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**Sunday 28th May 2023**

**Pentecost**

**The Rev’d Dr Elaine Colechin**

**Words of Scripture**

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

*Acts 2.1-4*

**Call To Worship**

Come, people of God, come.

Come with your fears and anxieties,

come with your joys and tranquilities,

come and listen,

come and receive,

for this is a day of new beginnings.

As rushing wind and tongues of fire,

as a gentle breath of inhaled air,

come and accept the Holy Spirit

so that you can go and proclaim

Christ as Saviour and Lord

as we are sent to do by God

Come and worship God.

**Prayer of Invocation**

Rushing wind, tongues of fire,
come sweeping through this day.
Engulf us with your transforming power
so that our hearts, minds and hands
are open again for what you send your Church
to be and do: witnesses of Jesus Christ
and proclaimers of your glory
as the one God, now and forever. Amen

**Prayers of Approach & Confession**

On this joyous day, when we are reminded
of your powerful gift to the Church,
the Spirit that you have breathed into us at birth,
we praise and thank you, creator God.

Without you as Spirit, resting upon us and within us,
we would be just dust, drifting and without presence or purpose.

As your Spirit stirs and forms us to be your Church,
we remember the trust you place in us and our imperfections.
We remember our quickness to condemn and our sluggishness to forgive.

*Silence*

Spirit of God, as you flow through the world filling creation and giving life,
you come to know our thoughts, our words and our deeds.
You know when they are lacking, when they are bound to the brokenness of the world,
or attempt to limit all that you make possible.

In your mercy,
**come and cleanse our hearts,
renew our willingness
and guide our ways
in Jesus Christ. Amen**

Since we have been justified by faith,
we have peace with God through Jesus Christ,
through whom we have gained access by faith
into the grace in which we now stand.
We can boast in the hope of the glory of God.
Hope does not put us to shame
as God’s love has been poured into our hearts
through the Holy Spirit, given to us all.

*Romans 5.1-2, 5*

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**All Age Activity**

When preparing the worship space set it up in a way where there is something radically different about it, ie have the Bible set central with the congregation. Or do something very different at the beginning of worship, ie have a procession of streamers through the church, rather than the procession of the Bible (to be even more radical, maybe you could let young people run round and through the church). At the point where you introduce the theme for the day, ask whether anyone has noticed anything different. If they have, go on to ask how that difference made them feel. Hopefully, there will be some positive and negative response to the change, but you may need to think on your feet a little. The idea is to get the congregation to think about change and re-enforcing change is good, as well as important in the life of the church. However, when change is sprung on us, we can feel uncomfortable and even ask “what does this mean?”. We would much prefer to talk about how we might change things and have time to think—we prefer a gentler approach where journey together. When God sends the Holy Spirit, though, it is not always gentle, and we need to be prepared for that.

**Readings**

Acts 2.5-12 | St John 20.19-23

**Sermon Notes**

The reading of Acts 2.1-21 is the traditional focus of Pentecost in the Church. However, in the lectionary Year A, it is paired with John 20.19-23 which offers a different account of the disciples receiving the Holy Spirit. In their settings and how the Holy Spirit was gifted, the stories in Acts and John are almost polar opposites. Yet, on Pentecost Sunday, together they give food for thought on what it means for the Church to receive the Holy Spirit and what the Holy Spirit should empower us to do.

Points to note about the story in Acts2:

* Its dramatic nature. There is something of the uncontrollable about it, but the absolute power and control of the creator God can be seen within the event.
* The disciples may have been waiting for the Holy Spirit to come, but for those who were on the outside, what they witnessed was unprecedented and spontaneous.
* The question “what does it mean?” in verse 12, could also be thought of in terms of “what is God doing here?”
* Peter’s sermon not only comes from the work of the Holy Spirit within Peter, it spoke of what the Holy Spirit has and will make possible in the people of God.

Points to note about the story in John 20:

* The disciples were gathered in much of the same way as the Church does, with fears and anxieties. There was little uncertain about what the disciples were to do in world.
* Jesus set out that vocational call to the disciples again but steered them gently onto the right path—following in his footsteps with the support of the Holy Spirit.
* The mission of the Church is shaped not only in relation to preaching the Good News, but in sharing the gift of forgiveness. The Church is not just to speak of forgiveness, it is to be forgiving!

Other scripture readings suggested for Pentecost:

**1 Corinthians 12.3b-13** picks up on the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the Church’s recognition of that gifting. The apostle Paul points out the variety of these gifts across the Church. No one particular gift denotes the presence of the Holy Spirit within a person or church. All that can be said for sure is that all Christians are gifted with the Spirit’s generous life.

**Psalm 104.24-34, 35b** relates the Holy Spirit to creation and Holy Spirit coming from God, the Creator. There is praise for God as source and life giver. And within the words of the psalmist we have the understanding of God being the wellspring of wisdom, the source of our vocation and the meaningful works we are to do in the world.

**Affirmation of Faith**

As those sent by Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit to be the church,
let us re-affirm our faith in God and declare the work of the Holy Spirit within our lives:

**We trust in God the Holy Spirit,
everywhere the giver and renewer of life.**

**The Spirit justifies us by grace through faith,
sets us free to accept ourselves and to love God and neighbour,
and binds us together with all believers
in the one body of Christ, the Church.**

**The same Spirit
who inspired the prophets and apostles
rules our faith and life in Christ through Scripture,
engages us through the Word proclaimed,
claims us in the waters of baptism,
feeds us with the bread of life and the cup of salvation,
and calls us to ministries of the church.**

**In a broken and fearful world
the Spirit gives us courage
to pray without ceasing,
to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Saviour,
to unmask the voices of peoples long silences,
and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.**

**In gratitude to God, empowered by the Spirit,
we strive to serve Christ in our daily tasks
and to live holy and joyful lives,
even as we watch for God’s new heaven and new earth,
praying, “Come, Lord Jesus, come!”**

**With believers in every time and place,
we rejoice that nothing in life or in death
can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.**

**Glory be to the Creator, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Amen**

*Adapted. Profession of Our Church’s Faith No. 4. The Worship Sourcebook. 2nd Edition.
Grand Rapids: The Calvin Institute of Christian Worship. 2013, p.708.
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**Introduction To The Lord’s Prayer**

And let us pray together the prayer of Jesus
that reminds us of how to pray and how to forgive: **Our Father …**

**Offertory**

In response to all that we receive,
let us give in thankfulness, in prayerfulness
and with hopefulness of God’s continuing work in our lives.

Gracious God, everything we have comes from you.
Through the pouring out of Holy Spirit and the sacrifice of Jesus Christ,
our hearts and lives overflow with abundance.
Therefore, we offer to you again our time, our talents and our tithes.
Use them to your glory as you send us to do your will
in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

**Prayers of Intercession**

Creator Spirit,
as we look at your creation and see our mistreatment,

our squandering of resources, and the scars we have left on the land,
we pray that you create is us an eagerness to care for the world.
Whether it is as small as sorting the recycling
or as big as investing in green technology,
may we be as enthusiastic as you are for all of creation.

*Pause*

Spirit of Christ,
as we see the brokenness of the world,
the pain humanity inflicts on each other, and the wars that rage,
we pray that you fill us with an urgency to share your gift of forgiveness,
made possible by Jesus’s self-giving.
May we be instruments of peace, and encouragers of grace
within the communities we serve.

*Pause*

Spirit of truth,
as we see the tangle of lies in the world,
governments weaving false narratives to fulfil personal wants of power,
and the use of dishonesties to gain status,
we pray that you compel us to see the truth and to be advocates of justice.
Stir us into action to make the world a fairer place,
where no one feels left on the marginalised.

*Pause*

Spirit of wisdom,
it so easy to rush in, to make quick decisions,
to do what we believe is best without considering the consequences.
In our eagerness to care, our urgency to share, and our advocacy for justice,
shower us with your wisdom so that we discern what is best
and serve you rightly in the world.

*Pause*

And as we pray for the things where we can bring about change,
we offer those places, people, and situations
which weigh heavy on our hearts and minds,
where the breath of your Spirit needs to be inhaled
lessening anxieties, calming fears, bringing healing and hope.

*Silence*

Spirit of God, come fill our lives
and the life of world, now and always. Amen

**Dismissal and Blessing**

Jesus says to us:
“Peace be with you, As Abba God sent me, I am sending you.”

With the Holy Spirit as your sure companion
go and do God’s will, following Jesus’s way.

And as you go,
may the blessing of God,
Eternal One, Incarnate One and Abiding One,
be with you always. Amen.

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| **Hymn Suggestions** |
|  | *RS* | *CH4* | *StF* | *MP* |
| *Come Holy Ghost Our Souls Inspire* | 751 | 586 | 373 | 90 |
| *Holy Spirit, we welcome you* |  |  | 385 | 241 |
| *Wind of God, dynamic Spirit* |  |  | 400 |  |
| *Sent by the Lord am I* |  | 250 | 239 |  |
| *O Breath of life, come sweeping through us* | 302 | 595 | 391 | 488 |
| *There’s a spirit in the air* | 329 | 616 | 398 |  |
| *Come Down O Love Divine* | 294 | 489 | 372 | 89 |
| *Breathe on me Breath of God* | 295 | 596 | 370 | 67 |
| *This is a day of new beginnings* |  | 526 |  |  |
| *Praise the Spirit in Creation* |  | 588 |  |  |
| *Holy Spirit come confirm us* | 298 | 640 | 382 |  |

RS – *Rejoice & Sing* | CH4 – *Church Hymnary 4* | StF – *Singing the Faith* | MP- *Mission Praise*