

# Sunday Morning Resources

Sunday 8 June 2025 - Pentecost

**Lectionary Readings** (*depending on the kind of service you are leading, you may use one or more of the following readings – however, you **must** use the gospel reading, as this is what the homily is based on*)

Acts 2.1-21 or Genesis 11.1-9; Psalm 104.26-36, 37b [or 104.26-end]; Romans 8.14-17 or Acts 2.1-21; John 14.8-17 [25-27] **\*\*Acts must be read\*\***

## Homily

**Today's homily has been written by The Revd Imogen Nay – Incumbent Vicar, St Paul, Cambridge (Benefice)**

In the name of the Creator, the Redeemer and the Sustainer. Amen.

Today we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, one of the great festivals of the Christian Church. The festival falls 50 days after Easter. The Feast of Pentecost is rooted in the story of the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit on the 12 apostles and the surrounding crowds who had come to hear them in Jerusalem. The book of Acts begins with a reminder that Jesus had promised his disciples that they would be baptised not just with water, but with the Holy Spirit as well (Acts 1.5).

The familiar account from the Acts of the Apostles frames the giving of the Holy Spirit in the context of:

- 1- Jesus's recent ascension to the Father
- 2- The empowering of the newly forming Christian communities.

Notice that Peter, the Apostle, addresses the crowd as 'fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem'. The Christian church has not yet been formed and therefore the Feast of Pentecost is also considered to be, in some senses, the birthday of the church. The book of Acts is an account of the spread of the good news of Jesus Christ, after his death, resurrection and ascension. As noted, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit doesn't happen completely unexpectedly. Peter, himself, references the prophet Joel and his prophecy that 'in the last days' God will pour out his Spirit on all people. Similarly, our Gospel reading tells us that Jesus spent time teaching the disciples about the Spirit. The Spirit is that enduring presence that enables the people of God to rest in the truth and be tutored in the truth. The Spirit is also known as the Advocate. This title should be seen in connection with the understanding of Satan as the Accuser. If Satan accuses us, then the Advocate stands by our side and commends us to God. The Holy Spirit then is really good news! The Holy Spirit is a gift from God, whom we worship as Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus affirms the interrelationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, he says, dwells within us, and is able, therefore, to continue teaching us and enabling us to do God's will.

The other really important element of Pentecost that must not be missed is the fact that the giving of the Holy Spirit is linked with the promises of God. These promises, we are told, are not just for one ethnicity, or group, or nation but for the entire world. The fact that the Holy Spirit brings unity out of diversity, enabling those who spoke different languages to hear and understand each other, is part of this teaching. Peter reaffirms it by quoting from Joel. Joel's prophecy is about the indiscriminate abundance of the Spirit, it is given to ALL people, men AND women, young AND old. The Spirit does not discriminate but rather it is lavishly given to enable all people to follow God and rejoice in his goodness. The Acts of the Apostles begins as it means to go on, it is a book about the spreading of the good news throughout the gentile world, and the forming of the first Christian communities as they spread from Jerusalem into Turkey, Greece, Syria, and then on to Rome and Spain. Christianity is a truly global religion, it is not about one nation, but rather very much about God's blessing of the whole world. We should remember this if we are tempted to imagine that God favours one nation over another, or one ethnic group over another.

There is one other element that is important here. Today we are also rightly hugely concerned not just about the worldwide human community, but the whole of creation. We are being encouraged through eco theology and ecological readings of the Bible to notice that the promises of God aren't just for the human community, but for the whole of creation. Indeed, it may be that we are just realising how little we have attuned ourselves to the languages of the planet which we inhabit. For it is not just humans that communicate with one another, all animals and even plants and trees have ways of communicating. The dawn chorus in spring is to us just the music of the birds, but to the bird community, it is how they communicate to each other. The story of Pentecost is about how God breaks down barriers of misunderstanding and incomprehension between diverse peoples. Might it also be a story about how God breaks down barriers between different species? When we open out the story of Pentecost to this reality, we notice that the prophet Joel includes creation in his predictions.

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.

Creation isn't simply the backdrop to the great human drama, but creation itself is the place where God's spirit abides. Remember that in the account of the creation of the world in Genesis, God's spirit hovers over the waters (Gen 1.2). This brings us full circle to the promise at the beginning of Acts that God's people will not only be baptised in water but in the Spirit too.

Today, then, we remember that God's love for us never ends. God empowers us to keep participating in divine love through blessing us through his Spirit. This Spirit is not given

meanly or only to *some* people. This Spirit is a blessing for all people, and even for creation itself, formed by the Spirit at the beginning of time. Amen

### **Ways to Engage all Generations**

When different generations are gathered together in worship there is an opportunity to build relationships and to encounter God in our conversations as we build relationships and learn from each other no matter what our ages, stage of life or faith and for all present to feel included. Adding some wondering questions to the service at an appropriate moment can help to do this.

Wondering Questions: Some wondering questions that may help to engage all generations to ponder and explore during the talk, service or during the week may include (three or so) of the following style of questions:

- I wonder what your favourite part of the story/passage is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder who your favourite character is? I wonder why that is?
- I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt or I wonder how \_\_\_\_\_ felt when \_\_\_\_\_ happened?
- I wonder how you feel about \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder where you are in this story?
- I wonder what part of the story is about you?
- I wonder what the [tree, pearl, coin] could really be?
- I wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ said \_\_\_\_\_?
- I wonder what we can learn about God in this story?

### **Suggested intercessions**

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

When I say, Come, Holy Spirit, please respond, May we receive your blessing.

On this day of Pentecost, we give thanks for the blessing of God's Holy Spirit on all people. May we always seek the good of the whole church and contribute to its well-being. We pray for the worldwide universal church and especially pray for the church where she is divided, in need of new life and growth, and where her members are in places of conflict and fear.

Come, Holy Spirit

#### **May we receive your blessing**

On this day of Pentecost, we pray for the world-wide human family, celebrating our diversity. We pray that we may work for the breaking down of boundaries, of enabling good conversation, and a commitment to working with those who are different from us.

Come, Holy Spirit

#### **May we receive your blessing**

On this day of Pentecost, we remember that we are part of the gift of creation. We pray for all of God's wonderful creation, and we pray that we work harder to make the necessary changes to our lifestyle in order to safeguard and protect the integrity of all life.

Come, Holy Spirit

**May we receive your blessing**

On this day of Pentecost, we give thanks for our own church community of (insert name/s). Bless our leaders and ministers (insert name/s); enable all our members to grow in their discipleship. May we be ready to hear and respond to the call of God, in our time, in this place.

Come, Holy Spirit

**May we receive your blessing**

On this day of Pentecost, we hold before God those people known to us who are sick in body, mind or spirit. May they know the loving care of a community of faith at their time of need.

Come, Holy Spirit

**May we receive your blessing**

In a moment of silence, we hold before God our own prayers and intercessions. [PAUSE]

Come, Holy Spirit

**May we receive your blessing**

Merciful Father,  
Accept these prayers,  
For the sake of your Son,  
Our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

### ***Suggested hymns/songs***

Come down O love divine

The Spirit comes to set us free (walk, walk, in the light)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me

Love divine, all loves excelling

Breathe on me breath of God

Shine, Jesus, shine

Enemy of apathy (John Bell)

### ***Activities to accompany the service***

If you are looking for resources to accompany the service for engaging younger children, then there are lots of online resources. The following free to access/download resources may be useful starting points:

- <https://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com/>
- <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/>
- <https://www.faithinkids.org/>

- [reflectionary.org](https://www.reflectionary.org) – lectionary-based resources
- [engageworship](https://www.engageworship.org) – in particular 'Area 52' for lectionary-based material
- <https://www.bdeducation.org.uk/product-category/primary-age-5-11/>  
(weekly@lectionary resource)