

# twelvebaskets



## PENTECOST C

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

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**Pentecost Sunday - Year C**  
8th June 2025



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us OR**

**32 STF – Meet and right it is to sing**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**726 STF – Come to us, creative Spirit OR**

**439 STF – Abba Father, let me be yours and yours alone**

Readings: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b Romans 8:14-17; John 14:8-17

**Hymn:**

**72 STF – Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist without the  
knowledge of your parenthood OR**

**394 STF – Spirit of God, unseen as the wind**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

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

**639 STF – Through the love of God our Saviour**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**14 STF – Sing to him, in whom creation OR**

**372 STF – Come down O love divine**

Blessing

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## **Call to worship**

The Spirit lives to set us free,  
Let us walk in the light.  
The Spirit moves amongst us this day,  
Let us walk in the light.  
The Spirit is here, guiding our worship,  
Let us walk in the light of the Lord.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

570 STF – As we gather, Father, seal us OR  
32 STF – Meet and right it is to sing

## **Opening Prayers**

On this day celebrating Pentecost let us pray.

Pentecost, a time to celebrate the gifts you have given us, a time to say thank you for all you have given us...

this world, our lives, we have so much to be grateful for,  
but how often do we squander those gifts.

On that first Pentecost you provided the people with the ability to understand one another despite different mother tongues,  
forgive us when we struggle to understand those with whom we share more than a common language, forgive us when we fail to communicate with our neighbours, friends and families.

We build walls, walls of shame, anger, fear, prejudice, walls that serve as barriers to communication, barriers to relationships, barriers that don't bring peace to your world.

Help us have the faith and the courage to remove some of those bricks, letting your light and love shine in and perhaps alongside that love we can find the courage to let go of those things that divide us so we can better communicate your love with those with whom we share our lives and the wider world.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## **We say together the Lord's Prayer**

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<sup>1</sup> Call to worship written by Tim Baker

<sup>2</sup> Opening prayers written by Lorna Dobson

## All Age Talk

Today is a very special day. It is called Pentecost Sunday. On Pentecost, we celebrate how God sent the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. It is a day full of joy and excitement because it reminds us that we are never alone.

In our Bible reading today, Jesus is talking to his friends. He is trying to prepare them for what is about to happen. He knows that soon he will return to the parental God in heaven. His friends are worried. They do not want to be left alone. They are confused about how they will manage without Jesus walking beside them.

Jesus gives them a tremendous promise. He says that God will send another Helper, the Spirit of Truth. This Helper is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will live with them and be in them. The Spirit will be their guide, their comforter, and their strength.

Jesus also promises something else. He says, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give you. I do not give as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.'

How amazing is that?

Jesus' peace is not the kind where everything is always easy. It is a deep peace inside us, even when life feels messy or difficult. It is the peace that comes from knowing that God's Spirit is with us, always helping us and always loving us.

On that first Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came powerfully after Jesus had returned to the parental God. It was like a rushing wind. Flames of fire appeared above people's heads. The disciples suddenly found the courage they had never had before. They went out and told the world about Jesus.

The same Holy Spirit who filled the disciples is with us today. The same Spirit helps us when we are worried, gives us courage when we are afraid, and fills our hearts with God's love.

When you feel scared or unsure this week, you can whisper a little prayer: "Holy Spirit, help me". When you feel happy or thankful, you can say: "Holy Spirit, thank you".

Jesus' promise to send the Helper was not just for His friends long ago. It is for us too, right now, today. On this Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate having a Friend and Helper who will never leave us.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### Hymn:

726 STF – Come to us, creative Spirit OR

439 STF – Abba Father, let me be yours and yours alone

**Readings:** Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b Romans 8:14-17; John 14:8-17

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<sup>3</sup> All Age Talk written by Matthew Forsyth

## Hymn:

72 STF – Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist without the knowledge of your parenthood OR

394 STF – Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

## Reflections on the readings

Today, the church worldwide celebrates its birthday! The events described in the passage from Acts chapter 2 describe what is now generally seen to be the events by which the Christian Church came into being – so ‘Happy Birthday’ to all of us – and to everyone gathered around the world to worship Jesus today (about 2.4 million people all together (according to [estimates made in 2020](#).) That’s quite a party!

Of course, as with any baby, the birth isn’t the point where life begins, and our Gospel reading will take us back a bit further to look at what preceded that astounding Day of Pentecost. We could go even further back, as Peter does in the sermon recorded in Acts, to the words of the prophet Joel, in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Century before Jesus. Or we might want to start in the opening chapter of Genesis where we read that God’s Spirit swept or brooded over the waters before creation. Today’s celebrations have been in planning for a very long time.

But does today feel like a party? Perhaps some of us remember that this day in the church year used to be called ‘Whit Sunday’. It was a highlight in the calendar, not only the church calendar, but in society generally. People wore white, and often were confirmed on this day. Big processions were common throughout the UK. Next day, Whit Monday, was a public holiday whenever it fell, and the weekend was popular too for weddings. Much of this has been eroded with the years, and now, with the Spring Bank Holiday only rarely falling on the same weekend as Pentecost, only a minority know that today is anything special.

But special it is. So we pause to ask ourselves, is Pentecost something we look forward to and celebrate or not? The story in Acts 2 contains some surprising and perhaps unnerving elements – a strong wind, flames of fire resting on people’s heads, ordinary people suddenly speaking in tongues they didn’t understand. Perhaps it’s no surprise that, over the years, some have played down the significance of Pentecost, or have preferred to stay away today - it’s a good weekend for an early summer holiday instead!

As we take a closer look at the story Luke records for us in the 2<sup>nd</sup> volume of his writing, let’s do so through the lenses of two extracts from the readings set for today.

From today’s psalm, 104, we hear:

<sup>24</sup> O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures.

...when you open your hand, they are filled with good things.

<sup>30</sup> When you send forth your spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

...Bless the Lord, O my soul. Praise the Lord!

Notice that the psalmist declares that God gives ‘good things’ to all creatures. This gift of the Holy Spirit is not something of which to be afraid or suspicious – it is the very best birthday present from a God who knows us better than we know ourselves.

Then from the end of the passage appointed from John’s gospel we hear:

<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.'

God's gifts are good gifts.

Acts 2 opens at a time when, following the ascension of Jesus, the first Christians have taken the first step to get themselves organised by electing Matthias to replace Judas. Now it is the day of Pentecost – a Jewish festival which fell 50 days after the Passover. As Jesus died around the time of the Passover, we know it must be about 7 weeks since the resurrection – count the Sundays since Easter and you'll find that's the case! The Jewish festival of Pentecost began life as a harvest celebration but by this time it also incorporated thanksgiving for the law; it was a lively gathering and the early Christians came together to mark the day, probably not in the least anticipating how the celebrations would unfold.

First, they hear a sound 'like' the rush of a violent wind, which fills the building where they have met; then tongues 'as of' fire rest on them... Luke is groping for adequate language to describe what is happening – it's outside of his experience and he's using images, pictures, symbols – something like wind, something like fire. Wind and fire are both, in other places, used as symbols of God's presence and that may be what Luke is trying to convey.

Then comes the speech in unknown languages – unknown to the speakers, but instantly recognisable to people in the crowd. Pilgrims have come to Jerusalem for this festival from throughout the known world – to their amazement, suddenly they can understand what is being said – all of them! Anyone who has holidayed abroad and longed to hear someone speaking in a language they understand can imagine their joy and excitement, clearly mixed with a little confusion, 'What does this mean?'

The suggestion that it is nothing more than drunkenness is rather strange; inebriation generally leads to less clarity of speech, rather than an instant ability to speak a new language! Be that as it may, Peter soon addresses the charge and explains the commotion as he stands and preaches his first sermon. He falls back on his knowledge of the Jewish scriptures and identifies what is happening as being that which had been prophesied centuries before by Joel when God declares; 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams... Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Reading on, we discover that the crowd want that salvation, they ask what to do, Peter tells them to repent and around three thousand people are added to a group which may have consisted of around 100 – that's 300% growth in one day! We can see why today is considered the birthday of the church.

The gift of the Holy Spirit to those early believers was, however, only one link in a long chain of God's generous pouring out of this good gift. Throughout the Old Testament, we find stories of men and women who are filled with the Spirit, often for particular tasks or roles – kings, prophets, priests. What Joel prophesied was that one day this gift would be freely given to all, and the New Testament could be seen as the story of that happening.

Luke in particular is keen to make us aware of the Spirit's activity... in chapter 1 of his gospel he describes John the Baptist as being 'full of the Holy Spirit', even before he is born; Gabriel tells Mary that the Holy Spirit will come upon her; when Mary visits Elizabeth both women are described as being filled with the Spirit; so is Zechariah and so, when he is born, is John. Chapter 2 is full of the same refrain; the Spirit rests on Simeon, who is guided by the Spirit to meet the infant Jesus; John announces that one will come who will baptise people in the Holy Spirit and then Jesus enters, driven first into the wilderness, by

the Spirit... We cannot say we were not warned about what was to come in volume 2 of Luke's writing!

The gospel passage appointed for today takes us back, a few days more than those 50 days since Easter, to the occasion of the Last Supper when, in John's account, Jesus takes the opportunity of having his disciples gathered for that meal to teach them solidly for five chapters (John 13-17). When Philip asks Jesus to show the Father to the disciples, Jesus tries to make them understand that in seeing Jesus they are seeing the Father, then he goes on to promise that they will be given further help. Jesus tells them in v16 that he will ask the Father to send 'another Advocate... the Spirit of truth' and then again in v26, that 'the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you.'

It was never God's plan that after the earthly life of Jesus was ended, his followers would be left with simply an example to imitate; to try to do the best we can and hope God forgives the rest. Rather, in the generosity of God, Jesus promises that the Spirit will come, as an Advocate, as a teacher, as a reminder and, as we see in Acts, as a power to transform us. So today we rejoice in that gift and, like young children at a birthday party, we grab with both hands what we are being offered, for God's gift of the Spirit is not an optional extra, but the very energy and grace we need to live for Christ today. The Spirit is the birthday present we have always longed for and which we cannot do without. Thanks be to God.

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

### **Hymn:**

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

639 STF – Through the love of God our Saviour

### **Prayers of intercession**

We bring to God our prayers for the world, praying in the name of Jesus and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

We pray today for the church around the world, holding before God:

- this congregation, its members, stewards, preachers, ministers, Sunday school teachers... (*as appropriate*), along with the wider ... circuit and ... district (*names can be included*)
- the church in places of persecution and opposition...
- churches which are growing and in need of resources for leadership and teaching...

On this Pentecost Sunday, pour out your Spirit once again on your church, that we may bring glory to you, gracious God.

We pray today for all who are perplexed and bewildered, holding before God:

- all who want to have faith or belief, but find it impossible...
- all who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to understand the society around them and struggle to make sense of life...
- all who have had to flee their homeland and have ended up in places where they are misunderstood...

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by Jill Baker

On this Pentecost Sunday, pour out your Spirit of communication and connection, that all may know that you understand them, gracious God.

We pray today for all who are discriminated against, holding before God:

- all whose gender makes them subject to violence, mockery or abuse...
- all who suffer prejudice because of their age or race...
- all whose social status means they are disregarded or oppressed by others...

On this Pentecost Sunday, pour out your Spirit of equality on all who turn to you, that the world may see your generous, unrestricted love for all your people, gracious God.

We pray today for all who live in fear or anxiety, holding before God:

- all who are victims of war and violence, remembering especially the lands of the Middle East and of Eastern Europe...
- all who are fearful for their jobs or lives because of extreme regimes...
- all who struggle with inner fears and crippling anxiety...

On this Pentecost Sunday, pour out your Spirit of freedom, peace and liberty, that the world may be turned upside down and become your Kingdom on earth, gracious God.

We pray today for all who are in need of healing in body, mind or spirit, holding before God:

- all known to us who suffer today, naming them aloud or in our hearts...
- all in the hospitals and care homes in this locality, and all being cared for at home...
- all who have no-one to care for them at this time...

On this Pentecost Sunday, pour out your Spirit of understanding, compassion, healing and wholeness, that those we have named, and all who are in need, may feel your touch, gracious God.

Gracious God, compassionate Christ, strengthening Spirit – come again to your world on this Pentecost Sunday, come and fill the earth with your goodness. We pray in the name of Jesus,

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

### **We will now take up the offering.**

God of all grace,

On this celebration of the birthday of the church,

We take a moment to thank you for all the centuries of generosity that have kept your church alive,

Enabling us to be here today,

To gather in your presence,

And to create spaces where others can encounter you.

May we use these gifts to those same ends,

In Jesus' name,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by Jill Baker

<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker



**Hymn:**

14 STF – Sing to him, in whom creation OR

372 STF – Come down O love divine

**Blessing**

The Spirit is already here,  
and already out there,  
seeking for each of us to get involved, to find our place.

May this week be one in which we encounter the Spirit closer, more real, more present  
than ever.

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker