



## Service for Pentecost Sunday, 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020

*A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Moses said "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put His spirit on them. (Numbers 11 v29).

Welcome to our worship as we celebrate the Day of Pentecost. Hear the great things God has done and worship Him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

HYMN: Come down, O Love Divine

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 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.

2 O let it freely burn,  
till earthly passions turn  
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;  
and let Thy glorious light  
shine ever on my sight,  
and clothe me round, the while my path  
illuminating.

3 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.

4 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, *tr* R F Littledale

### PRAYERS

Come Holy Spirit, breathe your life into our worship, that it may be worthy of God's greatness and power. Set our hearts on fire with love for God, that the worship of our lives may glorify Him.

Gracious God, we thank you for the world you have created and for making us in your image. We thank you that you sent Jesus to be our Saviour, and when He returned to glory, you sent the Holy Spirit to be with us for ever.

We confess that we often resist the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We have not responded to His teaching. We have not been willing to share with others the good news of Jesus. We often fail to show your love and glory to the world. We pray for your forgiveness.

Create in us new hearts, O God, and renew your Holy Spirit within us. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. 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.

## SCRIPTURE READING: Acts 2: 1-11

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

<sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

<sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!"

## REFLECTION

Today, we celebrate Pentecost. I wonder if you have remembered to wear something **red** this morning?

Luke's description of the wonderful event that happened on that day is very dramatic: there was a strong wind and tongues of fire settling on each one of them. They experienced a feeling of power and confidence, and they ran out into the streets to share their excitement with the people there. It seemed that everyone understood what they were saying in spite of the many different nationalities represented in the crowd.

The language of love is understood by everyone, and they certainly had a message of love and joy to share. What really happened that morning we do not know, but somehow these frightened men who had been hiding away found the ability to go out and witness to the power and love of God. The longing that Moses had expressed so many generations earlier had been fulfilled. God had poured out His spirit on all people. Remember that the disciples had been told to wait in Jerusalem until the Spirit came. Perhaps this is our waiting time in these days of lockdown.

We may be hiding away for good reasons, but the time will come when we shall be able to go out again and meet with families and friends. Will we also feel confident to witness to share our faith and tell them what God has done for us?

Let us have a pause for some music as our choir sings the anthem "If ye love me" by Thomas Tallis (recorded in 1998).....

Please click the "Anthem" icon on the webpage

*If ye love me, keep my commandments  
and I will pray the Father,  
and He shall give you another comforter,  
that He may abide with you forever;  
E'en the spirit of truth.*

The words of the anthem remind us of the lectionary reading for today from chapter 20 of John's Gospel...

<sup>19</sup> On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" <sup>20</sup> After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." <sup>22</sup> And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. <sup>23</sup> If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

John obviously remembered the coming of the Holy Spirit in a different, more reflective way, but his experience may be the one that inspires us today. Jesus came to the disciples when they were remembering their betrayal, denial and abandonment of Jesus. Even the sight of the His hands reminded them of their guilt. But Jesus brought them the word of forgiveness they needed to hear and encouraged them to take that forgiveness and pass it on to others.

Jesus came to them in their time of need. They knew just how much they had been forgiven and they were able to speak from their own experience when they set out on their mission.

As we look back on these days and reflect how Jesus has been with us in our disappointments, frustrations and sadness; as we remember how He has ministered to us through the love and kindness of family and friends, we also will be able to speak from our own experience. We shall be able to tell others what great things the Lord has done for us. We will become His witnesses!

So we pray for His Spirit to come to us in the words of the next hymn....

HYMN: Breathe on me, breath of God

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love,  
and do what thou wouldst do.

2 Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
until my heart is pure,  
until my will is one with thine,  
to do and to endure.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
'til I am wholly thine,  
until this earthly part of me  
glows with thy fire divine.

4 Breathe on me, Breath of God,  
so shall I never die,  
but live with thee the perfect life  
of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch

#### PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Gracious God, we pray for your people in all parts of the world as we face the many difficulties this pandemic infection has brought us. Give wisdom to all who are in positions of authority, give strength and courage to all who work for the NHS, for the Samaritans and for all charities.

Hold in your care all who are ill, the dying and the bereaved. May they know the comfort of your presence and the healing of your peace.

We pray for our own families and friends, for our church fellowship and for all who are lonely or anxious at this time. Loving God, in our changing world may we find assurance in your unchanging love and rest in the peace which passes all understanding.

We offer these prayers, together with the unspoken prayers of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

HYMN: O Thou who camest from above

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment*

1 O thou who camest from above  
the fire celestial to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart!

2 There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

3 Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work, and speak, and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up the gift in me.

4 Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat;  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley

#### BLESSING

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