

**Who is the Holy Spirit? Take-home questions**  
**March 31, 2019, Fourth Sunday in Lent**  
**United Parish in Brookline**

*The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.*

John 3:6-8

*When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.*

Acts 2:1-4

Who is the Holy Spirit?

Who first taught you about the Holy Spirit? What was your understanding?

Some of the images associated with the Holy Spirit include breath, fire, wisdom, wind, and a dove. What were your first images of the Holy Spirit?

How have these images and understanding been helpful? How have they been unhelpful? Do any of these particular images mean something special to you? Why?

Your evolving notion of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit seems to astonish and surprise us every time she shows up. When was the last time you were surprised by your faith?

How would you like to expand or deepen your image of the Holy Spirit?

Take Home Questions

How has your understanding of the Holy Spirit changed along your faith journey?  
How has it stayed the same?

How does your expression of the Holy Spirit compare with your expression of God and Jesus?

### Exercise to try this week

In both the Hebrew Bible and in Christian thought, the Spirit of God has been closely associated with the breath (drawing from the Hebrew *ruach*, “breath”). Drawing attention back to our breath in breathing meditation can also become a way of drawing our attention to the movement of the Holy Spirit in scripture and in our lives.

Here’s a sample 5-minute breathing meditation from [mindful.org](http://mindful.org):

1. Find a relaxed, comfortable position. You could be seated on a chair or on the floor on a cushion. Keep your back upright, but not too tight. Hands resting wherever they’re comfortable. Tongue on the roof of your mouth or wherever it’s comfortable.
2. Notice and relax your body. Try to notice the shape of your body, its weight. Let yourself relax and become curious about your body seated here—the sensations it experiences, the touch, the connection with the floor or the chair. Relax any areas of tightness or tension. Just breathe.
3. Tune into your breath. Feel the natural flow of breath—in, out. You don’t need to do anything to your breath. Not long, not short, just natural. Notice where you feel your breath in your body. It might be in your abdomen. It may be in your chest or throat or in your nostrils. See if you can feel the sensations of breath, one breath at a time. When one breath ends, the next breath begins.
4. Be kind to your wandering mind. Now as you do this, you might notice that your mind may start to wander. You may start thinking about other things. If this happens, it is not a problem. It’s very natural. Just notice that your mind has wandered. You can say “thinking” or “wandering” in your head softly. And then gently redirect your attention right back to the breathing.
5. Stay here for five to seven minutes. Notice your breath, in silence. From time to time, you’ll get lost in thought, then return to your breath.
6. Check in before you check out. After a few minutes, once again notice your body, your whole body, seated here. Let yourself relax even more deeply and then offer yourself some appreciation for doing this practice today. What did you learn about your breath, about yourself, and about the Holy Spirit?