

A Pentecost Reflect for worship – 31st May 2020

(have you made your flame like doves or dove like flames)

Call to worship: Holy Spirit of God
Come into our lives. Fill them with your love.
Come into your church. Fill it with your power.
Come into your world. Fill it with your peace.
That all creation may know you as a living God.

SING: Spirit divine, attend our prayers,
R&S and make this house your home;
303 descend with all your gracious powers;
oh come, great Spirit, come.

Pray; Holy Spirit of God come among us, move amongst us. Work amongst us. Breathe life into our worship and love into our hearts and light into our witness. Come as fire refining and cleansing. Come as the wind blowing the cobwebs from our lives. Come as a dove enfolding us in your peace. Come to us, move in us, work through us now and always. Heavenly Father we pray about this sad time we are living through and pray that we will be delivered from this soon, so that we may once more gather with our friends to worship You together. Come again now we ask and through your grace work within us dissolving all that is wrong in our lives. Open our hearts to all you would say and all you would do amongst us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reading: Acts: chapter 2 – *Cynthia's thoughts*

We don't usually read the whole of Acts Chapter 2 in one go, which includes Peter's sermon. So now we have sometime on our hands perhaps we can sit and read the whole chapter. Maybe we will stumble over the names of the places the crowds came from. In Jesus' time there were more Jews living around the Mediterranean area. Many travelled to Jerusalem for this festival time. A special celebration of fifty days after Passover. The Festival of Weeks at the end of the corn harvest, later for Christians called Pentecost.

The disciples were together, when suddenly they all experienced something which completely changed their lives. They heard the sound like a strong wind and saw flames of fire; they were filled with Gods Spirit. They began praising God. The Spirit enabled them to speak.

Peter suddenly became an impressive speaker and he took this opportunity to speak to the crowd. Peter said God was at work as he has id through the prophet Joel (v28-32) and that he would give his Spirit too all people. This passage is full of significance, the prophesy would be known to his listeners and they would witness clear evidence of the ancient scripture being fulfilled. Peter reminds the crowd that Jesus was no ordinary man for his ministry was obviously from God. In fact, he was the long-awaited messiah come to set his people free. The prophet said that the messiah would suffer, and the Jews used the Romans to be the means of this. But God raised Jesus to life again and from his came the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter urged his listeners to be baptised. They would be forgiven as they observed their repentance and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. A new beginning.

We can share this new beginning, God's Holy Spirit is our daily companion – urging, comforting inspiring us, a gift from God. We will again be able to share in fellowship together again. We know how God will never fail us.

Pray: We thank O God for choosing us to be your people, give us the courage of Peter, that we may be your witnesses in the power of Jesus name.

Reading: Reading: John 20: 19-23

Reflection; Ready for the new “normal”

I am so sorry for using that phrase. But it seems so apt! And it is the phrase used by a recent United Reformed Church Booklet. (See June newsletter) In the midst of lockdown, some are looking forward to a new normal. Others are more cautious and hoping to go back to normal. But we are told we can never be the same. Never go back. As Hermione Granger said to Harry Potter at the end of the book Goblet of Fire when they realised the evil Lord Voldemort had returned. “Everything is going to change now isn't it?” “Yes” Says Harry simply.

As Cynthia says her thoughts on Acts2, when Gods Spirit changed the lives of Peter, the disciples, and the crowds they were changed and could not go back. Pentecost is nothing if it is not about change. The spirit changed them. Like the wind never knowing which way it blows. Like fire burning in your heart. Like a dove quietly lifting your souls. Like the wonder of the shared language.(although was not that they all spoke the “same” words. But that they understood each other’s). Change happens in a myriad of ways. Love changes everything. There is always a response to love.

We cannot stop the Spirit of God coming into the world. In that way there will always be a new normal. And it will be no different after lockdown. Maybe a new appreciation of creation. Maybe a new acknowledgment of climate change. Maybe a new recognition of our dependence on one another. Maybe a new gratefulness to the underpaid care and key worker services. Maybe a new welcoming of Gods gifts of slowing down. A new welcoming Gods gifts of ourselves and of life again.

In Harry Potter the changes were not just about a return of evil. It was that Harry and his friends were growing up. Unlike the seven Harry Potter books however there is no closure to life. Troubles will arise out of every temporary resolution. As darkness looms on the horizon people will flourish in the uniqueness of Gods gifts given to humankind of loving and living, even post tragedy. Everything will change. Gods spirit will continue to come among us. “And some said they were drunk”. (v13) Perhaps they were. And we can be too on these goblets of fire!

SING: There’s a Spirit in the air,
R&S telling Christians everywhere
329 “Praise the love that Christ revealed,
 Living, working in our world.”

May the Spirit fill our praise,
Guide out thoughts and change our ways;
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrows life today

PENTECOST PRAISE AND INTERCESSION

Pray: *(Use the dove/flame template as we pray. See how it can be a dove or a flame. We see how the Holy Spirit gives power, wisdom, peace. Hold the flame. How does the Holy Spirit helps you? Are you seeking the power and wisdom or the peace? Place your dove/flame prominently for you. Hold for the future when we can meet).*

Jesus bestowed it,
Gave to us freely,
Our blessed Comforter,
God’s dearest gift.

When life’s against us,
When times are hardest,
There to support us,
God’s dearest gift.

When we are struggling
Then we can claim it,
Call on our Helper,
God’s dearest gift.

Open our hearts now,
Welcome it gladly,
Come, Holy Spirit,
God’s dearest gift.

Equipping the Church – Prayers Stephen Best (Ephesians 1: 15-23)

Paul prayed for the Church We pray in very different times.
May we as Christ’s Church be equipped. Not for glory,
but so, we can better fulfil our potential.

And may we as Christ’s Church be empowered; not for our own
protection and perseveration, but so we can better risk doing the
will of the one who is both our head and fullness.

For all peoples of the earth to know you. For the healing of nations and a
new thirst for righteousness and purity at every level and aspect of society.
With our whole selves we pray:

Come, Holy Spirit of God.

SING:
R&S
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Come down O Love Divine.
Seek thou this soul of mine
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O comforter draw near
Within my heart appear,
and kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.