

Morning Worship and Spiritual Communion

Pentecost 31 May 2020

A still small voice...A rushing wind

We are beginning our service for Pentecost in a quiet contemplative manner, where we left off last Sunday evening with the Taizé chant; Veni creator spiritus; Come Holy Spirit.

You will find it at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LA7V1xMXWQ>



Something changed

On that day they were all in one place,
breathing the same air,
saying the same words.
It seemed the most important thing to be doing.

Then there was a sound- like a rush of wind...
and suddenly nothing was the same.
They received new languages, new dialects,
new understanding, new power.
Those who were gathered received the Holy Spirit in a new way.

What was important had changed.
Being in one space was not a priority.
Breathing the same air was not a priority.
Speaking in unison was not a priority.

The power of the Holy Spirit rearranged their priorities to align them with God's.
God's priority of diversity,
God's priority of widespread grace,
God's priority of neighbours and community,
God's priority of stepping out, reaching out, being out in the world.
The world that God loves.
The world that is God's priority.

Being aligned with God's priorities, it felt, it feels like being on fire.

Developed from Julia Seymour's post on Revgalsblogpals.org

Opening prayer

Exuberant Spirit of God,
bursting with the brightness of flame
into the coldness of our lives
to warm us with your passion for justice and beauty
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
sweeping us out of the dusty corners of our apathy
to breathe vitality into our struggles for change,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
speaking words that leap over barriers of mistrust
to convey messages of truth and new understanding,
we praise you.

Exuberant Spirit of God,
flame
 wind
 speech
burn, breathe, speak in us;
fill your world with justice and with joy.

Jan Berry, Sheffield 1990

We seek forgiveness

The Spirit comes with fire of justice
and we offer the extinguisher of complacency.

**Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy upon us.**

The Spirit comes with the rain of love
And we offer an umbrella of reserve.

**Christ have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
Christ have mercy upon us.**

The Spirit comes bearing fresh winds of change
and we close the windows.

**Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy,
Lord have mercy upon us.**

Hear the great good news of our faith:
The Spirit is alive!
Children of God,
breathe the fresh winds of the Spirit.
taste the quenching waters of God's love.
touch the heat of God's passion for justice.

(From Liturgy Outside)



Alternative collect for Pentecost

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Come down O love divine

This must surely be one of the most beautiful hymns for any time of the year! The words were penned by Bianco da Siena in the early fifteenth century. The tune is by Ralph Vaughn Williams. The words appear on the screen and is filmed at Dunblane Cathedral.

Access: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDgktutI>

Reading

John 20: 19-21

‘When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said ‘Peace be with you..... And again he said ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’

The still small voice of calm A reflection for Pentecost 2020

Our grateful thanks to Revd Peter Beacham for providing this reflection.

As the New Testament narratives recount so vividly, the disciples’ early experience of Jesus’s resurrection had not been of unalloyed celebration. And no wonder. The events around the trial and execution of their beloved Master had left them bewildered and confused, their faith in old certainties shattered, their hopes about the future confounded, their lives utterly changed. The palpable and pervasive sense of loss, fear and doubt that permeate the Easter stories are compelling because they reflect authentic lived experience. The truth of resurrection life is only realised gradually through hints, nudges and glimpses, pieced together in conversations between members of the small community of believers.

Against that background, the gift of the Holy Spirit is so clearly transformative. As described here in John’s gospel, this is not the dramatic account of the day of Pentecost which appears in Luke’s account in the Acts of the Apostles accompanied by ‘a rushing mighty wind’ and ‘tongues of fire’. Rather it is an altogether quieter and understated bestowal of God’s great gift to a frightened few, locked away and fearful, characterised by peace, calm and re-assurance. Yet it so changes everything that these same disciples lose all their apprehensions to become a life-force fired with faith, hope and love to be shared not just with their fellow believers but with the whole world, Jew and Gentile, slave and free.

That image of a beleaguered community holed up against a hostile world but finding the strength not just to endure but eventually to break free to a new form of life must have resonated so often down the centuries. But surely it has a special power to speak to us this Pentecost. We find ourselves locked down for fear of the global pandemic which stalks the world. We find our familiar certainties challenged and our hopes for the future on hold. So many lives have been lost, sadly many more will follow, and all of us who live on will have our lives changed in ways we cannot yet imagine.

In the sadness, indeed tragedy, of our current circumstances, John's understated narrative of the gift of the Holy Spirit surely has a special appeal for us this Pentecost. It speaks of quiet reassurance, which is surely what we and our world most need, certainly more than grand but empty rhetoric or false promises. It offers us a coping strategy for our present difficulties which isn't dependent on some great intervention from outside but is within our own grasp – all it requires is for us to be open to the gift of God's Holy Spirit. The words of the great Quaker hymn seem so specially apposite today.

Drop thy still dews of quietness
Till all our strivings cease
Take from our souls the strain and stress
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of thy peace.

And so may we pray, in the words of the final line of that hymn, to be given and receive 'the still small voice of calm.'

You can now access that hymn: Dear Lord and Father of Mankind, recorded at Westgate Baptist Church, Newcastle upon Tyne. The words accompany the video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WqOnjmr9Ah0>

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a loving God
whose Word sustains our lives
and the work of our hands in the universe.

God is life.

We believe in God's son among us
who brought the seed of life's renewal.
He lived with the poor to show the meaning of love.

Jesus Christ is Lord.

We believe in the Spirit of Life
who makes us one with God,
whose strength and energy renews our own.

The Spirit is Love.

Camillo Torres, Colombia, from 'Creed'.



Intercessions

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**
From the Church of Scotland



A short Spiritual Communion

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.



Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing
can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

You may like to access [Come Holy Spirit: a poem for Pentecost by Peter Coppin, in the form of a haiku](https://youtu.be/Q3adYODI4Lg). Music by Nigel and sung by the Langford Singers.

<https://youtu.be/Q3adYODI4Lg>

Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen. *(after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester)*

Post-Communion Prayer

Post Communion

Gracious God, lover of all,
we are one family in Christ your Son,
one in the sharing of his body and blood
and one in the communion of his Spirit:
help us to grow in love for one another
and come to the full maturity of the Body of Christ.
We make our prayer through your Son our Saviour. Amen

Closing Prayers

As we have been enjoying a few days of sunshine.....

*Any patch of sunlight in a wood will show you something about the sun
which you could never get from reading books on astronomy.
These pure and spontaneous pleasures are 'patches of Godlight'
in the woods of our experience.
- C.S. Lewis (Letters to Malcolm)*

Sometimes, Lord,
actually fairly often these days,
all the world seems dark and shadowed
and we sometimes simply wonder,
"Where are you?"

But something deep inside, a gently nudging Spirit,
softly whispers, prompting us to pray:
remind us and help us to look up and look ahead,
to look *for* your golden light, Lord, always shining,
softly glowing, piercing through the woods
that keep us in the dark...



Your light is there, Lord - there you are -
just a glance away, showing us the way,
drawing us to *Godlight*, welcoming and warm,
leading us to bask in the light that never fades...

Amen.

(Concord pastor)

O God, send forth your Holy Spirit into my heart that I may perceive, into my mind that I may remember, and into my soul that I may meditate. Inspire me to speak with piety, holiness, tenderness and mercy. Teach, guide and direct my thoughts and senses from beginning to end. May your grace ever help and correct me, and may I be strengthened now with wisdom from on high, for the sake of your infinite mercy. Amen.

(Saint Anthony of Padua)

Night Prayer is on the next page

Night Prayer



If you are able to do so, you might wish to light a candle near a window.

Opening prayer:

Spirit of the Risen Christ,
As the lamps light up the evening,
Shine in our hearts and kindle in us the fire of your love.

Lord, we are just ordinary people,
seeking to make each day something special,
and hoping that in some way our lives might have meaning, might count.

We recognise that we need so much.
Wisdom and strength.
Compassion and courage.
And we turn to You as the source of what we need.

And You are within us!
In Jesus, You have stepped into our world.
By Your Spirit, You have stepped into our hearts.
How often we have missed this hidden treasure inside us.

We are just ordinary people,
but we are Your image, and we are filled with Your Presence.
Forgive us for our blindness,
and for our neglect of the gift of Yourself
with which You have so generously blessed us.

In Jesus' Name.
Amen.

Adapted from Food for the Road: John van de Laar

Psalm 139 : 7-12a

I can never escape from your spirit!
I can never get away from your presence!
*If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I go down to the place of the dead, you are there.*

If I ride the wings of the morning,
if I dwell by the farthest oceans,
*even there your hand will guide me,
and your strength will support me*

I could ask the darkness to hide me
and the light around me to become night –
but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.

For your invisible presence
revealed in the unexpected moment
For your silent power
surprising in its irresistible challenge
For your unlikely people
carriers of the wonder-filled message of Jesus;
We give you thanks and praise, O God, our Lord.
Amen.

Reflection on Pentecost from John van der Laar at sacredise.com

As Richard Rohr says, God is either everywhere or nowhere. Pentecost has to have been less an outpouring of God's Spirit and more an "outpouring" of awareness of God's Spirit that has always been the sustaining breath of creation. The Pentecost moment, however, is far more far-reaching and significant than just a personal experience of blessing. If we are truly to open ourselves, both as individuals and as communities, to the Pentecost Spirit, we must also open ourselves to our connection with others and with the cosmos – not just with God. This means that we receive God's gift as an empowerment which comes with a responsibility to grow in love, to grow in compassion and respect for other people, for all creatures and for the earth. Then, as we live out of this empowerment, we must inevitably make daily choices in the direction of unity, sustainability, peace and inclusivity.

Prayer for others

I lay before God:

the hopes and needs of all who find themselves in the dark places of the world;
the hopes and dreams of all who have lost their purpose and vision;
the hopes and courage of all who serve and uplift others;

We praise You for the light that shatters the darkness, the hope that rises from the ashes, the life that returns from the grave And we pray that they may fill the earth, as dawn fills the sky. Amen

Evening collects

Be present, O merciful God, and protect us through the hours of this night, so that we who are wearied by the changes and chances of this life may rest in your eternal changelessness; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

God our Father, by whose mercy the world turns safely into darkness and returns again to light: we place in your hands our unfinished tasks, our unsolved problems, and our unfulfilled hopes, knowing that only what you bless will prosper. To your love and protection we commit each other and all those we love, knowing that you alone are our sure defender, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Commission and blessing

We go into the world as hope-carriers. We thank you, Lord, for re-igniting the flame of hope within us, for filling our hearts with light and evicting the darkness, and for giving a new vision of your glory. Amen.

We go in the name of Christ, in the love of God and in the power of the Spirit. Amen.

May the risen Lord Jesus bless us.
May he watch over us and renew us
as he renews the whole of creation.
May our hearts and lives echo his love.

You might like to access

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8UTXeszjk>

for 'Come Holy Spirit' described as a Rockin' song calling for the coming of the Holy Spirit based in part on Psalm 104:30 and Isaiah 11:2. A gentle but different ending to the day!

Thanks

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this service:

Sheila for accessing elements of the liturgy

Peter for the reflections

Nigel for the Langford Singers

Material is taken or developed from various websites and blogs and normally identified in the text.

