

United Benefice of Berrow with Pendock Eldersfield, Hollybush and Birtsmorton



Holy Communion at Pentecost

Pentecost

Pentecost or Whit Sunday is often referred to as the birthday of the Church for it is on this day that the Church commemorates the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first disciples.

At his Ascension, Jesus commanded his disciples to stay in Jerusalem until
...they had been clothed from power on high (Luke 24:49).

And this they did and on that first Pentecost, *...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.* (Acts 2:1-4)

And so began the mission of the Church, to spread the Good News about the Kingdom of God.

We are heirs and successors to the disciples and we too hope and pray that the same Holy Spirit who empowered the disciples more than 2000 years ago will, on this day, inspire us, as it inspired them, to be worthy disciples of our Lord.

**Come, Holy Spirit,
come upon us,
come around us,
come within us;
come to lead us,
come to guide us,
that we may work in your power,
and rest in your presence:
through Jesus Christ our Lord
who lives and reigns
with you and the Father,
one God for ever.
Amen**

David Adam - Traces of Glory

THE WELCOME

THE FIRST HYMN

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

What God has prepared for those who love him,
he has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything.
Therefore, let us in penitence open our hearts to the Lord,
who has prepared good things for those who love him.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour,
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE GLORIA IN EXCELSIS

Glory to God in the highest;
and peace to his people on earth,
Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

THE COLLECT

God, who as at this time
taught the hearts of your faithful people
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:
grant us by the same Spirit
to have a right judgement in all things
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

THE BIBLE READINGS: Acts2:1-21, John 15. 26-27, 16. 4b-15

At the end of the Readings the Reader says:

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

THE SERMON

Today, we are celebrating Pentecost. Happy Birthday, Church! When God's power, the Holy Spirit exploded through the church and officially began its mission of making disciples. Have you heard the phrases;-

"A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue."

"Nothing but fire kindles fire."

That day, 120 people were gathered together in a larger upper room. Those first Christians were waiting for something very special to happen. And then it was like a rush of wind in the room and tongues of fire above them. Rushing out onto the streets, full of fire in their hearts, going from home to home and neighbour to neighbour. The Greek word is "laos", which means, "the laity," "the people of God." They spread the good news.

Today, it is the laity, the people of God, who become inspired by the Holy Spirit and who go about winning souls to Jesus Christ and nurturing those souls into maturity.

How do the laity do this? Do they do this by their own enthusiasm? By their own intelligence? "Nothing but fire kindles fire".

The Church spread widely in that first century. Ephesus, Rome, and onto Spain within thirty years. It was absolutely incredible, spreading across like a spreading flame.

The flame of Jesus Christ is *still* spreading. In Africa, South America, Asia- Christian faith accounts for about 25% of the population. Yet declining to less than 4% now in the Western world. How is that possible? Perhaps because the laity are no longer on fire and as a church, it has gradually become a self-contained unit that has lost a sense of evangelical fervour.

Many people live an enthusiastic secular life. But God's power and presence can be just as powerful and dramatic today. Luke's story that Pentecost was the beginning of the creation of a new kind of community in the church. And a once timid, frightened, and discouraged group of Jesus's followers--his disciples--become forceful, confident, and unified advocates for their *experience* of the risen Christ, and a new faith movement--and community--is born.

In many faith communities, somehow it is the traditions itself that have seemingly replaced that purpose of those dramatic encounters of the Holy Spirit. Many faithful people have become defensive of their faith within our communities.

The Holy Spirit can be unpredictable and we can resist its transforming nature when we are challenged. But God *can still-through* God's Spirit, breath, or Wind--can bring that sense of mission still- "God Is Still Speaking."

When the spirit is active and present, it's not just about, "me," but about, "we." It's about the creation of a new kind of inclusive, welcoming, *community* based on love. That doesn't mean to say it is necessarily going to be easy.

Christianity is **not** about things we should or shouldn't do, or about just being nice. It's revelling in the beauty of creation, about taking part in the wonderment of it all by living, loving, and being active. It's about embracing the pain and suffering of the world

and transforming it into new life. It's about harnessing the creative Spirit which can transform lives.

It is easy to listen to the story of Pentecost like a noisy party from the past. You can't really blame people for being careful. There's lots of weird practices that goes on in some churches making us feel out of our depth; when people are too exuberant, perhaps jumping, shouting, lifting their hands. The Holy Spirit is strong, but it doesn't force itself on anyone or any church, so it will go only as far as we allow it.

Social media, Twitter accounts and the internet has become on way to communicate with individuals, groups and now the church. The whole nature of human interaction changes on social media. As a church, we can relate to God, to one another and to the world (or worship, ministry and mission, as they're usually called.) What implications does this have for those who use Social media a lot ?

It's easy to access videos and texts from the Web, many of which are much slicker and more attractive than what's on offer at your local parish church. During Lock Down, you could view worship from your sofa from across the world. It is a tempting idea that you can have God and even church without troubling yourselves or even having to meet those people. But then where are the relationships, the trust of one another, the shared fellowship and getting alongside one another? There are no complications of church, and perhaps no intention of developing personal engagement or investment.

As a church we need to be imaginative, flexible and proactive in adopting and incorporating aspects of social media as we draw all people to be with God, one another and the world. And opportunities to witness, to worship, to share our core 'fruits of the spirit' can be embodied, expressed and advanced at best in face-to-face relations, and now social media too. 500 years ago, it was the power of the printing press which spread the words of Scripture.

Some of the changes are scary, some unwelcome, but together the influence of social media and connection and visibility can be offered. God isn't changing character and God can't be limited by our tradition, our worship or our ministry . It can make for an uncertain, roller-coaster experience of faith; but it's an invitation to a kingdom where: "A burning heart will soon find for itself a flaming tongue."

"Nothing but fire kindles fire."

Amen.

THE CREED

**Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried;
he was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles:
this we have received, and this we believe.
Amen.**

THE PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

After each petition the Intercessor says:

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.

At the end of the prayers:

Merciful Father,
**accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE PEACE

God has made us one in Christ. He has set his seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come, has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
and also with you.

THE OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.
Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.
Blessed be God for ever.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

Let us pray

It is indeed right, it is our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and everlasting God,
through Jesus Christ, your only Son our Lord.

This day we give you thanks
because in fulfilment of your promise
you pour out your Spirit upon us,
filling us with your gifts, leading us into all truth,
and uniting peoples of many tongues in the confession of one faith.
Your Spirit gives us grace to call you Father,
to proclaim your gospel to all nations
and to serve you as a royal priesthood.

Therefore we join our voices with angels and archangels,
and with all those in whom the Spirit dwells,
to proclaim the glory of your name,
for ever praising you and saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest;
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
and according to your holy will,
these gifts of bread and wine may be to us
the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who, in the same night that he was betrayed,
took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

Jesus Christ is Lord
**Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming in glory,
we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
we bring before you this bread and this cup
and we thank you for counting us worthy
to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
and gather into one in your kingdom
all who share this one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of [N and] all the saints,
may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

**Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
in 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.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

THE GIVING OF COMMUNION

Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia!

We consume the bread and wine

THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

Faithful God,
who fulfilled the promises of Easter
by sending us your Holy Spirit
and opening to every race and nation
the way of life eternal:
open our lips by your Spirit,
that every tongue may tell of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**We thank you, Lord,
that you have fed us in this physical and spiritual sacrament,
united us with Christ,
and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples.
Amen.**

THE FINAL HYMN

THE BLESSING

The Spirit of truth lead you into all truth,
give you grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
and strengthen you to proclaim the word and works of God;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you, and remain with you always.
Amen.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia! Alleluia!
Thanks to be God. Alleluia! Alleluia!