

Preparation:

1. The readings set this Sunday include: **1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 • Acts 2:1-21 • John 7:37-39**
2. You may want to read some or all of these readings before starting your worship – or include them after the first prayer.
3. When preparing for this worship, find a place and time where you can be comfortable for half an hour, preferably where you cannot be disturbed. (Turn off the TV!).
4. Place something that speaks to you of God's Spirit in a place where you can focus on it. This is the Spirit who is like fire or wind, coming to us and offering comfort.
5. For the hymns, you can sing them if you are able, or you can read the words out loud – or silently if that seems better – or you may be able to find them on YouTube or elsewhere on the internet.
6. There is a short YouTube introduction to worship if you wish to follow the link: <https://youtu.be/TEjewgVrPh8>
7. When you are ready, light a candle/tea light if it helps you to focus. This can mean many things to you but maybe bear in mind the words of the psalmist: "I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being." (Psalm 104:33)
8. Now, sit down, relax your body and your breathing...
9. Welcome to worship!

Order for worship on 31st May 2020



Worship on Sunday 31st May - Pentecost

Notes for worship preparation are on the other side of this sheet.

Call to worship:

Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water. *John 7:38b*

Hymn 391: O breath of life

Prayer: Holy Spirit come to us, kindle in us the fire of your love. Burn away all that keeps us cold or unresponsive to your call or our neighbours need. Forgive us where we need forgiveness. Blow on the embers of our hearts, even those hidden under the ashes, revive the flame within us. **Amen**

Gospel reading from Acts 2

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. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. (verses 17-18)

Reflection

On the day of Pentecost the loss of the physical Jesus ten days earlier (at the Ascension) was suddenly not the latest news. A new thing was happening in Jerusalem, and that morning the news was spreading fast. Were they drunk – those followers of the crucified Galilean? Or was it true, that the Spirit of God, which had moved over the face of the waters in the beginning, as creation was breathed into life, the Spirit which breathed the breath into Adam, the Spirit that animates all living things, that same Spirit was visiting the early church, to animate, comfort, protect and speak on their behalf?

This Spirit did not discriminate in the way human beings do. This Spirit made it clear that God's comfort was for all people. The comforter had been promised to the disciples by Jesus, but at Pentecost the Spirit became available to all.

When Jesus said, "Father forgive them," as he looked, from the cross, upon

Romans, Jewish Authorities and all the people. Jesus did not limit his forgiveness or discriminate against certain onlookers and single them out as the ones to blame, as we humans so often are willing to do.

At Pentecost the good news was spoken to all the onlookers in a language each one understood. The message of God's presence was for all, whether they were men or women, slaves or free, Jews or proselytes. The Spirit moved, bringing hope and God's prophetic word to all people.

It may feel sometimes that we could do with another burst of the Spirit's animation in this time of lockdown, but actually, whatever we are doing, the wind – spirit (same word in Greek) still blows, if only we can feel it. We cannot capture the Spirit, nor can we tell the wind which way to blow, but it is there, invisible, keeping us all alive.

Pentecost reminds us that we are not just physically alive because of the wind – the air, but we are alive because of God's Spirit which dwells in each person. It is that spirit we ask, at Pentecost particularly, to reinvigorate our faith and bring us together again as Christ's living body.

Hymn 380: Holy breath of God

Pray (adding your own intercessions)

- For people risking their lives so that others may live
- For actors, music makers and artists who cannot perform
- For all who have lost jobs or cannot work at the moment
- For our church as we wait until we can meet again in person
- For places of worship in our city and throughout the world

Holy Spirit comfort and restore us.

Lord's prayer

Hymn 397: The Spirit lives

Blessing:

Holy Spirit, by your breath reanimate us in the coming week. Make us fully alive to praise you and give you glory. God of Glory, bless us, keep us, shine your face upon us and be gracious to us, this day, and always. **Amen**