

## Pentecost service 31<sup>ST</sup> May 2020



*You are invited to join in the words in bold type throughout the service*

### **Call to worship** Psalm 104: 27, 30

God of wind and fire,

**When you send your Spirit,**

**we are created anew.**

God of mighty oceans and still waters,

**When we receive your baptism,**

**we are born anew.**

God of bread and wine,

**When we eat at your table,**

**we are nourished anew.**

So pour out your Spirit

**Let sacred waters flow**

Fill us with holy food.

**May our hearts and our hands be open wide  
to receive your gifts of life. Amen.**

### **Opening Song** (sung x3)

*Come all you people, come and praise your maker,*

*Come all you people, come and praise your maker,*

*Come all your people, come and praise your maker,*

*Come now and worship the Lord!*

### **Prayers of adoration, confession and Lord's prayer**

Lord God, thank you for this day of Pentecost  
when we celebrate the coming of your promised Holy Spirit.

We give thanks that in times past, you poured out your Spirit on the earth,

fashioning men and women in your image,  
to enjoy the wonders of nature you had created;  
that you kept rescuing us from ourselves  
despite our foolish ways, and our lack of understanding  
of what it means to be your children.

Lord, we give you thanks that you have kept your promises throughout the ages,  
even when you despaired of our ever grasping the importance of placing you first in our lives,  
and that you took steps to show us the futility of our actions.

At Pentecost, through your Holy Spirit,  
you set the early church on fire  
and led the disciples into the world to preach your Word.  
May all praise and worship be yours!

*And now in the silence we open out hearts to you, to seek your forgiveness, for things we may or may  
not have done this week ,in either thought word, or deed.*

Loving and most Gracious God ,  
you are the source of our forgiveness,  
you are the source of our restoration,  
you are the source of our Promise

***You say to each one of us, your sins are truly forgiven, but you also say these words, Come now ...  
and follow me.***

### **The Lord's prayer**

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power, and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.**

## Hymn

Holy Spirit, come, confirm us R&S 298 (*Tune: All for Jesus*)

**Holy Spirit, come, confirm us  
In the truth that Christ makes known;  
We have faith and understanding  
Through your helping gifts alone.**

**Holy Spirit, come, console us,  
Come as Advocate to plead,  
Loving Spirit from the Father,  
Grant in Christ the help we need.**

**Holy Spirit, come, renew us,  
Come yourself to make us live;  
Holy through your loving presence,  
Holy through the gifts you give.**

**Holy Spirit, come, possess us,  
You the Love of Three in One,  
Holy Spirit of the Father,  
Holy Spirit of the Son.**

Brian Foley (1919 – 2000)

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## Readings

John 20: 19 – 23 read by Saju Mathew

<sup>19</sup>When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” <sup>20</sup>After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” <sup>22</sup>When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup>If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Acts 2: 1 -21 read by Melvin Mathew

<sup>2</sup>When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup>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. <sup>3</sup>**Divided tongues, as of fire**, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup>All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

<sup>5</sup>Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup>And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup>Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup>And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup>Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup>Phrygia and

Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup>Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” <sup>12</sup>All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup>But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

<sup>14</sup>But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup>Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup>‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. <sup>18</sup>Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup>And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup>The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup>Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

### Reflection

Today is a new beginning. Our reading from Acts tells us of what is often seen as the beginning of the church, not only for a group of people who have followed Jesus and learned daily from his teachings & wanted to share them with the world but it is the birth of the church as a body of believers filled and empowered and *moved* by the Holy Spirit. It makes the church alive!

We’ve been travelling the last seven weeks together through the Easter season with virtual worship, and we are reminded in our reading from John’s Gospel, all those weeks ago, of Jesus coming to the disciples after the Resurrection when they thought they were safely locked behind closed doors. Locked doors didn’t stop the risen Jesus, of course. He came right in saying “Peace be with you”. Nothing could stop Jesus from saying and doing what needed to be done and said for the disciples he cared for so deeply.

Ruth reminded us last week that the book of the Acts is the second of Luke’s writings. And today, early in these writings we find the disciples again – sort of safely - locked behind closed doors. This was Pentecost, the harvest festival when the Jewish people celebrated the giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. We hear that people were in town from all over the Roman Empire, the entire known world, huge crowds of people speaking many different languages.

And then it happened. The Spirit, the Holy Spirit, filled them all and amazing things began to happen. For one thing, they finally got out of that room, opened up the doors and burst through them, out into the world, speaking in languages they didn’t even know. And all those people, from all over the world, no matter what language they spoke, understood every word of the good news being shared that day.

But, of course, not everyone heard it the same way. Some were frightened & you know what we do when we are afraid – we get all sceptical, look for an explanation so we can contain it, perhaps even dismiss it. So, Peter, impulsive Peter, leaps in saying we should look at this situation through the lens of our own story, the story of faith told in Scripture. To me, this is Peter’s way of saying that *God is still speaking*, when he spoke out and for us today. There’s a call here for us too because, like the disciples in Acts, we are the church, the gathering of Jesus’s followers filled and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

What are we supposed to do about that you may ask, you and I, gathered together virtually this morning as this country & the world begins to emerge from lockdown and people look back at these months of waiting and living differently?

There has been so much revealed by the Covid19 pandemic — inequalities have been highlighted; being in lockdown has revealed hot spots for the disease; many people have struggled with mental health issues; low and no income families have had to rely on donations of food and care; workers we may not have valued as highly as we should are now considered “essential” & questions are raised about fair pay structures. How are we responding to that?

We have also seen unprecedented cooperation between scientists and researchers all over the world. We have seen healthcare workers and many others work sacrificially to save people’s lives. We have seen people of faith reaching out to their neighbours in creative and caring ways. And we have also seen the earth & its environment renewed.

Perhaps this Pentecost season, we can think about how we are responding to this new normal. Like those first disciples, knowing the peace Jesus shared with them is shared with us too, can give us strength; we can pray together, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit and opening ourselves to the visions and dreams being revealed for our work in these uncertain days ahead. We can admit that power in to our lives so that we are active witnesses to the work of Jesus Christ and show people what church is. It’s alive. Perhaps amazing things can happen!

There is no doubt that this is a strange time, a disconcerting time, but we as the church have been here before, waiting and hoping, praying and trusting. And we are not alone. That same Holy Spirit who showed up in fire and wind to the first disciples calls us to be witnesses to Jesus. That same Holy Spirit who endowed the first disciples with the gift of tongues is alive and active today and will help us.

This is not just another day. I hope your heart fills with the spirit of God, your ears resonate with the voice of the Spirit speaking in a language that reaches deep into your soul and God's voice empowers you to share and spread the good news, so that all the world may know the love of God - because of you.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Lord at this time of Pentecost,

when we celebrate the day

the Holy Spirt comes to energize us,

and move us into a new place within time and space, we are mindful of the world we live in,

its people, its situations, its tensions, and its fears

Breath of God: **Breath on them now.**

For people in our church and our community ... *Pause*

Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

For the lost and the lonely...*Pause*

Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

For the ill and the dying...*Pause*  
Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

For the bewildered and confused...*Pause*  
Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

For the tortured and trafficked...*Pause*  
Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

For the abused and neglected...*Pause*  
Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

For the grieving and broken...*Pause*  
Breath of God: **Breath on them now**

*For ourselves*

*Breath of God: **Breath on us..... Amen.***

### Closing Prayer & Blessing

As we go now to our daily living,  
may the Spirit come to us in new and exciting ways:  
**as a gentle whisper, in dreams, in silence, in prayer;**  
as a strong wind, in lives filled with love and compassion;  
**as a mighty storm, in exuberant hearts of joy.**

So let us go now, filled with the Spirit all our days!

**Amen!**

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Sharing of the Grace:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.