit, who lives in you.....
...if you live according to the sinful nature, you
will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death
the deeds of the body, you will live....

(Romans 8:11 & 13)

Old Orchard Church
Eighth Sunday of Easter
June 8, 2014—10:15 to 11:50 a.m.

Celebrating Jesus as the Community of Resurrection Power

And the Admission to the Lord's Table of
Lilly Maney, Carolena Mayfield, Thaddaeus & Simeon Woodard;
and the Baptism and Admission to the Lord's Table of
Joshua, Sophie and Zoe DeLay

Blessed be the Lord Jesus Christ
Who has baptized us with his Spirit—

Divine wind,
Fire from heaven,
Power for our poor power—
The very life of God in our lives!

Praise be to the Spirit who animates the church;
Who sets Christ before us, glorifying his dying and rising,
Convincing us we are loved,
Softening our hearts of stone,
Recreating us in the Beloved,
Filling us with hope for our own immortality,
Drawing together what had split apart:
Young and old, rich and poor, men and women,
This racial group and that, the weak and the strong—
One new community of redeemed children of Adam!

Come, O Source of joy and gladness,
Breathe your life in and through us;
Fill us with power to do what is good.

Alleluia!



Scripture Readings

Old Testament Lesson: from Ezekiel 37

New Testament Reading: from Acts 2

Sermon

“Falling Into Our Father’s Arms”

Romans 8:12-17

Joseph Bianco, seminary intern, preaching

The Holy Spirit and Our Adoption

Paul tells us that here and now “**The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs...**” (Romans 8:16ff)

We note that in this verse witness to our adoption is borne from two distinct sources: our spirit (that is, our conscious self), and God's Spirit, who bears witness *with* our spirit, and so *to* our spirit.

What is the nature of this dual witness? Robert Haldane's analysis... can hardly be improved upon. The witness of our spirit, he writes, becomes a reality as “the Holy Spirit enables us to ascertain our sonship, from being conscious of, and discovering in ourselves, the true marks of a renewed state.” This is *inferential* assurance, being a conclusion drawn from the fact that one knows the gospel, trusts Christ, brings forth works fit for repentance, and manifests the instincts of a regenerate man.

But [continues Haldane] to say that this is all that is signified by the Holy Spirit's testimony, would be to fall short of what is affirmed in this text; for in that case the Holy Spirit would only help the conscience to be a witness, but could not be said to be a witness Himself... The Holy Spirit testifies to our spirit in a distinct and immediate testimony, and also with our spirit in a concurrent testimony. This testimony, although it cannot be explained, is nevertheless felt by the believer; it is felt by him, too, in its variations, as sometimes stronger and more palpable, and at other times more feeble and less discernible... Its reality is indicated in Scripture by such expressions as those of the Father and the Son coming unto us, and making their *abode* with us—Christ *manifesting* Himself to us, and *supping* with us—His giving us the *hidden manna*, and the *white stone*, denoting the communication to us of the knowledge of an acquittal from guilt, and a *new name* written, which no man knows except he that receives it. **And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.** [Romans 5:5] (*Romans*, p. 363)

This is *immediate* assurance, the direct work of the Spirit in the regenerate heart, coming in to supplement the God-prompted witness of our own spirit (*i.e.* of our own self-consciousness and self-knowledge as believers). While this dual witness can be temporarily clouded through divine withdrawal and satanic assault, every whole-hearted Christian who is not grieving and quenching the Spirit by unfaithfulness ordinarily enjoys both aspects of the witness, more or less, as his abiding experience; as Paul's present tense (**testifies with our spirit**) makes clear.

Continued on back.