

# **Christ Church, Ipswich**

**Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2020**

## **Pentecost Sunday Worship**

With Revd Neil Coulson

Hello, I hope you are all keeping well.  
Let us worship God together this Pentecost Sunday.

### **A call to worship**

Come, Holy Spirit; fill us with your peace.  
Come, Holy Spirit; unite us in our worship.  
Come, Holy Spirit; raise us by your power.  
Come, Holy Spirit, come now.

### **A gathering prayer**

Dear Lord, we gather in the name of Jesus  
and in the power of the Spirit to worship you.  
We bring gifts of speaking, of listening, of music,  
of prayerfulness, of knowledge, and of wisdom.  
May our gifts be united to honour you  
and may each of us receive from you that which we need.

**Amen.**

### **Hymn: There is a Redeemer**

There is a redeemer  
Jesus, God's own Son  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah  
Holy One,

*Thank you, O my Father,  
for giving us your Son,  
and leaving your Spirit  
till the work on Earth is done.*

Jesus, my Redeemer  
name above all names,  
precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
O, for sinners slain.

*Thank you, O my Father...*

When I stand in glory,  
I will see His face,  
and there I'll serve my King forever  
in that holy place.

*Thank you, O my Father...*

## A prayer of adoration

*Based on Psalm 104*

O Lord, your works are so diverse and so plentiful.  
 The earth is full of such a range of animals;  
 the vast and rolling oceans teem with creatures immense and tiny.  
 You provide for all with great generosity.  
 We will always praise you.  
 Our prayer will be empowered by your Spirit  
 and we will always praise you –  
 Father, Son and Spirit.  
**Amen.**

**Bible Reading:** Acts 2:1-21 (NRSV)

*The Coming of the Holy Spirit*

<sup>2</sup> When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. <sup>5</sup> Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. <sup>6</sup> And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. <sup>7</sup> Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, <sup>11</sup> Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” <sup>12</sup> All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” <sup>13</sup> But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

*Peter Addresses the Crowd*

<sup>14</sup> But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. <sup>15</sup> Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> ‘In the last days it will be, God declares, that 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. <sup>18</sup> Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. <sup>19</sup> And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. <sup>20</sup> The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day. <sup>21</sup> Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

## Reflection

The Jewish 'festival of weeks, the first fruits of the wheat harvest' (Exodus 34:22) was called Pentecost ('fiftieth') because it took place 50 days after the spring Passover festival (Leviticus 23:16). We note that Jesus observed the Passover with his disciples before his death (Luke 22:15) and the first Christians continued to observe the Pentecost (Acts 20:16; 1 Cor 16.8), which was celebrated on the fiftieth day of the season beginning on Easter Sunday. We also note that in the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, during Easter, Jesus ordered his disciples to wait in Jerusalem for 'the promise of the Father', that is, a baptism in the Spirit 'not many days from now' and Pentecost saw the fulfilment of this promise that they would be 'clothed with power from on high' (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,8; Acts 2).

By Jesus' time, Pentecost was a celebration of God's descending in the thunder and lightning that shook Mount Sinai (Exodus 19.16-19) to give the Law to Israel. The coming of the Spirit in Acts 2 'when the day of Pentecost had come' is about God's coming again with a power like that of wind and fire, but this time God is not giving the Law but giving the Spirit, as Hebrew prophets Joel and Jeremiah had foretold: 'I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people' (Jeremiah 31.33).

We read that the people from many nations who were in Jerusalem to celebrate Pentecost were 'devout' Jews. But we quickly discover that this is only part of a much bigger picture – actually, the universal nature of the gift of the Spirit is clearly anticipated both by the long list of nations they represent and by Joel's great vision: 'In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh'.

I think our reading in Acts mostly draws our attention to the power of God in the 'sound like the rush of a violent wind' and the 'divided tongues as of fire'. And then there's an amazing linguistic event in which people with different languages from 'every nation under heaven' (that is, from across the known world), were, in that moment, hearing, and so surely understanding, the words of the Spirit filled disciples in their own language. What an amazing, empowering and extraordinarily uniting experience!

As we observe how on this special day, each one's native language is heard, and in Peter's preaching on Joel, that the young will see visions and the old will dream dreams, I like the way this strongly suggests to us that the Spirit gives different gifts and inspires different activities. This is very encouraging and empowering. As we seek to share and be good news to all people in our world today, with those who share our language and with those with other 'native languages', we wonder: How might the Spirit speak through us? What might the Spirit inspire us to do? What might the Spirit lead us to do to build bridges and foster unity within our community and beyond?

## Hymn: Lord of the church, we pray for our renewing

Lord of the church, we pray for our renewing:

Christ over all, our undivided aim.

Fire of the Spirit, burn for our enduring,  
wind of the Spirit, fan the living flame!

We turn to Christ amid our fear and failing,  
the will that lacks the courage to be free,  
the weary labours, all but unavailing,  
to bring us nearer what a church should be.

Lord of the church, we seek a Father's blessing,  
a true repentance and a faith restored,  
a swift obedience and a new possessing,  
filled with the Holy Spirit of the Lord!

We turn to Christ from all our restless striving,  
unnumbered voices with a single prayer:  
the living water for our souls' reviving,  
in Christ to live, and love and serve and care.

Lord of the church, we long for our uniting,  
 true to one calling, by one vision stirred;  
 one cross proclaiming and one creed reciting,  
 one in the truth of Jesus and his word.  
 So lead us on; till toil and trouble ended,  
 one church triumphant one new song shall sing,  
 to praise his glory, risen and ascended,  
 Christ over all, the everlasting King!

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### **Our prayers of intercession**

Holy Spirit of peace,  
 we pray for homes and nations where there is discord and conflict.  
 Pour out your breath of peace that people  
 may listen to each other;  
 may respect one another;  
 may honour each other.  
 Holy Spirit, hear us.  
**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

Holy Spirit of hope,  
 we pray for those who live in despair;  
 for those who can see no purpose in their lives;  
 for those who cannot see a way ahead;  
 for those who feel completely alone.  
 Holy Spirit, hear us.  
**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

Holy Spirit of unity,  
 we pray for your Church,  
 for its ministry to the faithful;  
 for its mission to the world.  
 May the Spirit of Pentecost breathe upon us,  
 that we may witness to the world  
 the comfort, meaning and love that you offer.  
 Heal our differences and make us one in you.  
 Holy Spirit, hear us.  
**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

We pray for all who are suffering and all who mourn because of the Coronavirus.  
 We pray for your blessing upon all who work in the NHS, social care and all key sectors.  
 We also pray at this challenging time for your blessing upon all teachers, school staff and all involved in  
 education as they seek to do what is best for the children in their care. Grant them wisdom and  
 strength and bless too all their students as they seek to learn and grow, whether in school or at home.  
 Holy Spirit, hear us.  
**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**

We pray for those we know and love who are in need of your healing and help.  
 We continue to hold Jo, and all the Robertsons, in our prayers.  
 We keep Pat Smith, who has a painful foot, in our thoughts and prayers.  
 We pray for Isobel who has now moved from Bluebird Lodge to Prince George House Care Home.  
*A moment of quiet for your own thoughts and prayers for those in need.*  
 Holy Spirit, hear us.  
**Come, Holy Spirit, come.**  
 In the name of our Saviour we pray.  
**Amen.**

Rejoicing in God's love,  
we pray with confidence as Jesus has taught us....

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on 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 Blessing**

May the power of the Spirit challenge you.  
May the peace of the Spirit comfort you.  
May the presence of the Spirit enable you  
to live in love and service in the name of Christ.  
Amen.

May the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be upon us all,  
and those we love,  
today and always,  
Amen.

### **The Grace**

(As we do each week in this season, we say the words of The Grace imagining that we are saying them together, to one another, in our Sanctuary)

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all,  
for evermore.  
Amen.**

May God bless you all richly,  
With our love and best wishes to you and your families,

*Neil*

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