

Communion Service for Pentecost – 23 May 2021
“The Holy Spirit is given”

Call to worship Psalm 33: 8 -13.

Let everyone in all the world men, women, and children fear the Lord and stand in awe of him. ⁹ For when God spoke, the world began! It appeared at his command! ¹⁰ And with a breath he can scatter the plans of all the nations who oppose him, ¹¹ but his own plan stands forever. His intentions are the same for every generation. ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, whose people he has chosen as his own.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

The holy One, is here;
Come bow before him now
With reverence and fear
In him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground.
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around;
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour he is crowned:
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant king of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place:
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister his grace -
No work too hard for him.
In faith receive from him.
Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

Prayer

Come Holy Spirit, blow among us as we celebrate your calling us out to be the people of God, on the birthday of the church. Come Holy Spirit, rain on us as we celebrate your showing of gifts on the people of God empowering the church. Come Holy Spirit, shine between us as we celebrate your awakening us to the people on earth as the church of God. Amen

Reading 1 Ezekiel 37 v 1 - 14

The hand of the Lord was upon me. He brought me out by His Spirit and set me down in the center of the valley. It was full of bones. ² He led me around the valley. I saw there were very many bones, and they were very dry. ³ He said to me, “Son of man, can these bones live?” I answered, “O Lord God, only You know that.” ⁴ He said to me, “Speak in My name over these bones. Say to them, ‘O dry bones, hear the Word of the Lord.’” ⁵ This is what the Lord God says to these bones: ‘I will make breath come into you, and you will come to life. ⁶ I will join you together, make flesh grow back on you, cover you with skin, and put breath in you to make you come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.’” ⁷ So I spoke as I was told. And as I spoke, there was a noise, the sound of bones hitting against each other. The bones came together, bone to bone. ⁸ I looked and saw that parts had

grown to hold them together. Flesh had grown, and they were covered with skin. But there was no breath in them. ⁹ Then He said to me, “Speak to the breath in My name, son of man. Tell the breath, ‘The Lord God says, “Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these dead bodies to make them come to life.”’” ¹⁰ So I spoke as I had been told. The breath came into them, and they came to life and stood on their feet. They were a large army. ¹¹ Then He said to me, “Son of man, these bones are all the people of Israel. They say, ‘Our bones are dried up, and our hope is gone. We are all destroyed.’” ¹² So speak in My name and tell them, ‘The Lord God says, “I will open your graves, My people, and make you come out of them. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. ¹³ Then, My people, you will know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves and brought you up. ¹⁴ I will put My Spirit within you, and you will come to life. I will place you in your own land. Then you will know that I, the Lord, have spoken and have done it,” says the Lord.’”

Reading 2 Acts 2 v 1 – 17

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?’ ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[a] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’ ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’ ¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning!’ ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ “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.

Lord, the light of Your love is shining

In the midst of our darkness shining;
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,
Set us free by the truth You now bring us,
Shine on me, shine on me.
Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father’s glory;
Blaze, Spirit, blaze Set our hearts on fire.
Flow, river flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy
Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light.

Lord, I come to your awesome presence,
From the shadows into Your radiance;
By the blood I may enter your brightness,
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.
Shine on me, shine on me. *Chorus*

As we gaze on Your kindly brightness
So our faces display Your likeness,
Ever changing from glory to glory,
Mirrored here may our lives tell your story.
Shine on me, shine on me. *Chorus.*

Message

During this time of restrictions I think we have all experienced a feeling of being like dry bones. We didn't realise before this time that there are many things that "oil" aspects of life, that gives us joy and hope for the future. The disciples felt it keenly when Jesus died. They were empty, shocked and experienced the trauma of being at the crucifixion and the devastating effects of their bereavement. They were like dry bones. Then Jesus came to them and wished them peace. He was alive! He appeared to many people during the 40 days of resurrection. This was a time of healing and restoration, for Peter, for Thomas and the dry bones were filled with life. Then Jesus told them that he had to return to his Father, so that the gift of the companionship of the Holy Spirit could be given and they were to wait in Jerusalem for the gift to be given. The disciples needed that gift, in order for them to bring Jesus' message of love, peace and hope, for all people. The restrictions about access to God were over and the Holy Spirit was given, to warm, and breathe new and abundant life into them, changing the future for everyone gathered and in every generation. Today we celebrate this event, acknowledging the presence and power in our lives. The disciples were emboldened by the spirit and the joy spilled out onto the people gathered there. It was a glorious day for God's intervention in a new way. The presence of Jesus was available in a new way. It was not held in a physical body, but was released into the world to create a new closeness to God for everyone. This is a moment of life and energy for the believers and still is! Jesus promised that his followers would have the abundant life of God's presence, and here it was, in reality! They were never the same again, God was breathing new life into them, so that the reality of Jesus' presence in the world, could be accessed by anyone. No more rituals or sacrifices. Jesus' life had fulfilled every requirement and the disciples and hearers were welcome into the kingdom of love. Everything changed! The Holy Spirit made all the difference and God was fully known, in a new and refreshing way. The disciples were overflowing with the spirit of God, through Jesus. We may be feeling "dry" because of the restrictions we have faced, but the Holy Spirit had encouraged us to see God working in our lives and we have come, safe into a new reality. The love of God is still with us and we are filled to overflowing with God's abundant and transforming love, to share. Despite restrictions we can all pray and build our relationship with God, so that we are no longer dry bones, but living believers, who carry with us God's Holy Spirit of transformation, energy and life.. Each of us carry with us the gifts of the spirit, to be used for God's glory and to invite people into the kingdom of love that Jesus has prepared for us all. We have learned over this year the

values of God's revelation in small things, which delight and encourage us. We must do everything we can, to work with God to accomplish our potential and maturity, in Jesus. We can all be faithful witnesses, because the Holy Spirit works with us and within us to achieve God's purpose for the world. Amen

Be known to us in breaking bread

But do not then depart
Saviour, abide with us, and spread
Thy table in our heart

There sup with us in love divine
Thy body and Thy blood
That living bread, that heavenly wine
Be our immortal food

Communion Celebration

In a world dry and thirsty Living Water flows; In a world fainting and breathless Holy Spirit presence blows; In a world which is cold and dark Holy Spirit's flame glows; God's Holy Spirit has always been here, and we open our awareness to perceive her and receive her. The Holy Spirit is here! We give thanks and celebrate! This is the feast which fulfils us as we are fed by God, today. Holy Mysterious God, your breath fills the universe and makes it alive.; We praise you, Holy God of life, for the gift of Spirit. Your love blows through all creation and makes it one; We praise you, Holy God, for the gift of Spirit. Your presence fills every corner, your voice fills every silence, and your heartbeat lives within every living thing; We praise you, Holy God, for the gift of Spirit. Your Spirit reminds us that we have failed to value the life of other people, other creatures, and the world You have given to be our home. Forgive us, Holy God, we have failed to recognise the connectedness of all things, and have brought pain through division and exclusion. Forgive us, Holy God. We have denied your presence, ignored your voice and forgotten your love for us and all that you have made. Forgive us, Holy Presence. *Silence* Holy Spirit, we recognise the ways we have brought pain to you, to others, and to ourselves. For Jesus' sake we ask you to breathe new life into us, wash us clean, and ignite the fire of love in our hearts again. Amen. Let us invite the Holy Spirit to blow through our lives and our world, as we lift our needs in prayer. We pray, Holy Spirit, for all who have lost faith in themselves, in others and especially in you. May your Holy Spirit renew and inspire them again. We pray, Holy Spirit, for all who have lost their hope in what life can become for themselves and for all people. May the Holy Spirit encourage and challenge them again. We pray, Holy Spirit, for all who have lost their ability to love freely and recklessly. May the Holy Spirit comfort and soften them again. Holy Spirit, fill the world with your peace, fill communities of faith with your purpose, and fill us with your power, For the sake of your Reign. Amen. The prayer that Jesus taught may said together We celebrate the Holy Spirit, who hovered over creation and brought order out of formlessness. We praise you, Spirit. We celebrate the Holy Spirit, who filled Jesus with power and wisdom and, through him, made Holy life available to all. We praise you, Spirit. We celebrate the Spirit, who has been poured out on all people, and leads us into the reign of God. We praise you, Holy Spirit. As we gather at this table, we recognise your Spirit's

presence among us, generous, abundant God. We open our hearts to Spirit's influence. God, we come knowing that we depend on you for life and truth and love. We come knowing that you welcome us with open and accepting arms. We come ready to meet with you, and be changed by the encounter. The Lord Jesus, on the eve of His death, gathered his friends for a meal. During supper, he took a loaf of bread, and gave thanks for it. Then he broke it and passed it among them with these words: This is my body which is broken for you. Take, eat and remember me. After the meal, Jesus took a cup of wine and gave thanks for it. Then he passed it among them with these words: This is my life which is given for you. Take, drink and remember me. So now, we eat and we drink, and we remember Jesus and the deep and abundant love he showed us. Holy Spirit, as we share this bread and wine, let it be a sharing in Christ's body and sacrifice, Christ's life and presence; And may we embody your life, love, and presence in our homes and community. Amen.

Bread and wine are received

Thank you, Holy Spirit, for this meal of nature and promise, and for coming to us as we have shared it. May the love we find at this table be reflected in our lives; May the power we receive at this table make us peacemakers and healers; And may the Spirit who fills us again at this table lead us to be those who proclaim God's reign in every word we speak and in everything we do. Amen.

Prayer

Spirit of God, fire of Pentecost, make us fire-starters with you, we pray. Ignite your Church with energy, empowering us to transform this world with a longing for new life, new ways, new hope for the people of the world you love. Where injustice tightens its grip over children of every race, burn in us with courage and outrage. Challenge each foe that rises against your kingdom's ways. Where exploitation suppresses human life, engulf us with passion. Do not permit us to sit back and watch whilst others suffer unnecessarily. Where abuse and manipulation are daily facts of life for many, set our souls ablaze. Give birth within us a deep desire to see change come for the better! Warm us by your comforting Spirit, too, when lives are troubled and overshadowed by distress. Light the way through the unceasing barrage of news and information that comes from so many sources. Heat our cold hearts when they are chilled by the sadness of this world's troubles. And all the time, remind us of your eternal promise that all will be made new, O Spirit of God, fire of Pentecost. Amen.

Silent Prayer, **Lord's Prayer**

Colours of day dawn into the mind,

The sun has come up, the night is behind.
Go down in the city, into the street,
And let's give the message to the people we meet.
*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,
Open the door, let Jesus return.
Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,
Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.*

Go through the park, on into the town;
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing a friend. *Chorus*

Open your eyes, look into the sky,
The darkness has come, the Son came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near. *Chorus*

Prayer

Holy Spirit, you are a blast of energy, coming from the hot furnace of God's love for all people. Your fire purifies us and gives power to transform lives in uplifting ways; Holy Spirit, transform our hearts, pour out your grace, awaken our passion to love, in obedience to your call. Connect us through your spirit, into unity, one body, overflowing with abundant love. Set our hearts on fire for you and your kingdom of peace and hope. Amen.

Blessing

May the gifts of the Holy Spirit bring fire to the earth so that the presence of God may be seen in a new light, in new places, in new ways. May our own hearts burst into flame so that no obstacle, no matter how great, ever obstructs the message of the God within each of us. May we come to trust the Word of God in our heart, to speak it with courage, to follow it faithfully and to fan it to flame in others. May Jesus who filled people with his Holy Spirit fill the world and the church with new respect for your power and presence. Give us, Great God, a deluge of your Holy Spirit to fill us to overflowing. Amen