**SUNDAY SERVICE MAY 31st 2020**







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**PENTECOST**

**GOD’S GIFT OF HIS HOLY SPIRIT**

***‘Whoever believes in Me, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ John 7: v 38***.

**Welcome to our Service today. It is Pentecost when we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit and the Birthday of the Christian Church.**

**We are also at the climax of the 10 days of Thy Kingdom Come which is a global prayer movement that invites Christians around the world to pray between Ascension Day and Pentecost for more people to come to know Jesus.**

**HYMN:** Our first hymn is a prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit, Come down O love divine

[https://youtu.be/Gi78bnzMyws](about:blank)

1 Come down, O Love divine!  
seek out this soul of mine  
and visit it with your own ardour glowing;  
O Comforter, draw near,  
within my heart appear,  
and kindle it, your holy flame bestowing.

2 There let it freely burn  
till earthly passions turn  
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;  
and let your glorious light  
shine ever on my sight,  
and make my pathway clear, by your illuming.

3 Let holy charity  
my outward vesture be,

and lowliness become my inner clothing;

true lowliness of heart  
which takes the humbler part,  
and for its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

4 And so the yearning strong  
with which the soul will long  
shall far surpass the power of human telling;  
for none can guess its grace  
till we become the place  
in which the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

On the day of Pentecost, as God’s Spirit filled the hearts of Jesus’ followers, they miraculously started praising God in every possible language, languages they could not previously speak. And the crowd, who were from all around the region and spoke many languages said: “We hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own languages!”

The Lord is here.

**All: His Spirit is with us**

Jesus Christ, whom we worship, is our crucified, risen and ascended Lord and we have walked with Him through His journey of love. We have faced the agony of His suffering and death on a cross. We have rejoiced at His bursting free from the bonds of death. We have enjoyed His risen presence with us. We have celebrated His Ascension and His return to the throne before which every knee shall bow. And now, we celebrate the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, His gift to his people, through whom we make Christ known to the world.

As we wait in silence, **All - fill us with Your Spirit.**

As we listen to Your word, **All - fill us with Your Spirit.**

As we worship You in majesty, **All - fill us with Your Spirit**.

As we long for Your refreshing, **All - fill us with Your Spirit.**

As we long for Your renewing, **All - fill us with Your Spirit.**

As we long for Your equipping, **All - fill us with Your Spirit.**

As we long for Your empowering, **All - fill us with Your Spirit.**

**Prayer of Penitence** A time to say sorry to God:

Jesus says, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.’

*A short time of silence*

**All:** Lord have mercy upon us, forgive us where we have gone wrong and sinned and help us to walk from now on in your way. Amen.

May the God of love and power bring you back to Himself, forgive you and free you from your sins, and restore you to newness of life by his Spirit.

**Let us pray:**

**PRAYER OF THE WEEK:**

**Almighty God, your ascended Son has sent us into the world**

**to preach the good news of your kingdom:**

**inspire us with your Spirit**

**and fill our hearts with the fire of your love,**

**that all who hear your Word**

**may be drawn to you,**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**READING READINGS Acts 2: v 1-12.**

The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost

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

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’

**John 7: v 37-39.**

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.’ By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

**HYMN:** Spirit of the living God fall afresh on Me

[https://youtu.be/GK-O5nfL1Mo](about:blank)

Spirit Of The Living God,  
Fall Afresh On Me.

Spirit Of The Living God,  
Fall Afresh On Me.

Melt Me, Mould Me,  
Fill Me, Use Me,

Spirit Of The Living God,  
Fall Afresh On Me.

**SERMON:**

Let us pray: Loving Heavenly Father, as we thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, we pray that He may give us understanding of the wonderful things that we read in your word. Amen

**John 7 v 37-39. The Spirit comes after Jesus is glorified.**

We are very fortunate in this country not to suffer from lack of water. As an American once said, the one thing the British do well is rain! In fact the first time I can remember being agonisingly thirsty was on my first trip to Israel visiting Masada, the old Jewish fortress in the south of the country. It was a baking hot day, and I got lost (difficult to do at Masada, but I managed it), and by the time I got back to civilisation, I had a thirst that I had never experienced before. We are helped to see the true situation for many people in this world by the pictures and videos from Water Aid, often showing children having to walk many miles in blazing heat, just to get water for their families.

Jesus’ words in John 7 come in the context of the Feast of Tabernacles, one of the great celebrations for the Jews, together with Passover and Pentecost. At the Feast of Tabernacles, Jews remember the wanderings in the wilderness for forty years, and build for themselves , for eight days in the year, small booths or tabernacles, which spring up everywhere – on flat roofs, in gardens, anywhere, to remind them of their outdoor existence in the desert. The highlight of the celebrations was when the High Priest took a chalice to the pool of Siloam in Jerusalem, filled it with water, took it back to the Temple, and poured out the water over the Temple altar as an offering to God. This happened for seven days, but not on the eighth and final day of the Feast. So there is huge significance in the fact that Jesus stood up, possibly near the Pool of Siloam, and proclaimed “If anyone is thirsty, let them come to Me and drink.” The Jews were expecting their Messiah to do the miracles that Moses had done – providing bread, manna, in the wilderness, and providing water, as Moses did in the wilderness by striking the rock and water poured out. Jesus had fulfilled the first part, in John 6, by feeding the 5,000 miraculously out in the country, and now He makes this claim. Jesus gave many wonderful invitations in His three year ministry – come to Me, all you who are weary; feed on Me; open the door; hear my words, and so on. This invitation has three lovely aspects to it.

**1. Our Need. If anyone thirsts . .**

Too often we thirst for other things – pleasure, self-indulgence, comfort, luxuries. But Jesus gives a lovely picture of someone longing for their Maker. People can thirst for Jesus in different ways – my own longing was for the perfect relationship, whereas my brother came to faith because he longed for the power to live a better life. C.S. Lewis desperately wanted to rediscover the joy he had experienced as a child, but it kept eluding him. Aged 31 he discovered that if he aimed for joy, he couldn’t find it, but once he had found Jesus, he discovered joy as well. We can long for peace, forgiveness, a new life, all signs of thirsting for Jesus , and Jesus Himself pronounced a blessing on “all who hunger and thirst for righteousness.”

Here then is the condition – if anyone thirsts.

**2. His Remedy – let them come to Me and drink.**

Here is the solution to that longing – to come to Jesus, yes, but then to drink, to take in, to receive from Him. This is the same promise given three chapters earlier to the Samaritan woman at the well. In the middle of making a mess of her life, she was nonetheless looking for some longing to be satisfied. Jesus’ words to her were “Whoever drinks from the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up into eternal life.”

This takes us to the third aspect.

**3. The Result. Whoever believes, streams of living water will flow from within him.**

The old Heineken advert was a very effective one, offering a drink that could refresh the parts that other beers/lagers couldn’t reach. It was of course a travesty of the promise Jesus gives here – of satisfying every longing that a human being can experience. Let me just mention three.

**Peace**. Jesus offers a peace that passes all understanding.

**Joy.** Peter talks about being filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy.

**Love**. Paul writes of the width, the height , the length and the depth of God’s love, a love which surpasses knowledge.

This offer of streams of water welling up, for those who drink who drink from Jesus, John explains, refers to the Holy Spirit. Verse 39 needs amplifying. In fact the Holy Spirit was given to a select few in the Old Testament – to prophets eg, and a few kings. But God’s Holy Spirit had not been given in full measure to ALL God’s people, the event wonderfully and dramatically described in Acts 2, which we celebrate today. Before that could happen, John explains, Jesus had to die, rise, ascend AND be glorified.

So let me ask the question. How thirsty are you for Jesus? How much do you long for eternal things, as opposed to the pleasures that the world offers. Lockdown has been a good time to reassess our priorities, so now is a good opportunity to pose this question. If the answer is “not at all”, then it may be that we need to ask ourselves some fairly basic questions. But to all who fulfil the condition – if anyone thirsts – there is an answer, a remedy, a solution. Let them come to Me. This is a wonderful guarantee of the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Jesus, welling up inside us, flowing from within us. Quenching in the most satisfying way that thirst, that longing for Jesus, and that desire for the beautiful virtues of love, joy, peace etc that can be experienced now, and which last into eternity.

Dear Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Spirit. We pray that He may come in and transform our lives, so that our longing for you is met, and our desire for you is granted. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.

**HYMN: Spirit of Holiness**

[**https://youtu.be/P-QNMJsks74**](about:blank)

Spirit of holiness, wisdom and faithfulness,  
   wind of the Lord, blowing strongly and free:  
   strength of our serving and joy of our worshipping  
   Spirit of God, bring your fulness to me!

1 You came to interpret and teach us effectively  
all that the Saviour has spoken and done;  
to glorify Jesus is all your activity  
promise and gift of the Father and Son:  
   Spirit of holiness...

2 You came with your gifts to supply all our poverty,  
pouring your love on the church in her need;  
you came with your fruit for our growth to maturity,  
richly refreshing the souls that you feed:  
   Spirit of holiness...

**PRAYERS:**

Dear Lord, we thank you at this time of Pentecost, as we are challenged to make a difference in the name of Jesus.

We thank you for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit and we pray that your Spirit God, will continue to do great work in all our lives. May our leaders and scientists work together to understand each other in their own languages as they try to find a vaccine and effective treatments to fight this pandemic. We pray for all those affected by Covid 19, directly or indirectly. Lord, help us to be strong and sure in our faith and to put our trust in You.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Thank you Lord for helping us to pray with joy and confidence. We accept that we are work in progress and we ask for guidance as we learn more in the Discipleship Explored series and for your continuing support at our Bible study meetings, helping us to understand what is written and what you want to say to us through it.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Please Lord send your love and guidance for our church leaders as they work to decide the best way forward for our future worship. We believe in you Lord and await your streams of living water. We give you thanks that your love for each of us, is revealed to us in so many ways.

O God of peace, you know the deep needs of our hearts and the ache of our longing. In the silence, sit with us until we know that we are heard.

Help us to be considerate in our actions, thoughtful in our dealings with people, and reflect in our lives your loving concern for all. Help us to be open to see your will and trust you in the choices we make each day.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

Please watch over our teachers and some pupils as they try to return to school life and help parents with their continued home schooling. We thank you for the technology that enables us to keep in touch with family and friends in these difficult times.

We pray for those that are growing up, may they grow in wisdom and love; for those facing changes, that they meet them with hope; for those who feel weak, that they may find strength; for those with heavy burdens, that they may carry them lightly.

Lord in your mercy Hear our prayer

We thank you Lord for our National Health Service and its staff who show such dedication to care and let us pray for all who are infirm or disabled in any way, that they may experience healing, comfort and compassionate care

We pray especially for Pearl Read and others known to us. And as we continue to give thanks for the life of Mike Redshaw we ask for your continued love to surround Lisa and the rest of the family.

And finally on this great day of Pentecost the birthday of the church and the climax of the global wave of prayer Thy Kingdom come, let us spend some moments in bringing before God the names of five people you love and care about who do not yet know the Lord Jesus They may be friends, family, or people you work with. Pray for them now that they too may come to know the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, their Friend and their King

We join now in the prayer Jesus taught his followers to pray:

**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**

**HYMN** Our final hymn is a prayer that the Spirit might blaze in our world

Lord the light of your love is shining

[https://youtu.be/J3iB30gCqAc](about:blank)

Lord, the light of your love is shining  
In the midst of the 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

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…

**BLESSING**

May the Spirit, who hovered over the waters when the world was created, breathe into you the life He gives.

**All: Amen.**

May the Spirit, who overshadowed Mary when the eternal Son came among us, make you joyful in the service of the Lord.

**All: Amen.**

May the Spirit, who set the Church on fire upon the Day of Pentecost, bring the world alive with the love of the risen Christ.

**All: Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

**All: Amen.**

Filled with the Spirit’s power, go in the light and peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

**All:** Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.

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