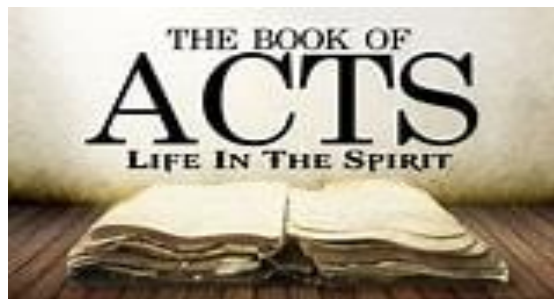


Worship for Fleet URC & Beacon Hill URC

Sunday 13th June 2021



'The Holy Spirit aflame as Church'

Peter: Spirit Enabled

Led by Karen Smith

Opening music: Have you any room for Jesus?

Welcome & Gathering Prayer

Open our eyes, ever-present God,
To see you here and now in this place and in one another.
Open our ears, Word of Life,
To hear you speaking in the words we hear and say and sing
and in the silence.
Open our hearts, transforming Spirit, to change and renewal in
each of us in our lives together and our witness to the world.
Already, God of extravagant generosity,
You have opened your hands and poured out your life for us;
open our minds to your greatness and our lives to your service.
Amen

[Open our eyes — Heather Pencavel | Worship Words](#)

Call to worship

When the world divides us

Come, Holy Spirit, make us one.

When the world calls us orphaned

Come, Holy Spirit, make us family.

When the world leads us astray

Come, Holy Spirit, call us home.

Come, Holy Spirit, come! Come and fill this place!

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/holy-spirit>

Hymn: Spirit of the Living God sung by the Westminster Presbyterian church
R&S 308

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

Melt me, mold me,
fill me, use me,

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

Sung twice

Reading: Acts 11: 1 – 18 read by Mike Walters

1 The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3 and said, "You went into the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

4 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story:

5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.' 9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.'

10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11 “Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man’s house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, ‘Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.’

15 “As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: ‘John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.’ 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God’s way?”

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, “So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life.”

This is the Word of the Lord **Thanks be to God**

Prayers of Thanksgiving & Confession & the Lord’s Prayer

Most generous God:

with thankful hearts we rejoice in your goodness towards us
and in the many blessings that we receive each day.
In love you provide for your people’s needs
and you accompany us along the way.

We give you our thanks
for the physical gifts that sustain us
and for the added blessings which make life more joyful and full.
We rejoice that you freely pour out the perfume of your love,
even though we are not worthy to receive it.

We are thankful for those who have been bountiful towards us,
giving of their time, their skills and their love.
As a token of our gladness, may we also bless others,

being generous with all that you have bestowed.

~ posted on the **Starters for Sunday** website of the Church of Scotland. <http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/>

God of the clean and the unclean,
we too easily think we can see from your point of view.

We exclude, hold grudges and nurse contempt,
all the while hiding ourselves
for fear we too would be found wanting.

We think we are justified
because we are made holy by your love,
and we assume holiness means more like us.

We forget, or never really knew,
that all you touch is holy,
and that you created all that is.

So when we exclude, we exclude you.
When we hold grudges, we hate you.
When we show contempt,
we are contemptuous of those you love.

May we be made holy in truth,
loving as you love, clean and unclean alike.

~ written by Rev. Doug Hagler, Calvary Presbyterian Church of Wyncote, PA, and posted on LiturgyLink. <https://www.liturgylink.net/>

Words of Assurance:

Wherever you are, Christ is with you. You are beloved of God and God’s care will always surround you. Be at peace and rejoice!

Amen

Ministry Matters™ | Worship Connection: May 19, 2019

Our Father, which art in heaven, read by Margaret Tracey
hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

**And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them 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.**

Poem: Fresh Start by David Hopwood © engageworship.org

Reflection:

I'm sure in your reading of the Bible you have come across individuals who you immediately respond to. In our recent Bible study meetings we stood in the sandals of Nehemiah and I must say his commitment, his love for God and how he leads the rebuilding of the city wall in Jerusalem sparked my admiration, of those attributes as well as his leadership skills. And today, as we continue our mini-series looking at the Book of Acts I find myself drawn to Peter the Apostle, mainly, I realise, because I really don't recognise this man in the Book of Acts from everything about him in the Gospels! What a transformation from fisherman to orator; from impulsive to considered; from denial to conviction of faith.

Let's just remind ourselves of his story. Impulsive, likeable, loud Peter, called by Jesus by the Sea of Galilee, following Jesus throughout his ministry and revealing his character as he did so. Think of some of his impulsive actions: in Capernaum Peter invited Jesus and the disciples to his house even though his wife's mother was sick in bed (Mark 1:29-30). When Peter saw Jesus walking on water, he said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). He impulsively hurt the servant of the high priest (John 18:10). When Christ appeared to Peter and some of the other disciples when they were fishing, Peter "put on his outer garment and plunged into the sea" (John 21:7).

Peter was outspoken. When Jesus asked His disciples, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter immediately and emphatically stated, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:15-16). Jesus was clearly pleased with Peter's understanding.

Right after that, Jesus described his coming death and the events that would lead up to that. Then audacious Peter took Jesus to one side and began to *rebuke* him. We all know of Peter's denial of following Jesus, how that affected him and the restoration of relationship and commissioning by Jesus in the resurrection appearances.

Poor Peter. He has moments of such insight and other moments of putting his foot in it. And yet, he was the one given the task to build the church and be the keeper of the keys, to be the rock on which the church will be founded. His humanity is so real all these years later.

Then - at Pentecost - we heard how Peter received the Holy Spirit and boldly proclaimed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. This Peter called the crowd to repentance, to recognize the ways in which they had turned from God's path, to yield their hearts and lives to God. We see an added dimension of maturity, wisdom and knowledge of Scripture, clearly inspired by God's Holy Spirit. With his second sermon in Acts 2 that we heard last week, we see a mighty preacher of the gospel giving a focused and powerful masterpiece of a sermon to the Jewish authorities.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter had the gifts to be able to preach and heal and bring others to Christ. But Peter still had to wrestle with his faith understanding. Faced with the success of the gospel message, and what he was experiencing, Peter had to rethink his views on the Jewish laws and dietary requirements. In today's reading we heard how he ate with Gentiles and the reaction of the early Jewish Christians to this. He, and the church, had to decide: did new converts have to follow those old rules? What did it mean to be a first century Christian?

What the story of Peter tells us about is a dynamic, changing understanding & fulfilment of faith. Truly being a disciple. Filled with the Holy Spirit, Peter's views did not stay static. He faithfully grew and changed and matured in the faith. I know that I am not

the same person of faith as the one who started training to be a Lay Preacher. My outlook on all sorts of things has changed over time. We can learn from Peter that it is okay to change. To have our eyes opened to things we have not noticed before and to show others that the gospel is good news to all.

This is a story of discipleship, a reminder when we think about our own discipleship journey that it does not always follow the path we might have expected. What a discipleship journey Peter had. What a difference the Holy Spirit made to his life and can make in our lives. What a lot we can learn from Peter: Spirit Enabled!

We too are called to respond to Jesus' call in our lives in a way that is good news for the whole world. In this transitional time may we listen and wait for moments of the Holy Spirit touching and warming our hearts. May we declare with Peter the good news that Jesus was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God. And perhaps with some trepidation, let us build Christ's Church on the foundation laid by Peter and those who have come since, keeping, adapting and innovating when we need to, but always for the glory of God.

Who would have expected Simon who was called from his every day work as a fisherman to be such an example of faith & discipleship – to be that Fisher of Men? For the faithful witness of Peter: Thanks be to God.

Intercessory prayer 'And as I began to speak ...

based on Acts 11.15

'And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning.'

Lord, we know that we tend to love those like ourselves. We are prone to think of people who are hard to love as 'out there', not in our backyards. But they are sometimes much closer than that, they are in our family.

And, dare we admit, sometimes it is ourselves whom we find difficult to love.

Holy Spirit, fall on us.

We pray now for our families, for our nearest and dearest. They don't always choose the lifestyle we would choose for them, but, Lord, we pray you would help us to walk wisely alongside them, being there for them, but not in their face. Help us to remember that you don't work on just one side of the equation; you are with them as much as you are with us. May we all be guided by your Spirit, as we look for glimpses of your glory in those around us.
Holy Spirit, fall on us.

We pray for those 'out there', that we would not so much seek to bring them in, as to be ready and willing to be out there with them at their point of need.

Holy Spirit, fall on us.

Lord, we sometimes walk a difficult path between being true to ourselves, and not offending others. We pray for: those we find difficult to love because they are different, those we perhaps feel might help themselves more, those who haven't had our advantages. We pray for a spirit of openness and a willingness to see your glory everywhere.
Holy Spirit, fall on us. Amen.

<https://www.rootsontheweb.com/lectionary/2016>

Hymn: Go forth and tell sung by the Newcastle Virtual Choir Project
R&S 574

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!
God's saving news to all the nations take;
proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,
that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;
he will respond in grace to all who call:
how shall they call if they have never heard
the gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell! The doors are open wide:
share God's good gifts – let no one be denied;
live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,
your ransomed powers for his sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, arise!
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;
go till all nations his great name adore
and serve him, Lord and King for evermore.
James Edward Seddon (1915-1983) © Copyright Mrs M Seddon

Blessing

May the Lord Christ go with you, wherever He may send you. May He guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm. May He bring you home rejoicing at the wonders He has shown you. May He bring you home rejoicing once again into our doors. Amen

Closing Music: Holy Spirit, truth divine

Responses led by Margaret Tracey

Opening music from <https://www.smallchurchmusic.com/Snippet-2010/S-HaveYouAnyRoom-SPiano-48-CAM.mp3>

Closing music from <https://www.smallchurchmusic.com/Snippet/S-HolySpiritTruth-Lubeck-PipeLC-48-CAM.mp3>

Hymns: [Spirit of the Living God on Vimeo](#) Westminster Presbyterian Church

[Go Forth and Tell - Google Drive](#) Newcastle Virtual Choir Project

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