

twelvebaskets



PENTECOST B

A complete Sunday service ready to use
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

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Pentecost Sunday - Year B
19th May 2024



Order of Service

Call to worship

Hymn:

395 STF – Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me OR

38 STF – Come, O Holy Spirit, come

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Hymn:

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples OR

499 STF - Great God, Your Love Has Called Us

Readings: Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Hymn:

389 STF – Like the murmur of the dove's song OR

373 STF – Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire

Reflections on the readings

Materials needed: Pens, pencils and paper cut-out 'tongues of fire' (or just red pieces of paper) - two for everyone in the congregation.

Hymn:

388 STF – Let every Christian pray OR

393 STF – She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the Glory OR

400 STF – Wind of God, dynamic Spirit

Blessing

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Call to worship

The light of your love is here.

The fire of your Spirit is here.

The hope of a better world is here, in each of us.

Come, Lord Jesus, and make yourself known to us in this Pentecost worship, we pray,

Amen.¹

Hymn:

395 STF – Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me OR

38 STF – Come, O Holy Spirit, come

Opening Prayers

Justice-seeking, grace-giving, all-loving God,

Today we bring ourselves in worship,

Opening ourselves up to the way the Spirit is at work amongst us.

Oh Lord, hear our prayer for justice,

Oh Lord, hear our prayer for courage.

Today we come, and we listen to your word to us,

And listen for The Word within us.

We take courage from this moment, from this encounter,

To meet with you – O God.

To be inspired by each other,

And by stories from others who seek to follow you.

We know we have not always got it right this day, this week, this year.

We know we have failed you,

And we carry the guilt of that.

In this moment, we say sorry for all the times we have fallen short. Unburdening ourselves in the stillness.

[Pause].

And, on this Pentecost Sunday, we hear your reassuring voice saying to us: “your sins are forgiven”. Our connection with the divine is not broken or damaged, but renewed again this day, by your love, in your Spirit.

And for that we rejoice.

We bring these, and all our prayers in Jesus’ name,

Amen.²

¹ Call to worship written by Tim Baker

² Opening prayers written by Tim Baker

We say together the Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

Pentecost Sunday features one of the most famous passages from scripture - from Acts 2. We will hear it a little later in our service and will hear we hear how the early disciples of Jesus received the special gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost ten days after Jesus had returned to heaven.

But what does this mean? Why did Jesus send the gift of the Holy Spirit to the disciples? And what does it mean for us?

Jesus recognised that all disciples - those fishermen 2,000 years ago, and us today - need to know that the presence of God is real in order to join in with the work that Jesus had started on earth. It's no easy task!

Before Jesus went back to heaven he said to his followers:

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Jesus knew when He gave the disciples this mission that they would need the power of God!

Imagine that I now want to make a cup of tea before I go about sharing God's love. What will I need to boil the water? A kettle? That's right. Now the only way that a kettle can work is if we power the kettle using electricity. However, there's a problem if we don't have that then there's simply no brew.... To work the kettle we need power.

Now like the kettle, the disciples needed power. Not electrical power, but God-given power. You see the disciples couldn't change the world with their own strength because they are only humans after all.

They needed God's power living inside them, which is why Jesus told them to wait in Jerusalem until he sent them what they needed. On the day of Pentecost, Jesus sent the gift of the powerful Holy Spirit. The disciples were changed people. They now had the courage to be Jesus' witnesses; to share the message that God loved all.

Over 2000 years later, we too, like the disciples, need the powerful Holy Spirit to fill us so that we can follow Jesus and carry on the work of the building a kingdom of justice and joy - the Kingdom of God. We need the power of the Holy Spirit so that we can really love other people and love can really change lives... a bit like the kettle needs power to change cold water into hot water and release the potential in the tea bag!

So, the important thing for us to hear in this story is that the Holy Spirit was not simply given to Jesus' first disciples, She is given to us as well - all we have to do is 'plug in'!³

Hymn:

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples OR

499 STF - Great God, Your Love Has Called Us

³ All Age Talk written by Matt Forsyth

Readings: Acts 2:1-21, Psalm 104:24-34, 35b, John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

Hymn:

389 STF – Like the murmur of the dove’s song OR

373 STF – Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire

Reflections on the readings

Materials needed: Pens/pencils and paper cut-out ‘tongues of fire’ (or just red pieces of paper) - two for everyone in the congregation.

Today is Pentecost Sunday! The birthday of the church! Happy birthday to us!

As with all birthdays, it is an opportunity to celebrate and give thanks, but perhaps also to check-in - to recognise the ways things have changed since last year, to notice the ways we are getting older, to evaluate how we are doing...

How are we doing, as a church? In what ways are we clear about what is ours to do, and what might be next for us?

These are not easy questions, and they may not be something we can leave here today with any clarity about...but what we are going to try to do is a prayer exercise. Yes, not a sermon in the traditional sense, but an attempt to create space for us to learn and grow as a church, to celebrate Pentecost by connecting again with the Spirit of God and with each other.

So, firstly, I invite you to come and get two ‘tongues of fire’ each, and a pen or some crayons.

Give people time to do this, perhaps recruit some volunteers to help.

Now, I’m going to give you a few minutes to write two prayers, one on each of the tongues of fire.

On one, you are invited to write a prayer for yourself - maybe one word, or something longer and more specific, don’t worry - no-one is going to see this one, unless you want them to.

On the second one, I want you to write a prayer for someone else in this room. Someone specific, you can choose them, and this one you are going to show to them, so don’t write anything you think might be private or might not be yours to share.

Take your time.

[You might like to play some music - something like ‘Oceans (Where Feet May Fail)’ or to invite the organist / musicians to play some background music and create some calm space - at least five minutes, and maybe more...]

Is everyone happy? If you need a little bit longer, then we can have another couple of minutes and those who are finished can simply pray the prayers you’ve written - offer the prayer for yourself, and for someone else, to God.

Then, when everyone is finished...

Now I invite you to share your prayer for someone else with them. Take some time over this. If you don’t want to talk about it, that’s fine, but perhaps you do - you can move around the church, find the person, join them. You might even like to pray with them for a moment - read the prayer aloud so only they can hear. Let us pray for each other as a church...

More background music would be useful here.

Wow, thank you! Not something that we typically do in many of our services, but hopefully a helpful Pentecost exercise. As we recognise the way that God's words spoke to and inspired those first disciples, can we have the same level of energy and passion again today in 2024?

It might be appropriate to break into conversation at this point - with the simple invitation of the question 'how was that for you?' Recognise that some people will have found that uncomfortable or difficult, and there may be ways to acknowledge or tweak the exercise to work better for your context - why not reflect on those together as a church?

When the conversation is done, close with this prayer.

Pentecost God,
God who is Spirit,
God who invites us to pray, not because you need it, but because we do,
God who is right here, right now, in ways we can't even begin to understand,
Thank you for this space, and for these people.
Hear the prayers we have whispered today, and the prayers for those in the community around us.

Help us to be a part of the change we want to see in the world,
In Jesus' name we pray,

Amen.⁴

Hymn:

388 STF – Let every Christian pray OR

393 STF – She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters

Prayers of intercession

Holy God, God of fire and Spirit,
God of light and life,
God of justice and joy,
We pray for your Church today,
Especially for the witness of your people in this church and community,
Breathe new life into us, as those first disciples rediscovered their passion and energy for you and for inclusion.

Heavenly Father, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

God of Pentecost and Easter,
God of Christmas and Lent,
God of Sunday morning and Tuesday afternoon,
We come to you in prayer for those in need today.
We hold a moment of stillness to pray for those known to us who need our prayer this day.

Miraculous God, we invite you to reveal yourself to all in need with comfort and peace.

⁴ Reflection written by Tim Baker

Heavenly Mother, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

God of here and there,
God of coming and going,
God of now and forever,
We pray for the nations in your world.

Grant to those in authority the gifts needed to speak clearly across divides, to bring healing and calm, where there are wounds and discord.

Heavenly Spirit, in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

In faith, and hope, we offer these prayers to you holy and blessed God.
May we see your work, vision, and kingdom come here on Earth.

This we pray in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.⁵

We will now take up the offering.

On this special Sunday, at this birthday party, as we celebrate the story that began the church, we give thanks for the church across the ages, and we pray for the church of the future. Heavenly Father, by your mysterious Spirit, transform our gifts into the work of your Kingdom.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.⁶

Hymn:

313 STF – Thine be the Glory OR

400 STF – Wind of God, dynamic Spirit

Blessing

Go in peace, Pentecost people, and may the Spirit of God go with you.
Go in peace, and build a better world, in Jesus' name,

Amen.⁷

⁵ Prayers of intercession written by Tim Baker

⁶ Additional prayers by Tim Baker

⁷ Additional prayers by Tim Baker