

The Holy Spirit

Session 2 – The Presence of the Holy Spirit

1. Introduction: Last week, we discussed how and why the Holy Spirit is seemingly neglected. This week we'll consider how the Lutheran Church makes the Holy Spirit evident in our worship and practice. The presence of the Holy Spirit was evident from the very beginning of God's Word.

a. Genesis 1:1-2, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the **Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.**"

b. Where was the Holy Spirit when the heavens and the earth were created?

c. What comes to mind when you read the Spirit of God "hovered" over the face of the waters?

d. How does the Holy Spirit "hover" over us today?

e. Can you recall a time when you personally felt the presence of the Holy Spirit?

2. Far from being neglected, the Holy Spirit is seen in the Lutheran Sacraments, Worship, observances, and rites.

a. Lutherans focus most specifically on the work of the Holy Spirit on particular holidays, including: The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord, the Second Sunday of Easter, and Pentecost.

1) Why are special days and special events in our "church life" important?

2) What is your favorite church day or event, why?

b. The Holy Spirit has a central role in Baptism.

1) How is the Holy Spirit seen in Baptism?

2) Why do we baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit?

3) How does the pastor making the "sign of the cross" on the head of the person being baptized show the presence of the Holy Spirit?

c. During the Confirmation ceremony, Lutherans publicly confirm the work of the Holy Spirit in a person's life. The service commemorates the work of the Holy Spirit through Baptism and the Word, leading a person to publicly confess their faith in Jesus. During the Service of Confirmation, the pastor lays his hand on the

confirmand's head and prays for the sevenfold gift of the Holy Spirit as described in Isaiah 11:1-2, "There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. 2 And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD."

1) What do you recall about your confirmation?

2) What do you think of as others are confirmed?

3) How does the Holy Spirit prepare a person during the confirmation process? Hint: What is the primary source of the study material for confirmation?

d. The ceremony for the ordination and installation of pastors is often quite formal. During these ceremonies, Lutherans call especially on the work and guidance of the Holy Spirit, who appoints men to the pastoral office (John 20:21-23; Acts 20:28).

1) Do you think religious ceremonies are important, why?

2) How do religious ceremonies and traditions draw us closer to God and to one another?

3. We also find the following Scriptures that testify that the Holy Spirit is present within us.

a. John 14:15-17, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

1) Who asks that the Holy Spirit be sent to you (v16)?

2) Who will send the Holy Spirit to you (v16)?

3) Once sent to you, what will the Holy Spirit do (v17)?

4. Your thoughts, questions, concerns?