

# Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021

## Pentecost

### WELCOME

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Yet God raised Jesus to life! God's Spirit now lives in you, and he will raise you to life by his Spirit. Romans 8:11

### HYMN

*Come down O love divine.*

### PRAYERS

Mighty God, we remember this day, with awe and wonder, the events of that day of Pentecost long ago which so transformed the lives of the apostles. Move in us, we pray.

Mighty God, you came through your Spirit and life was never the same again. Come to us, breathing new fire into our hearts, new energy into our lives, new life into our souls. Transform our fear, anxiety, and doubt, filling us with confidence and faith. Move in us, we pray.

Open our minds to new horizons, new experiences and a new way of looking at life, and so may we live by the Spirit, bearing rich fruit to your glory. Move in us, we pray, through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen

### READING

Acts 2: 1-21

### REFLECTION

It sometimes feels that our TV schedules are overrun with talent shows. X-Factor, Britain's got Talent even Strictly where people put themselves forward to do things that they have never really done before in front of large crowds of people. They are scared amateurs who are willing to put themselves up there, possibly even make fools of themselves to do the thing they've always believed they could do. And many of us love to watch it, or rather to watch them, maybe even hoping they will make fools of themselves!

Let's wind the clock back 2000 years to a bunch of scared people hiding away in a room, terrified of the consequences of standing up and being seen. They weren't sure what was going to happen, but they somehow had this sense that it was going to be dramatic – and it certainly was that!

The power of God's Spirit coming down as fire and hurricane touches everyone present and gives them the power to speak in every known language at the time. These uneducated Galileans, who would be used to being mocked for their strange accent could, all of a sudden, communicate with people all over the world to tell them about God's love and to spread the news everywhere. Their new found talent had a purpose!

Jesus had promised his followers that he would send this helper, this Advocate, to work alongside them to lead people to the truth of God. Peter, the guy who until now kept getting it wrong and denied even knowing Jesus was the kind of person that today's media would have loved! He would have given them many a story for their readers. Yet look at him now, here he is standing up in front of the crowds speaking confidently and quoting the Hebrew scriptures and making sense of all that has happened. And as he does so thousands are convinced by what he says and are converted. That is the clearest demonstration of what the power of the spirit can do.

Jesus had seen Peter's potential and working with the power of the Holy Spirit Peter is becoming the person that Jesus knew he could be. But he's not doing it by himself- Jesus has not left him to his own devices but through the power of the Holy Spirit Peter is able to lead the crowds to the truth of Jesus and so for them to turn their lives around.

We're a lot like Peter, we're a bunch of amateurs who often get things wrong. If the Pentecost story teaches us anything it must surely be that God can work through all of us with the help of the Spirit. We may not be people to whom the Spirit has come like a rushing wind or flames of fire but rather our experience may be a quiet constant guiding that enables us to walk with him. The spirit

may, after all, be a comforter and counsellor who brings peace and reconciliation.

However and whenever we receive God's Spirit, it can enable us to be all that we can be, just like it did for Peter. However frail or inadequate we feel with his guiding hand on us we can be taken to new places. These may be a bit uncomfortable at times but with the strength he brings we can challenge prejudice and injustice and we can become who he is calling us to be. That may not be to perform on the stage as the acts on X Factor in front of the crowds but quietly working to build bridges and right the wrongs we see around us today.

That first Pentecost may have been a dramatic affair, but we can have just as profound influence as long as we are filled with that same Holy Spirit today. Amen

## HYMN

*O breath of life come sweeping through us*

## PRAYERS

God of love, we pray for the poor.

As Covid-19 continues to impact our world, we pray for those around the globe who don't have the resources of the richer nations, for those countries struggling to afford vaccinations and basic health care. We think in particular of people in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Nepal. May those who have the power to bring relief to others use their influence to ensure help and vaccines are directed to the people who need it most.

May those who have very little in this world  
**be filled to overflowing with your Spirit.**

God of love, we pray for those who mourn.

With the battles continuing to rage in the Middle East and the death toll rising, we pray for everyone who has lost friends and loved ones. It's difficult to imagine how scared people must be living with bombs and violence. We pray for those caught in the

middle of the chaos. Please bring an end to this war. We are also aware of rising tensions in our own communities as violence escalates between Israel and Gaza. We pray for wisdom for community leaders trying to bring calm; may they know the right words to use and be able to mediate problems with insight and skill.

May those who live with violence and pain  
**be filled to overflowing with your Spirit.**

God of love, we pray for those who hunger and thirst. Many people in our country have really suffered during this pandemic. As venues open and life resembles something more normal, we are aware that not everyone is able to feel hope for the future. Help us to continue to reach out to those who are hungry. Thank you for the network of foodbanks, so many operating out of the churches across the land.

May those who need hope  
**be filled to overflowing with your Spirit.**

God of love, we pray for the poor in spirit. With so many people experiencing mental health issues we think of those we know who are struggling. We bring to mind family members, friends, neighbours, and people in our congregations. Help us to be compassionate listeners and good friends to people who need us.

May those who face the darkness  
**be filled to overflowing with your Spirit.**

God of love, we pray for the peacemakers. On this Pentecost Sunday thank you for the work of your Spirit bringing hope, joy, and peace to us and to your world. On this Pentecost Sunday renew us in our faith, remind us of the outpouring of your Spirit and help us to be the agents of hope, joy and peace in our world.

May those who sow peace in our neighbourhoods  
**be filled to overflowing with your Spirit.**

## LORD'S PRAYER

### OFFERING

Generous God, as we celebrate the gift of your Spirit to us today we offer our gifts now. May they be blessed and used to breathe life into your word whenever and wherever they can.

**Amen**

### HYMN

*O thou who camest from above*

### BLESSING

Holy Spirit, send us out.

Gentle Spirit, calm our fears.

Spirit of truth, lead us to a broader vision of your work.

Spirit of strength, in our weaknesses, make us strong.

Spirit of power, show us when and how to act for you.

Holy Spirit, send us out.

**Amen**