



AT HOME SERVICE

Sunday 8th June 2025

PENTECOST SUNDAY

compiled by Rev. Chris Jackson

Call to Worship

Let us come into God's presence.

Let us come just as we are.

Let us expect great things from God.

Let us welcome the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts today

HYMN: Singing in the Faith 394

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove;
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love!*

2] Without your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live His way;
we need Your power, we need Your strength,
following Christ each day.

1] You spoke to us long, long ago,
gave us the written word;
we read it still, needing its truth
through it God's voice is heard.

Margaret V. Old (1932-2001)

PRAYER

God of energy and purpose,
as fire erupts from a volcano,
so may your Spirit erupt today;
as water thunders down a waterfall,
so may your Spirit thunder today;
as a downpour refreshes a tired garden,
so may your Spirit refresh us today -
that, gathered together with confidence,
we may celebrate together today.

We praise you, God of all language and all culture,
that in the coming of your Holy Spirit,
Jesus' promise to be with us always is fulfilled,
and we are equipped and enabled to serve you
in the strength and with the energy
you delight to bless us with.
May every day be as Pentecost -
an opportunity to hear you speaking to our hearts,

a commissioning to share your gospel,
and a chance to celebrate your presence among us. AMEN

LET US JOIN IN THE LORD'S PRAYER TOGETHER

READING Acts 2:1-21

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. Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs - in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine." But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: '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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Hymn: Singing in the Faith 372

1] COME DOWN, O LOVE DIVINE,
Seek Thou this soul of mine
And visit it with Thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

2] O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn
To dust and ashes, in its heat consuming;
And let Thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

3] Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

4] And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he become the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes His dwelling.

Bianco da Siena (d.1434)

Translated by Richard Frederick Littledale (1833-1890)

Reflection

What do we think of when we refer to the Holy Spirit...a person, a thing, smoke, a lesser part of the trinity. Something or someone that is ethereal, ghost like (as in the Holy Ghost)...something supernatural....or do we not think of anything at all. Perhaps the Holy Spirit is only for those that want it, perhaps those in the Pentecostal or Charismatic style churches.

Pentecost can often be referred to as either the coming of the Holy Spirit and/or the birthday of the church...in some respects that's okay...but the Holy Spirit has existed before the beginning of time...

Genesis 1:2 says "the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters". There are numerous references to the Holy Spirit throughout the OT...therefore this may have been the coming of the spirit on this occasion in this place...but certainly not for the first time...it was an act of the Spirit of God for a specific time and place that was a turning point in the eternal story of God's relationship with humankind.

When I was in my previous job there was a very popular business book called 'The Tipping Point'. All of the managers in the company were "encouraged" to read it...I dutifully obliged. Actually it was an interesting read. The author describes a tipping point as "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point."

Some events can be almost unnoticed at the time...but their result is world changing...a seismic event that means everything changes. Take an event 500 years ago this year, October 31st 1517, the popular myth says that Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to a church door at Wittenburg in Germany and sparked the beginning of the reformation, a period of huge unrest for the whole of Western Europe...whether Luther did or did not grab a hammer and nail on that day in 1517 is slightly irrelevant, what is certain is that it was a tipping point in history...nothing would ever be the same again.

And so we come to a bunch of largely unknown people in an upper room, hiding for their lives sometime in the early first century in Roman occupied Judaea. It was the place and the people that God chose to move the great cosmic plan of salvation for all, forward.

The Spirit is not under our control, we cannot order the Spirit to work on our behalf, or call down the Spirit as though it is at our beck and call...why...because the Spirit is God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is God who is in control, and we surrender ourselves to be obedient to the guidance and calling of God for our lives, not the other way around.

The Spirit of God came upon Jesus at his baptism, before he was tested in the desert, a gift not a reward. And so it is for us. The disciples were equipped for ministry before they went to witness to the world, not as a reward for long service and good work. Again God is good at subverting the world's values. Imagine going to work on your first day and receiving your next ten years wages before you've even worked a single day...and yet that is what God does with the Holy Spirit...God has that much trust in his people.

So what does this mean for us: Well firstly I believe strongly that God charged us with the responsibility of being witnesses to the Gospel throughout the world. Each of us are given spiritual gifts, for the use of the whole church and community, we are all to continue living our lives by the values of the fruits of the spirit. Changing our communities, our nation, our world by joining in with the work of God.

Pentecost celebrates the vitality and gift of the Holy Spirit that empowers believers with knowledge, enthusiasm and confidence to witness and evangelise.

I'll finish with a quote from one of the best teachers of the 20th century, John Stott...

"Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible"

AMEN

Prayers

Creator God, we thank you
for all your gifts to us.

Loving God, we thank you for our lives together
and for the joys of family and friendships.

Today we give special thanks for the gift of your Holy Spirit
and we ask for courage and strength to do your work in the world.

Help us to see your hand in all things and not lose sight of what is real and true.

We ask for the gifts of your Spirit to shine in the lives of all people.

Give us the faith to have confidence
in the power of your Spirit to change and renew.

Teach us to trust in your transforming power.

Give us the grace to say yes to your call.

We thank you for the guiding presence of your Spirit
and for all those who have helped us on our Christian journey.

We offer you ourselves to be a light to others.

May we burn bright with your holy fire.

Let us not be afraid to bring our weakness to you in prayer.

We remember all who are sick in mind or body and all who care for them.

In a moment of quiet we hold before you
all those we know to be in need of your healing presence.

Lead all of us through your Spirit
Open our heart and minds
To the prompting of your Spirit in our lives

We bring our prayers
In the name of Christ
And in the power of the Holy Spirit AMEN

HYMN: Singing in the Faith 564

1] O THOU WHO CAMEST FROM ABOVE
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
On the mean altar of my heart.

2] There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.

3] Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work, and speak, and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.

4] Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Blessing

May the blessing of God
Father, Son & Holy Spirit
Be with us and all those we love
Now and forever. **Amen**