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PENTECOST SUNDAY A

28th May 2023

A short act of worship and daily devotions

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Opening prayers

The Spirit is here,
And I welcome her into the dance of worship, learning, love and prayer that is this
space for reflection and turning aside.

The Spirit is here,
And this day, I listen, listen to the whispers and nudges she has for me in our time
together.

The Spirit is out there,
Calling me beyond this time, into the week ahead, with grace and peace and hope in
my hearts.

Happy Pentecost!

[Pause]

Eternal God,

I thank you for knowing that my words will never be enough to encompass my
gratitude and love for you,
and for giving us the Holy Spirit to intercede on our behalf,
letting my groans and wordless prayers be welcomed into your presence.

Thank you for teaching me the power of sacrificial love.

I give thanks today for the reminder that you are at work,
within each of us,
through us,
around us,
everywhere.

Help me to be your Pentecost people,
declaring the power of the spirit,
helping to bring justice,
show mercy,
walk humbly,
and seek your will.

Lord Jesus,
fill my heart today with the fire that cannot be put out,
quench my thirst that can only be satisfied by you,
guide me on the path you have laid out before me.

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on us,
we pray.

Amen.

**You may now wish to say the Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with
which you are comfortable.**

Hymn:

151 STF – This is the day the Lord has made - [YouTube](#)

Reading: John 7:37-39 – [Click for reading](#)

Acts 2:1-21 – [Click for reading](#)

Response to the reading

Here is a poem for Pentecost Sunday:

What strange new thing is this story?
In all our comfort and reflected glory,
Sitting in our soft chairs and staring at the nice paintings,
Thinking about how far we've come,
How much we've done,
How clever we are - cleverer by far than any of them 'out there'.

It's church and the urge to get out and meet people
Has faded, over the years.
Faded with the tears about how we'll never really grow,
And we'll never really know
What it would be like if we'd never built this place,
Got comfy in this space,
And drifted into a deep spiritual sleep.

Then, this strange story turns up, once a year,
To make us all quake with fear,
That maybe these days, and the ways we are playing
At being church, and saying the same things we've always said:
Those ways might be dead,
Or need to be dead,
So we can be alive,
So we can fly on the wings of the Spirit,
Out beyond our walls and the pitfalls of being church,
To scratch the deep urge in people for connection,
For hope,
For love,
For God,
Descending as fire and taking us higher, no matter the cost.
Welcome friends, to the revolution that is Pentecost.
[Pause].

Spend a few minutes in reflection on this poem:

- How does the poem make you feel? Does it resonate with your experience of Pentecost, or not?
- Does it make you think differently about Pentecost? How do the lines about 'drifting into a spiritual sleep' and 'playing at being church' make you feel?
- Are there ways in which God is at work amongst 'sleepy' churches?
- How does it look when we, as a church, are 'flying on the wings of the Spirit'?

When you are ready, say this prayer:

God of all grace,

Thank you for the miracle of Pentecost, for the way it is an invitation into following you and seeing your Spirit at work in our lives.

Thank you for the conversation we've just had, and the way you are at work in that too, prompting us to know more of you, and to share your love with the world.

In the stillness, we call out some of the words and sentences that came to us or we shared during that conversation, offering them as part of this prayer:

[Hold a period of quiet, you might like to share some of your own words and sentences to help people feel comfortable shouting out]

God of all grace,

Show us how to be a Pentecost people again today.

Amen.

Finally, setting aside the poem and your responses to it, return to the Pentecost story, and spend a moment thinking about how you would respond to the question of the crowd in Acts 2, verse 12, where:

Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

What does Pentecost mean to you?

Why not make some notes about this and possibly share with a friend or neighbour this week.

Hymn:

503 STF – Love divine all loves excelling - [YouTube](#)

Blessing

Go in peace, as one of God's Pentecost people, and may the Spirit of God go with you.

Go in peace, and build a better world, in Jesus' name,

Amen.

Prayers and Prayer Pointers for the Week

Monday 29th May

- What does the good news of the Gospel feel like to you?
- Can you express it as a prayer of thanks in just a sentence or two?
- Once you have chosen or written your sentences, why not find someone to share that prayer with – as a text, or over the phone, or via email, or by chatting to someone today.

Tuesday 30th May

- Do you have a favourite poem or song?
- It doesn't have to be explicitly Christian. Consider the ways the good news of God is communicated through the words.
- If it helps, use these words as a prayer today, perhaps humming or repeating them over and over again during the day.

Wednesday 31st May

- God of love,
Today I pray for refugees and exiles all around the world,
Those who are living in fear and have fled the place they call home.
Show me how to show love to those in need,
To be a place of sanctuary to all who encounter me,
In Jesus' name,
Amen.

Thursday 1st June

- Think about how God is at work in the lives of everyone.
- You can see God shining out from all people.
- Remember this with the next person you speak to, and give thanks for the glimpses of God you see in them.

Friday 2nd June

- Go outdoors and find something natural: a stone, leaf, flower, or something else.
- Consider the ways God has made this thing and then reflect on how you too are wonderfully made by God. What does this mean to you?

Saturday 3rd June

- Pour a glass of water.
- Think about the things you do that get in the way of your relationship with God. You might think it muddies the water of your life, but God forgives us for all these things, and offers us living water.
- Drink some of the water and give thanks for the way God reaches out to you with love and forgiveness.