

**twelvebaskets**



# **PENTECOST A**

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

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**Pentecost Sunday - Year A**  
24th May 2026



## Order of Service

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**564 STF – O thou who camest from above OR**

**38 STF – Come, O Holy Spirit, come (Wa wa wa Emimimo)**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**167 STF – Colours of day dawn into the mind OR**

**370 STF – Breathe on me, breath of God**

Readings: Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39\*\*

**Hymn:**

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

**396 STF – Spirit who broods**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**544 STF – As the deer pants for the water OR**

**377 STF – Down the mountain flows the river**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**411 STF – May the God of hope go with us every day OR**

**248 STF – I heard the voice of Jesus say**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

**Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on [www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).**

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## Call to worship

The light shines in the darkness,  
The flame flickers to life,  
The Spirit comes into our midst, then and now.  
Help us to notice your presence, we pray, O God.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## Hymn:

564 STF – O thou who camest from above OR  
38 STF – Come, O Holy Spirit, come (Wa wa wa Emimimo)

## Opening Prayers

Let us pray.

As we join together can I invite you to close your eyes if that feels comfortable, if you can please concentrate on your breathing, a deep breath in and a slow breath out, in a moment of quietness take a few more relaxing breaths.

If you are able, I would like you to imagine that you are sat in that upper room with the disciples. You are not alone in still feeling lost and confused, asking what next. Wondering too if you are capable continuing the mission of Jesus. Suddenly, the room is filled with a violent wind, and you can see tongues of fire.

What is happening? This is terrifying. There is a part of you that would like to get up and run but suddenly a sense of calm comes over you, you hear your brothers and sisters talking, you realise the languages are unfamiliar, but you understand the words. With a sense of joyful confidence, you want to head straight out to meet with the people outside. Those you encounter are confused but Peter explains what has gone on. With that, you join with all those who were in the upper room and share the words and teachings of Jesus. People understood and many came forward to be baptised.

As you sit here now, today, worshipping perhaps you are asking similar questions to the disciples, perhaps you too can feel lost, confused, asking what next, wondering if you are up to the task in hand...

Take in another deep breath, breathe out slowly and know this...

You are loved.

*[Pause]*

You are known.

*[Pause]*

Just as the disciples were equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit you are too, let us not hide from the gifts but embrace them,  
giving thanks for all that we are, for all that we have,

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

in the name of Jesus, with love and thanks let us look out into the world and use those gifts to make this world a better place wherever and whenever we can.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

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

### **All Age Talk**

One popular social activity is an escape room. Has anyone here done an escape room?

The principal idea is that you are locked in a room for a period, and you need to find clues to navigate out. That feeling of being first locked in the room with little idea of what might happen next is something we find in our reading today.

Jesus's friends, otherwise known as the disciples, are hiding behind locked doors because they are afraid. Everything that has happened over the past few days has left them confused and worried.

Then suddenly something extraordinary happens. Jesus appears among them. The first thing he says is simple.

"Peace be with you."

Those words must have felt like a deep breath after a long moment of fear. The Gospel tells us that Jesus breathes on the disciples and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit." That detail is fascinating. Breath is a sign of life.

In the very beginning of the Bible, God breathes life into humanity. Now Jesus breathes on his followers and gives them new life again. This moment is a reminder that the life of faith is not something we create by ourselves. It is something God gives.

The Holy Spirit brings courage where there was fear. Hope where there was uncertainty. Notice what happens next. Jesus sends them out.

"Just as the Father sent me, I am sending you."

The disciples who were hiding behind locked doors are now given a purpose. The Spirit turns frightened followers into people who carry good news into the world. And that same Spirit is still at work today. So, Pentecost reminds us of something important.

Faith is not meant to stay locked inside a room, it is like that escape room, we are meant to break out of the room and share what we have received.

Amen.<sup>3</sup>

### **Hymn:**

167 STF – Colours of day dawn into the mind OR

370 STF – Breathe on me, breath of God

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

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

**Readings:** Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23

**Hymn:**

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

396 STF – Spirit who broods

**Reflections on the readings**

Have you ever had that feeling? The one where something grows in your mind, becoming so large that you feel trapped, unable to do anything until it is resolved? It can be anything, from the pressure of an upcoming exam to a secret you fear might come out. Either way, suddenly you are boxed in and unable to move forward mentally.

That's the situation we find the disciples in today. Afraid because they had betrayed Jesus. Afraid because they didn't know who else might be led to the cross for stirring up religious unrest. Afraid because so much had happened, and it was all overwhelming.

Then suddenly – boom – Jesus comes through a locked door. He enters this confined space and offers peace. What a strange thing to offer. Not a way out, but simply peace. However, the peace of Jesus is not simple. The peace of Jesus is found when the money changers are driven out of the temple. The peace of Jesus is found when the hungry are fed and twelve baskets are left over. The peace of Jesus is found when a woman is healed simply by touching the hem of his garment. This is because the peace Jesus offers comes from the words *shalom* and *eirene*. *Shalom* is a Hebrew word meaning completeness and wholeness. It is about everything being in right order, so that true peace may follow. *Eirene*, from the Greek for "peace," expands this from an individual concept into a collective one, binding people together in peace. Together, they offer a vision of shared peace and security.

Think back to a moment when you felt boxed in or unable to move. What did it feel like when you were finally able to deal with the situation, or when it passed? Often, a strange inner peace emerges. New possibilities open up, and what once held you back no longer has power over you. So far, so encouraging. Jesus can break through at the most unexpected moments and offer us peace: not just when we think we deserve it, but, like the disciples, precisely when we feel least worthy and most out of tune with ourselves. Indeed, it is often when we are at our lowest that we struggle to see the love and support around us. Think of times when the pressures of the world closed in, and then how it felt afterwards: how it can feel like a second life, a kind of rebirth.

And what happens next? Jesus says: now that you have received this peace, go out in the power of the Spirit and do what I send you to do. He sends the disciples to forgive sins, quite a big ask, and an extraordinary gift to offer. You who felt unworthy are now entrusted with an even greater task. This is what the spirit and meaning of Pentecost – the day we celebrate today – is all about. Often portrayed as "tongues of fire" descending on the disciples, it marks the moment when the universality and transferability of the message is revealed. Jesus the Divine becomes Jesus the instigator: no longer is sharing the love of God limited to him alone; we are all invited to play our part.

And how much this world needs people to step up and play their part. Over the past year, we have seen a decline in peace and a significant increase in war and violence. As you read this, it is likely that the news is filled with stories of suffering and humanity's failures, seen when peace and security are sought through the sword and the bomb.

Why make such a bold claim? Consider for a moment what has made you feel most at peace. It is most likely – like everyone – when you have felt secure within yourself. When you feel scared or threatened, that sense of security is shaken and must be rebuilt. Yet when you feel secure, you are able to offer your full self to others.

That sense of security is very unlikely to have come through violence. Conflict, perhaps: because conflict can clear the air and lead to resolution, but never violence. Why? Because violence leaves behind a trail of unresolved issues and unanswered questions which, if left unaddressed, simply sow the seeds for further conflict. So, Jesus's offer of peace is transformative because it brings assurance and security in a way no bomb or bullet ever could. Instead, it is about love and completeness. You are fully loved for who you are. And when you are at peace with yourself, you are able to share that love with others.

Sometimes, though – lest we expect neat conclusions – the offer of peace comes in the midst of peril and storm. Speak with those who live in situations of violence and uncertainty, and you will often hear a simple request: "Tell our story." Not because you can solve it, but because in telling it, they are no longer alone. They know, in their darkest moments, that someone else is thinking of them or even praying for them. How often have we felt encouraged by knowing someone is praying for us? That is the sense of security and completeness that the disciples felt when Jesus appeared and they recognised him. Almost like the prodigal son being welcomed home: the Father embracing them warmly, even if they felt more like the wayward child than the faithful one.

So, over the next week, take some time to reflect on your patterns of activity and rest. Consider what practices and principles help draw you nearer to God, and through that, into a deeper sense of peace. Notice what oppresses your soul and what liberates it.

When you feel oppressed or weary, take the risk of sitting with it before God, in prayer or in a place that brings you peace. In holding it there, you create space to encounter spiritual or practical support. It may come as a sign, or as a friend knocking on the door with a cup of tea. Either way, something may happen. And when you feel that sense of liberation, don't keep it to yourself, share it with others. The promise of Pentecost is that you will find the right words in the right way. All we need to do is be open and willing to act.

#### Questions to discuss

- When have you unexpectedly had a sense of God's presence – how did it feel and what happened?
- Think and share about what happens when you visit someone, often someone who sees few other people, how does it make them feel and how does it make you feel? What does that feeling tell you about the Peace of Christ?
- The gospel reading is set in a moment of hiding and concern – when have you felt liberated to share something of yourself that you kept hidden?
- Where do you find peace in your daily/weekly life – are there any particular places or spaces that bring on that feeling? Describe the places and why they make you feel that with others?
- Think of a time you felt far from God – share some of your experiences and how you felt. If you now feel closer again to God share what change happened.
- *Pray together for both situations and stories held.*

Amen.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Reflection written by John Cooper

## Hymn:

544 STF – As the deer pants for the water OR

377 STF – Down the mountain flows the river

## Prayers of intercession

*If you are able to project the responses in these prayers, or share print outs with members of the congregation, then you may wish to do so. Alternatively, you could have one voice saying the 'all' words, and another the 'leader' words.*

*Arrange 5 candles at the front and a taper. Make sure the candles and taper have been tested first!*

**All: God of Peace and God of Justice we pause before you to offer what is on our hearts and minds.**

Leader: As we light the **first candle** [*Either one of the voices involved in leading the prayer, or someone else, lights the candle*] we give thanks for the work and witness of this church. For its ecumenical connections and its place in our local circuit, district and the global Connexion.

We celebrate the work of its groups and the people that make up its community,  
Into this silence we lift before you our concerns for its work.

[SILENCE]

May we find the words we need

**All: to be your church of peace and justice in this place**

As we light the **second candle** we think of those people and places, where the violence of humanity means men, women and children cannot sleep easily tonight.

Of nations torn apart by warfare

And homes where a closed door hides acts of violence and fear.

We give thanks for those who seek to bring love and healing in all places of violence And pray for repentance of those who build peace through violence.

Into this silence we lift before you people and places caught up in violence:

[SILENCE]

May we find the actions we need.

**All: to be your people of peace and justice in this world.**

As we light the **third candle** we pray for decision makers in this land and around the globe.

Faced with unending and difficult choices they sit within a larger choice.

Guide their thoughts and their actions to follow your path of peace and justice.

May they prioritise words over war, reconciliation over separation.

Into this silence we lift before you all those in positions of power and privilege:

[SILENCE]

May all use the power they have

**All: To show your promise of peace and justice in this world**

As we light this **fourth candle** we think of those who do not feel at peace because of loneliness, separation, illness or despair, meaning your peace feels far away.

We pray for those in hospital, or long term care, who find a promise of peace through the work and knowledge of others

We pray for those who have died,  
that they have now found peace and that their families and loved ones encounter peace.

Into this silence we lift those know and named to us who need to feel your peace.

[SILENCE]

May we find words and action

**All: to be a people of peace through community when people are at their lowest.**

And finally we light the **fifth candle** for all those – including ourselves – who ever feel scared or afraid.

Into this silence we bring before you the people and places that deny us our peace:

[SILENCE]

May the clarity of light, and the warmth of the flame sit with us as reassurance.

**All: and may we never be too bold we don't take time to hold before you the times we need your peace.**

*OR – For a small group wishing music to reflect to lay out 5 pieces of paper around one candle:*

- Church
- War
- Leaders
- Illness
- Ourselves

*Invite people to write on post it notes the people and places they think of and to put the notes beside the relevant words. Then a short time of guided reflection.*

God of noise and God of silence

We turn to you and pray for peace.

We bring before you the people, places, times and spaces that need your presence for peace and to feel the energy of your breath.

*Then either play 'Slow me down by Porters Gate' or sing Look around you, can you see (Kyrie Eleison) STF 525 – as the music is played, invite people to walk around and look at the words and to pause and pray themselves.*

*We hear the pain, we see the need, let us be your breath of peace in world of pain.*

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

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

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<sup>5</sup> Prayers of intercession written by John Cooper



As we celebrate the birth of the church, O Lord,  
We know that there is much work still to be done today, and many opportunities to keep  
the story alive and renewed for this time.  
Guide us in our planning, our budgeting, our giving, our actions, and help us to use these  
gifts for your grace, we pray,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

**Hymn:**

411 STF – May the God of hope go with us every day OR

248 STF – I heard the voice of Jesus say

**Blessing**

The Spirit of God is inclusive, invitational and wild.  
The Spirit of God is ahead of you, already at work in the world out there.  
The Spirit of God invites you to join in the work of healing, hope and love,  
May you encounter that Spirit this day, and every day, we pray,

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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

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