

# Pentecost

A service of worship to guide reflections on 31 May 2020



## Call to Worship

Today we celebrate Pentecost, remembering that we are all part of Christchurch and of the wider church whose birthday we celebrate.

As we spend time with God, as we read these notes in our homes, may we feel the Holy Spirit came to us, just as those early believers did.



## Prayer

Awesome God we give you thanks and praise. We know that you are amazing and indescribable, yet you know and love each one of us by name.

We are sorry for the times when we fall short of what you would want us to be. But we give thanks that you forgive all those who are truly sorry.

We celebrate today that when Jesus had died and risen again you sent your Holy Spirit. Through the Spirit, you turn despair into hope, doubt into faith and fear into confidence. Transform and heal our lives we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen



## Hymn: Singing the Faith 372

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.

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.

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. Translated by Richard Littledale*



## Reading: Acts 2: 14-21

<sup>14</sup>Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd: “Fellow-Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means. <sup>15</sup>These people are not drunk, as you suppose; it is only nine o'clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup>Instead, this is what the prophet Joel spoke about:

<sup>17</sup>‘This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour out my Spirit on everyone.

Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions, and your old men will have dreams. <sup>18</sup>Yes, even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will proclaim my message.

<sup>19</sup>I will perform miracles in the sky above and wonders on the earth below. There will be blood, fire, and thick smoke; <sup>20</sup>the sun will be darkened, and the moon will turn red as blood, before the great and glorious Day of the Lord comes. <sup>21</sup>And then, whoever calls out to the Lord for help will be saved.’



## Hymn: Singing the Faith 391

O breath of life, come sweeping through us,  
revive your Church with life and power;  
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
and fit your church to meet this hour.

O wind of God, come, bend us, break us,  
till humbly we confess our need;  
then in your tenderness remake us,  
revive, restore; for this we plead.

O breath of love, come, breathe within us,  
renewing thought and will and heart;  
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
revive your church in every part.

*Bessie Porter Head*



## Prayer

We pray for our all those struggling due to Covid 19, with relationships, mental health, those working long hours, those suffering financial hardship and those facing grief.

We give thanks that Jesus is the resurrection and the life and that in him all things will be made new. In the meantime, he is with us in our suffering and promises us hope. These times will pass. Thanks be to God. Amen



## Reflection

At Pentecost, this group which had seen its leader put to death by the authorities was emboldened and enabled to speak by the Spirit. Peter, who only weeks earlier had denied Jesus and wept bitterly, addresses the crowd with confidence as spokesman for the group explaining what the events mean and that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

We are perhaps reminded of the vision of the dry bones in Ezekiel (37, 1-14) where it is written 'I will put my Spirit in you and you will live.' Here, the believers are transformed by the encounter with the Holy Spirit. A characteristic of the Spirit is that he does not respect the status quo. Pentecost indeed broke the mould and created a new way of being community!

And so, we today have a new opportunity, not to go back to what and where we were as society before Coronavirus. If these times are to be a crossroads for us, we should consider what new directions we might want society to move in, and what then is to be the role of the church in creating a new community and society for us today.



## Lord's Prayer

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.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.



## Blessing

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.  
Now and forever. Amen

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