

# Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2022 - Pentecost

## A service of worship for use at home

### Prepared by Mr Malcolm Sharp

Last Sunday at about 18 30 we were part of a crowd of thousands at Wembley bouncing up and down singing at the tops of our voices as Forest were promoted to the Premier League, it was quite a moment difficult to put into words. Today we are challenged to capture that joy and exuberance for a higher purpose as we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit! I remember being in another crowd in the Royal Albert Hall forty years ago at a Methodist Association of Youth Clubs weekend, which happened to fall on Pentecost Sunday and we bounced up and down singing at the tops of our voices, the place was 'rocking' to its foundations we were led by the MAYC Orchestra and Singers, I think it was the first time they sang 'Holy Spirit', now on their 'Shout it out' album, which I have included as our call to worship. I hope it helps you capture the joy and exuberance of this Pentecost celebration.

**Call to worship** Holy Spirit (MAYC Orchestra and Singers) [www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3XqkHxIGRQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3XqkHxIGRQ)

#### And now a prayer:

As we await in silence – **fill us with your Spirit**  
As we listen to your Word - **fill us with your Spirit**  
As we worship you in majesty – **fill us with your Spirit**  
As we long for your refreshing – **fill us with your Spirit**  
As we long for your renewal - **fill us with your Spirit**  
As we long for your equipping – **fill us with your Spirit**  
As we long for your empowering – **fill us with your Spirit**

#### Hymn 1 StF 726 Come to us creative Spirit

1 Come to us, creative spirit,  
in our Father's house,  
every natural talent foster,  
hidden skills arouse,  
that within your earthly temple  
wise and simple  
may rejoice.

2 Poet, painter, music maker,  
all your treasures bring;  
artist, actor, graceful dancer,  
make your offering;  
join your hands in celebration!  
Let creation  
shout and sing.

3 Word from God eternal springing,  
fill our minds we pray,  
and in all artistic vision  
give integrity.  
May the flame, within us burning,  
kindle yearning  
day by day.

4 In all places and for ever  
glory be expressed  
to the Son with God the father,  
and the Spirit blest.  
In our worship and our living,  
keep us striving  
towards the best.

*David Mowbray (b. 1938)*

**Prayer of adoration:**

Your Spirit,  
 present from the beginning  
 of beginnings,  
 present in the message  
 of the prophets,  
 present in provision  
 for your people,  
 present in the life  
 and words of Jesus,  
 present in the Cross  
 and crucifixion,  
 present in the lives  
 of the apostles,  
 present in the church  
 that you empower.  
 Your Spirit,  
 the presence of God  
 in hearts and lives!

**Amen****A prayer of confession:**

We ask for your forgiveness, Lord,  
 when we forget  
 the power that lies within,  
 and trust instead  
 upon our human strength.  
 Remind us of that glorious day  
 when your Spirit  
 transformed the lives of those  
 who hid in fear,  
 into men of power.  
 Renew these hearts which have grown cold  
 with flames of fire,  
 as on that Pentecost,  
 that this might be  
 the church that you desire.

There is now no condemnation for those who  
 live in union with Christ Jesus; for the law of  
 the Spirit of Life has set us free from the law  
 of sin and death.

**Amen. Thanks be to God.***(Faith and Worship John Birch and Methodist Worship Book)***A poem: They all understood**, by Ana Gobledeale

And they all understood  
 No missed messages  
 No mixed messages  
 Confusion moves to clarity  
 Discord moves to harmony  
 Cacophony moves to melody  
 Agitation transformed by peace  
 Individualism transformed by community  
 Nationalism transformed by neighbour-sighting  
 Strangers move into relationship  
 And they all understand  
 Message received.

**New Testament Reading Acts 2 1 - 21**

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

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<sup>[a]</sup> 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>[b]</sup> <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!" <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

<sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

## Peter Addresses the Crowd

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup> “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.

<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women,  
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
and they will prophesy.

<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

<sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

<sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved.’<sup>[c]</sup>

## Gospel Reading John 14 8 -17

Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? <sup>10</sup> Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. <sup>11</sup> Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. <sup>12</sup> Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. <sup>13</sup> And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. <sup>14</sup> You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

<sup>15</sup> “If you love me, keep my commands. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— <sup>17</sup> the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be<sup>[c]</sup> in you.

## Reflection

Are you ever lost for words? When words just seem inadequate. Words fail. I think this happens to all of us sometimes no matter how articulate we think we are, sometimes words simply fail to be enough to convey what we see and feel as part of the human experience. Perhaps this might be our first sight of a new born child or some wonder of nature or even in Wembley stadium! Somehow words just fail to capture the experience.

It may be that Luke finds himself at the limits of language as he sets out to write down the Pentecost experience. Just imagine being in his shoes as he tries to describe what he has been told. He writes

“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[a] as the Spirit enabled them.”

The sound was like the rush of a violent wind. The tongues were as of fire. Not wind or fire but something like.... It’s as if you can feel him struggling to do justice to this momentous event. An event which without doubt has changed human history.

Whatever your interpretation of the scene in that room with the disciples gathered around the Pentecost that they experienced was a creative force that has cascaded down the centuries as the Holy Spirit has remained active in human existence.

No one can deny that up until this point the work Jesus started was confined to a small country and relatively few people. Jesus may have preached to large crowds as he travelled around as an itinerant preacher with a few close disciples and after he has left them they are able to meet in just one room. Following this experience one room would never be enough again. The influence of Jesus teaching simply explodes. Justin Welby the Archbishop of Canterbury has referred to Pentecost and something like 'the Big Bang'. Again, words may not be enough to convey the explosion of Christianity from this time and place 2000 years ago.

We see the effect on individuals right away. Take Peter just a mere few weeks earlier he had denied who Jesus was as he crept away in the shadows. The disciples hid in an upper room after Jesus's death, frightened of the consequences. But after something like wind and fire the difference is dramatic. The disciples become bold in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. Peter addresses the crowd:

“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

At first the crowd is suspicious that the disciples are drunk on new wine but Peter says no, pointing out it's only 9 o'clock in the morning. Through the miracle of the empowering of the Holy Spirit these disciples, some humble fishermen speak out, the Holy Spirit serving as a unifying force to bring disparate peoples from all over the place together such that they understand what they are seeing and hearing. Luke concludes:

“They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

They may not have been drunk at 9 o'clock in the morning but they were filled with the Holy Spirit at 9 o'clock and maybe that's a good lesson for us. It's always 9 o'clock somewhere and who knows where the power of the Holy Spirit will be felt next, be it whatever o'clock it happens to be, to be our comforter. God has promised the gift of the Holy Spirit at all times and in all places.

Before this week is out or even before this day is over, we will come across someone in need of comfort and healing. When we do how bold will we be? Let us not hold back frightened of doing the wrong thing, stuck in our upper room, when we must trust the Holy Spirit to enable us to share God's love in all ways large and small. It's always 9 o'clock somewhere.

If we do find this frightening look back and remember the times you have been empowered to sit with a friend in need or when you have done a favour for a neighbour or some other act of love. You might not have thought much about it at the time but that doesn't mean it wasn't deeply significant to others. This is God's gift to us as we are there for someone else. It's also his gift when we have been carried through a personal time of trial. The gift of the Holy Spirit healer and comforter.

When and how might this happen next? I have no idea. But I do know this, God came in a mighty way at 9:00 in the morning on that Pentecost, when the Christian Church was born – and it is always 9:00 somewhere. Whenever the Spirit nudges us, we should just trust God to be in the midst of the situation, for

that creative force that changed the world at Pentecost is still like wind and fire blowing and burning through our lives.

**Hymn 2      StF 398      There's spirit in the air**

1. There's a spirit in the air,  
telling Christians everywhere:  
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world!'

2. Lose your shyness, find your tongue,  
tell the world what God has done:  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today!

3. When believers break the bread,  
when a hungry child is fed,  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.

4. Still the Spirit gives us light,  
seeing wrong and setting right:  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today!

5. When a stranger's not alone,  
where the homeless find a home,  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.

6. May the Spirit fill our praise,  
guide our thoughts and change our ways  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today!

7. There's a Spirit in the air,  
calling people everywhere:  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.

*Brian Wren (b.1936)*

**Prayers**

God of Pentecost, today we praise you for a promise kept, A people filled, A church empowered to share the good news of Jesus. For the Spirit came, emboldening, encouraging, energising and equipping, loosening tongues and setting hearts on fire with the truth of Your love.

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.**

God of Pentecost, in these strange days, unfamiliar and unchartered, we confess to you the ways we have limited and stifled Your Spirit, and offer ourselves once again to you this day, praying that you would renew and guide us into the future.

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.**

God of Pentecost, filled and fired up, may we, Your church, trust in Your unchanging love, be open to Your Spirit at work in all our dreaming, praying, planning and serving, and be emboldened, encouraged, energised and equipped, to use our gifts for the growing of Your Kingdom, as we shine brightly and follow Your lead, confident that you are not only within us and beside us, but always in front.

**Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on us.**

**Amen.**

**Hymn 3 StF 395      Spirit of the living God**

Spirit of the living God,  
Fall afresh on me;  
Spirit of the living God,  
Fall afresh on me.  
Break me, melt me,  
mould me, fill me,  
Spirit of the living God,  
Fall afresh on me.

*Daniel Iverson (1890 – 1977)*

## **Prayers of Intercession:**

Loving God,

We ask for the gift of your Holy Spirit  
to help us pray as we ought.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the energy and vision of your Spirit  
for those who are tiring in the battle against injustice and oppression:  
for those exhausted by the struggle with poverty and hunger.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the hope and comfort of your Spirit  
for those whose lives are overshadowed by illness or pain;  
for those whose lives are darkened by sorrow or bereavement.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the peace and joy of your Spirit  
for those living in the shadow of war and violence;  
for those eaten up by guilt and anxiety  
and whose Christian life has become hard and dry.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the guidance and strength of your Spirit  
for those uncertain how to use their time, talents and gifts;  
for those tempted to do what is wrong.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the love and courage of your Spirit  
for those reaching out to comfort the distressed;  
for those reaching out to others with the Good News of Christ.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

Loving God,

We ask for the assurance of your Spirit  
to know your presence with us in our daily lives:

in our relationships;

in our work and service;

in our worship;

in our times of joy and pain.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

In Jesus' name: **AMEN**

*(posted on the Church of Scotland's [Starters for Sunday](#) site).*

We bring all our prayers together in the words Jesus taught his disciples carried down the centuries in the power of the Spirit:

**The Lord's Prayer** – *whichever version you prefer*

**Hymn 4      StF 338      There is a Redeemer**

There is a redeemer  
Jesus, God's own son  
Precious lamb of God, Messiah  
Holy one

*Thank you oh my father  
For giving us your son  
And leaving your spirit  
'Til the work on earth is done*

Jesus my redeemer  
Name above all names  
Precious lamb of God, Messiah  
Oh, for sinners slain.

*Thank you oh my father...*

When I stand in glory  
I will see his face  
And there I'll serve my king forever  
In that holy place.

*Thank you oh my father...*

**Blessing:**

The Spirit of truth lead us into all truth,  
give us grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord  
and to proclaim the words and works of God;  
and the blessing of God, Spirit, Son and Father, remain with us always. **Amen**  
We go into the world in the power of the Spirit to fulfil our high calling as servants of Christ.

**Thanks be to God, Amen.**