

8th June 2025 – Morning Service

Pentecost Olwen Meller

Call to Worship - Acts 2:1-4

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

StF 388 – Let every Christian pray

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| 1) Let every Christian pray,
This day, and every day,
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Was not the Church we love
Commissioned from above?
Come, Holy Spirit, come! | 3) Always the Spirit strove
To teach her how to love:
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Age after age, anew,
She proved the gospel true:
Come, Holy Spirit, come! |
| 2) The Spirit brought to birth
The Church of Christ on earth
To seek and save the lost:
God never has withdrawn,
Since that tremendous dawn,
Those gifts of Pentecost. | 4) Only the Spirit's power
Can fit us for this hour:
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Instruct, inspire, unite;
And make us see the light:
Come, Holy Spirit, come! |

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Opening Prayers

Come, Holy Spirit, blow among us as we celebrate your calling us out to be the people of God.
Come as the robin in the morning, wakening our hearts with your song.
Come as the dove at evening, bringing blessing and peace.
Come as the blackbird at noonday, gladdening your world with joy.
Come to us as we worship, that we may sing to the Creator, seek healing for the wounds of creation and find peace through active prayer.

God of many voices, time and again you have filled the lives and voices of people with your Word, which has been to the world like the leaping, crackling flames of a bush or forest fire. At this season of Pentecost, we focus our thankfulness upon the voice and the vision you gave to a struggling group of believers. We give thanks for voices and accents, other than our own, which speak to us of Christ, deepening our experience and widening our vision. We give thanks that the rich variety within the Christian Church still speaks of the day they 'all heard with their own tongue'. We give thanks for Christ, who is for us the voice of all ages proclaiming the Word of God within the world.

Prayer Confession

Spirit of God, giver of wonderful gifts, compared with your abundant generosity we have so little to offer the world; our love is tainted by self-absorption, our joy is undermined by lack of trust, our peace is disturbed by our fractiousness, our kindness is weakened by thought of reward and our goodness is spoiled by cruel words and thoughtless actions.

What can we give you who gives all to us. God who connects us, who relates and reconciles, forgive us when we fragment your world.

Forgive us when we undermine our neighbours instead of encouraging them.

Forgive us when we close ranks in hostility, instead of opening ourselves in hospitality.

Forgive us when we pursue self-interest instead of sharing resources and power.

Forgive us when we are diverted by trivia instead of engaging with the struggles of the downtrodden.

Forgive us when we spoil the earth instead of respecting and cherishing it.

To our Babels - bring your Pentecost. Teach us the language of understanding and unity.

Lord we believe that you have called us here and we have come to hear the Word of life and to respond to the truth of Jesus. By your Holy Spirit, transform our formal act of worship into a joyous celebration of your love. May our praises overflow with love as on the day of Pentecost. In the name of Jesus, may our worship honour you here and everywhere for ever. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, 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 those who 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.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 383 – Holy Spirit, gift bestower

1) Holy Spirit, gift bestower,
Breathe into our hearts today.
Flowing water, dove that hovers,
Holy Spirit, guide our way.
Love inspirer, joy releaser,
Spirit, take our fears away.
Reconciler, peace restorer,
Move among us while we pray.

2) Holy Spirit, Christ proclaimer,
Wisdom bringer, light our way.
Fire that dances, wind that whispers,
Holy Spirit, come today.
Ease disturber, comfort bearer,
Move among us while we pray.
Truth revealer, faith confirmer,
Rest within our hearts today.

Church Hymnary, 4th Edition © Church Hymnary Trust

Reading: Acts 2:5-21

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!' Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?' Some, however, made fun of them and said, 'They have had too much wine.'

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: 'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.

I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”

First Reflection - Pentecost

Today we celebrate Pentecost – the day when Jesus’ disciples experienced the arrival of the Holy Spirit in their lives individually and together. Suddenly there was a sound like the rushing of a strong wind and tongues of fire appeared and touched each one of them. After being touched by the tongues of fire, the disciples went outside into the streets of Jerusalem and mingled with the crowds. At that time Jerusalem was a bit like London today; it was a city where people from many different countries lived, or came for a visit, and each person spoke the language of his or her country. So it was a bit like walking down Oxford Street and hearing lots of different languages spoken, some of which you might understand but others which are completely unfamiliar.

The reading from Acts gives us a long list of the languages you could hear spoken in the streets of Jerusalem; the languages of Parthians, Medes and Elamites, of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, of Pontus and Asia, of Phrygia and Pamphylia. People who came from Egypt spoke Arabic, those from Rome spoke Latin. With so many languages, it wasn’t easy to understand what everyone was saying. But something very remarkable happened on that first day of Pentecost. When the disciples went out into the streets of Jerusalem and mingled with the crowds they began to talk about what God had done in their lives, about their friend Jesus, about his life and work, his death and resurrection. The disciples had a fiery enthusiasm and a fresh inspiration to share the good news of God’s love for the world. And as they did so, the people around them began to hear the good news of God’s love in their own language and everyone understood what they were saying.

People were amazed and puzzled at what was going on. ‘Listen to what these men are saying’, they said. ‘How come ordinary men from Galilee are able to speak to us in our own language about God’s power at work in our world?’ Some people thought the disciples were just mad or drunk but other people were more thoughtful and asked ‘What does this mean?’ ‘What should we do in response?’

I expect the disciples were just as surprised and shocked at what happened in Jerusalem on that exciting day as their listeners were. But perhaps when things quietened down they remembered what Jesus had told them the night before he died. On that evening, while they were all having supper together in the Upper Room, Jesus tried to explain to his disciples that he would have to leave them soon and go away back to his Father. But he promised to send someone else to be with them. He promised to send the Spirit of truth, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, the Comforter (the Bible uses different names). And Jesus promised that when the Spirit of truth came he would do three important things....

Firstly, Jesus said, the Spirit of truth will help you understand God’s plans for this world; he will help you understand right from wrong. He will touch your minds and remind you of all that I have taught you while I’ve been with you.

Secondly, Jesus said, even though I’m no longer with you in the flesh, the Spirit of truth will help you feel my presence with you even though you can’t see me with your eyes. He will help you to hear my voice in your heart.

And thirdly, Jesus said, the Spirit of truth will help you live out your lives as my friends and followers. He will help you tell others about me, share my love, live together as my church changing the world around you to make it better, to make it more like the world my Father and I long for it to be.

Jesus promised that the power that had been at work in his own life – the power that was to bring him back to life from the dead – would continue to be at work through his Holy Spirit in his body the church. So today, just as it was for Jesus’ disciples at that Pentecost. God’s Holy Spirit is still with us and comes to fill each one of us.

His Spirit of truth helps us remember and understand Jesus' teachings in our minds, helps us feel his presence with us in our hearts and helps us to belong to his church here in this community and to carry the light and love of Christ into our world. We can't do any of that by ourselves, on our own. We can't even do it together, as a group. We can only do it if we ask for the help of the Holy Spirit, today and every day.

StF 394 – Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

*Ch) 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.*

1) You spoke to us, long, long ago,
Gave us the written word;
We read it still, needing its truth,
Through it Your voice is heard.

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.

Margaret V Old © Scripture Union

Reading: John 16:5-15

But now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, "Where are you going?" Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.'

Second Reflection – the Role of the Spirit

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

We can't live the Christian life without the help of the Holy Spirit. Even Jesus needed the Spirit. The Spirit had a major role to play in his life. At his baptism the Holy Spirit descended on him in the form of a dove, revealing him as his Father's beloved Son and empowering him for the mission he was about to begin. He began that ministry by making his own the words from Isaiah:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor - to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind - to set the down-trodden free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

What a fantastic mission and how faithfully Jesus carried it out. The Spirit wasn't just given for a moment - the Spirit remained with Him throughout his public ministry. He was continually strengthened and guided by the Holy Spirit. He was filled with the Spirit and power went out from him through his every word and his compassionate deeds. When Jesus ascended into heaven the Holy Spirit was poured out on those who were to carry on his mission to preach the Gospel to the whole world.

The action of the Spirit is mysterious but it's not magic. What the Holy Spirit did for the apostles was to give them the courage and boldness to overcome their fear and timidity; from being a group of people huddled together in fear of each other and of the world at large, they became people with a mission and a message for the world, the Good News of Jesus.

We are told that on the Day of Pentecost everyone understood the words of the apostles. It wasn't that they spoke a completely new language. These people were regular visitors to Jerusalem and would have been familiar with the local language. But that day the disciples spoke in a language we are all familiar with but which we tend to leave unused. It was the language of peace rather than war. The language of reconciliation rather than conflict. The language of co-operation rather than competition. Of forgiveness rather than vengeance. Of hope rather than despair. The language of tolerance rather than bigotry. The language of friendship rather than hostility. Of unity rather than division. And the language of love rather than hate.

At Pentecost the languages of division are reconciled by a language that is capable of being interpreted by all. Pentecost created, from the many languages of the people, one voice to profess one faith. Though people speak with many tongues, they speak with one voice. This new language gave rise to a new community; the community of those who believed in Jesus, a community of faith and love. According to the Acts of the Apostles *'The community were one in mind and heart.'* Through the gift of the Spirit people of many languages learned to profess the one faith, to the praise and glory of God. This is the real miracle of Pentecost and, thankfully, it still happens.

Pentecost strengthens us in our commitment to pursue unity in our diversity. Just as the disciples spoke in a way that everyone could understand so today Christians must speak in a universal language. We must speak in a language that everyone can understand. The coming of the Holy Spirit changed the apostles. People change when they are given hope and especially when they are loved. All of us have a capacity for goodness; we have hands that can care, eyes that can see, ears that can hear, tongues that can speak, feet that can walk and, above all, hearts that can love. The Holy Spirit helps us to release those gifts we have within us so that we, like the apostles, may become fearless witnesses for Christ through our kind words and our compassionate deeds.

Let us pray...

Lord grant us a strong and courageous faith, a faith that burns brightly in the time of darkness, a faith that is rooted in your love for us and that expresses itself in love for others. **Amen**

StF 410 – Lord, your church on earth is seeking

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| 1) Lord, your church on earth is seeking
Your renewal from above;
Teach us all the art of speaking
With the accent of your love.
We would heed your great commission:
Sending us to every place -
Preach, baptize, fulfil my mission,
Serve with love and share my grace. | 3) In the streets of every city
Where the bruised and lonely dwell,
Let us show the Saviour's pity,
Let us of his mercy tell.
In all lands and with all races
Let us serve, and seek to bring
All the world to render praises,
Christ, to you, Redeemer, King. |
| 2) Freedom give to those in bondage,
Lift the burdens caused by sin.
Give new hope, new strength and courage,
Grant release from fears within:
Light for darkness; joy for sorrow;
Love for hatred; peace for strife.
These and countless blessings follow
As the Spirit gives new life. | |

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Prayers of Intercession

We pray for the universal community of Christians, that we may remain faithful to the diversity God gave the Church at Pentecost...Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit**

For the Church called into being in one era but who finds difficulty adapting to new times...

Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit**

For all congregations and communities who honour and serve Christ in and through the poor and the wretched of the earth... Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit**

For the leaders of the nations and their representatives, that they may break through barriers of diplomacy, self-interest and culture and discover the freedom, justice and joy that God alone can give and especially we pray for the leaders of our own country that they may seek the common good rather than look to their own self-interest...Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit**

Within our cities, towns and villages may God's Spirit energise skill and resourcefulness, that the life which flows out of communities may be shared and celebrated as the strength of all...

Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit**

For all who work in the service of others helping make life better for those less fortunate, for the overworked and the under-employed, for the overpaid and the desperate poor, for the glamorous and the plain, for the strong and the weak...Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit**

For all who are sick, or sad. For those who have lost loved ones and mourn their passing and for all who have died, especially those who have died in the faith of Christ and lastly Lord we pray for ourselves, our families and our local communities...Upon every community of believers, **Lord send your Spirit. Amen**

StF 477 – Teach me to dance

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| <p><i>Ch)</i> Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart,
Teach me to move in the pow'r of Your Spirit.
Teach me to walk in the light of Your presence,
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart.
Teach me to love with Your heart of compassion
Teach me to trust in the word of Your promise
Teach me to hope in the day of Your coming
Teach me to dance to the beat of Your heart.</p> <p>1) You wrote the rhythm of life,
Created heaven and earth;
In You is joy without measure.
So like a child in Your sight,
I dance to see Your delight
For I was made for Your pleasure, pleasure.</p> | <p>2) Let all my movements express
A heart that loves to say 'Yes',
A will that leaps to obey You.
Let all my energy blaze
To see the joy in Your face
Let my whole being praise You, praise You.</p> |
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Blessing

May the Holy Spirit bless you with the gifts of unity and peace. May the Holy Spirit inflame your hearts and raise your spirits. May the Holy Spirit kindle in your hearts the fire of his love and make you courageous followers of Christ. And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us all now and for evermore. **Amen**