

KSAT Worship service on Pentecost Sunday 31st May
THEME – ‘I will pour out my Spirit’

Welcome to worship on Pentecost Sunday-often described as the birthday of the church. Thanks to John and Cath Thwaites for hymns, David Askew for call to worship and prayers and Penny Hilland for reflection; and to all of you for sharing in worship with us. Jackie

CALL TO WORSHIP

Recently in my own personal Bible readings I have been looking at the book of Hebrews. One of the verses that stands out for me is chapter 10 verse 19. It exhorts us to come with confidence into God's presence, into the most Holy Place, by the blood of Jesus. I think that we sometimes forget what an incredible privilege this is. We know that in ourselves we are not worthy to do this, but the wonderful thing about God's grace is that He accepts us as we are, with all the baggage that we sometimes carry, when we come to Him in faith. From God's perspective, I believe He is glad that we come and welcomes the opportunity to have fellowship with us. From our side, it is an opportunity to come close to Him, to remind ourselves of what a wonderful God we have, and to worship Him. When we do this, it helps us to put all the other things that are going on in the world into perspective. Unfortunately, we can't meet together to do this, but we can still participate as we share in this service on line or on paper.

OPENING HYMN – Lord the light of Your love

Link - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uaTwx0ehbvM>

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

As we gaze on Your kingly 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.

(Graham Kendrick)

OPENING PRAYERS

Despite all that is going on in the world, and maybe in our personal lives at the moment, we still have much to be grateful for. Especially those of us who live in such a beautiful rural area. So, we thank you Lord for all the blessings you shower upon us each day. (Pause and think of examples.)

We have to confess that recently there have been times when we have let you down. We ask that you will forgive us and help us by your grace to live lives that are pleasing and useful to you.

On this Pentecost Sunday, we thank you especially for the gift of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out on your church all those years ago. What a difference He made in the lives of those early Christians. We pray that today you will fill us again with your Holy Spirit so that we can worship you, and be the people you want us to be. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER.

HYMN – Welcome Holy Spirit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8M1SvGuSjo>

*Welcome Holy Spirit Be here with your presence
Fill me with your Power Live inside of me (rpt)*

You're the Living Water Never drying Fountain
Comforter and Counsellor Take complete control

*Welcome Holy Spirit Be here with your presence
Fill me with your Power Live inside of me*

You're the Living Water Never drying Fountain
Comforter and Counsellor Take complete control

*Welcome Holy Spirit Be here with your presence
Fill me with your Power Live inside of me*

Live inside of me... Live inside of me
Live inside of me... Live inside of me

BIBLE READINGS

Acts 2 vv 1-21 John 7 vv37-39

REFLECTION

Pentecost is one of the three Jewish pilgrimage festivals. Jews and Jewish converts came to Jerusalem from countries far and wide (see the list in Acts 2, verses 9-11). They gathered in great numbers to celebrate their main harvest festival and to give thanks to God for his generous love. For Pentecost marked both the end of the wheat harvest, fifty days after the gathering of the first barley harvest, and the beginning of the new planting season – and it is also, to this day, the time for Jews to remember the story of Naomi in the Book of Ruth and to thank God for his loving-kindness towards us which has the power to turn misery into joy and loss into new hope.

God chose just this time to fulfil the promise made by Jesus to send out the gift of his Spirit upon his people, planting new joy and hope in the knowledge that we now live every day *for ever* in the presence of God in Jesus Christ. Acts 2: 17-21 remembers the prophecy of Joel:

In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams.....and everyone who calls upon the Lord will be saved.

On the day the Spirit came upon the disciples, the saving presence of God came upon *all kinds* of people gathered in the festival crowds: men, women, slaves, Jews and foreigners from different cultures. There was no social or racial or language barrier on that day to the communication of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit was beginning its journey out into the whole world and into the lives of all who hear and respond to his voice. As we, like the first disciples, had gravitated inwards to Jesus, now we become anti-gravitational, following into the places where he sends us. Our God is an incarnational God. As his Spirit became human flesh in Jesus, so his Spirit becomes enfleshed in all of us. God's Spirit is not some intangible, unknowable, other-worldly being, but part of our everyday human life. The Holy Spirit is in all our conversations with Jesus and with each other, in everything we do for our neighbour, in every cry for help we utter or answer. The Spirit is God's continuing presence in us and in the world, the Spirit of Jesus who enables us to incarnate our risen, ascended Lord. The Spirit is this same Jesus, equipping us to continue the work of the Kingdom that he began.

Teresa of Avila put it like this: *Christ has no body now but yours.....yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on this world.....yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are his body.* God calls us outward, even in this time of lockdown and reassures us that we are never helpless. His love is seen in deeds of kindness, hence the *loving-kindness* remembered in his dealings with Naomi, through Ruth and Boaz. Perhaps, as for Naomi and for Jesus's disciples on the day of Pentecost, God's Spirit is experienced as more powerful in times of isolation and more comforting in times of fear than in times of ease.

In today's gospel reading John (Ch. 7: 37-39) tells us of another of the three pilgrim festivals, Sukkot. He recalls Jesus speaking on the 'last and greatest day' of the feast, when the purifying water from the Pool of Siloam is brought into the temple and poured into a silver pitcher on the altar. The festival commemorates the Exodus, when God provided life-giving water to his people as they wandered in the desert. We may recall the time when Jesus healed a man who had been waiting for many years to be immersed in the healing waters of this pool. Then, as here in today's reading, the healing we long for is found in Jesus himself. Jesus confirms the connection between water and salvation but he compares physical thirst and healing with the spiritual thirst for forgiveness and well-being. : *If anyone is thirsty, let him **come to me** and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.* The Spirit

of Jesus is surely here to refresh us in this dry period of waiting for the fullness of life to resume. Call upon him and he will send out his heavenly light upon us.
Therefore, you will joyously draw water from the springs of salvation. (Isaiah 12:3)

Feasts and festivals are times of community. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit swept over and through a gathered people. The experience was all the more real and meaningful because it was shared. For the moment we are separated and distanced from one another, deprived of the physical closeness of community. Yet through the grace given by God in the Holy Spirit we are never alone. The community of prayer has no boundaries and we can never be distanced from God. *Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses let us throw off everything that hinders.....and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. (Hebrews 12: 1)*

May we allow the Spirit to blow over us again and set our hearts on fire once more on this festival day. May God create a song of life and hope within us and grant us the harmony and peace to make our lives whole. Amen.

HYMN – Spirit of God <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v4uPDddZ7>

*Spirit of God, as strong as the wind,
Gentle as is the dove
Give us your joy and give us your peace,
Show to us Jesus' love.*

You inspired men, long, long ago,
They then proclaimed your word;
We see their lives serving mankind:
Through them your voice is heard.
Spirit of God....

Without your help, we fail our Lord,
We cannot live His way,
We need your power, we need your strength,
Following Christ each day.
Spirit of God....

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray:

We pray for the world in which we live, a world that is filled with beauty and wonder, and yet a world that is filled with suffering and despair. It is with confidence that we pray, because we know you are a God who is not only powerful, but one who loves and cares.

In situations of conflict, we pray you will bring your peace and reconciliation. We bring to you people who go hungry, who do not have clean water, have little health care, and do not have proper shelter. Strengthen those who help, and inspire those of us who are comparatively rich to reach out to these in whatever ways we can.

For people caught up with the corona virus - we bring them and the situation to you.

For our leaders, for strength and wisdom, for working together.

For our health and care workers, for protection, strength and compassion.

For the scientists working for a cure, may they be successful.

For all who have the virus, for healing and recovery.

For those who grieve, your comfort.

For those who are anxious, your peace and hope.

For us all, that in some way you will bring good out of this whole affair.

*Make me a channel of Your peace, where there's despair in life, let me bring hope
Where there is darkness, only light and where there's sadness, ever joy*

*Oh Master, grant that I may never seek, so much to be consoled as to console
To be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love with all my soul*

Amen.

HYMN – And can it be <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQelGbKqiW8>

And can it be that I should gain an int'rest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain? For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? (rpt)

Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies! Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love Divine!
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore, Let angel minds inquire no more. (rpt)

He left His Father's throne above, so free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free; for, O my God, it found out me. (rpt)

Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee (rpt)

No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness Divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.
(rpt) (Charles Wesley)

CLOSING PRAYER

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Fill me anew, fill me anew,

Spirit of the Lord, fall afresh on me.

And the blessing of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit be upon us this special day and in the days and weeks ahead. **Amen.**

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