

A message
from Val Slade

REMEMBER THE DATE!

Springtime in our house sees the mantelpiece groaning with cards celebrating special occasions; including a wedding anniversary and several family birthdays. The birthday celebrations continue with dedicated meals when the extended family gathers together for a themed tea, such as pizza night and of course the obligatory fancy cake.



May is the month of another important event when the beginning of the Christian Church is celebrated and is known as Pentecost. This festival always takes place 50 days after Easter Sunday on Whit Sunday. After the death of Jesus, his friends including the disciples, were afraid for their safety and had gathered together in a house in Jerusalem. It was the time of an early harvest festival for the first seasonal grains of the crops. All the houses would have been decorated with flowers and looked bright and cheerful. The festival attracted many visitors to Jerusalem who had come to give thanks and enjoy the atmosphere and entertainments. As the disciples and other friends of Jesus were keeping a low profile something very special happened; the Holy Spirit descended on them.

In the New Testament, Acts Chapter 2 describes this event as a sudden sound of the wind that blew around the room where the friends of Jesus were sitting. It was so noisy that it made the house shake and people outside took notice and wondered what was going on. Bright lights, like flames, were visible and appeared above the heads of those gathered in the room. Each person felt the power of God's Holy Spirit fill up inside them. It enabled them to do many things, including talk to people from different cultures in their own language. These visitors to Jerusalem were amazed and the disciples were accused of being drunk. Peter said it was only 9 o'clock in the morning and they had not had wine for breakfast but what everyone had just witnessed fulfilled a promise from Jesus. He had said he would not leave them alone, but the Holy Spirit would be sent to give them understanding and direction for their lives (John 14:23-29).



It will be no surprise to learn that symbols associated with Pentecost and the Holy Spirit include wind and fire but also a dove. It is a biblical representation of the Holy Spirit that descended upon Jesus at his baptism.

After receiving the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, the disciples immediately went out and preached Jesus' message to everyone. The early Church was made up of a group of believers sharing the teachings of Jesus. Peter said, "Follow God's way and be baptised into a new way of life and you too will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Today, Pentecost is celebrated in different ways including special group pilgrimages to holy locations; and it is a popular time for baptisms. I am sure that at a church service near you celebrating Pentecost there will be cake;



Remember the date Sunday 19 May.

Val Slade
Licensed Lay Minister