

28th May, 2023

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe,

light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

Who Breaks The Power
Of Sin And Darkness
Whose Love Is Mighty
And So Much Stronger
The King Of Glory The
King Above All Kings

Who Brings Our Chaos
Back Into Order
Who Makes The Orphan A
Son And Daughter
The King Of Glory The
King Above All Kings

Who Shakes The Whole
Earth With Holy Thunder
Who Leaves Us Breathless
In Awe And Wonder
The King Of Glory The
King Above All Kings

Who Rules The Nations
With Truth And Justice
Shines Like The Sun In
All Of Its Brilliance
The King Of Glory The
King Above All Kings

This Is Amazing Grace
This Is Unfailing Love
That You Would Take My Place
That You Would Bear My Cross
You Laid Down Your Life
That I Would Be Set Free
Jesus I Sing For
All That You Have Done For Me

Worthy Is The Lamb Who Was Slain
Worthy Is The King Who
Conquered The Grave
Worthy Is The Lamb Who Was Slain
Worthy Is The King Who
Conquered The Grave.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright: The King's Spirit.

Read Acts 2.1-21 John 7.37-39

Today is Pentecost Sunday. We all need the Holy Spirit!

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is a sign of new birth in Christ – *'no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.'* (John 3:5). It is a sign of our membership of God's family – *'the Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are God's children'* (Romans 8:16). And the Holy Spirit is a guarantee of eternal life – *'... you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance ...'* (Ephesians 1:13-14).

Through the Holy Spirit, we have access to the Father (Ephesians 2:18), and by the Spirit, transformation into the likeness of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).

The Holy Spirit brings, Creation (the Spirit hovered over the waters); life and refreshment to dead and dry lives; fruit-full characters like Jesus (Galatians 5:22-23); and supernatural ability to equip the Church for mission.

In our John passage Jesus declares the Holy Spirit will come as a refreshing, life giving flood. Those hearing would have recalled both, the water gifted from the rock in the Moses story (Exodus 17 & Numbers 20) – this water refreshed and kept alive the nation travelling through the desert. And, they would have remembered Ezekiel's vision of the water flowing from the temple (Ezekiel 47), bringing life, and a superabundance of fruitfulness and healing to all in its reach.

Here in our Acts passage Peter announces the coming of the Holy Spirit in fulfilment of Jesus' words and Joel's prophecy: ¹⁷ *"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. ¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.'*

In our study of the Sermon on the Mount we see Jesus challenging people to a seemingly impossible height. Matt said last week, we need help, and pointed to this week as something of answer. The Sermon on the Mount moves people from external religious compliance as an act of will, to the transformation of motivation, attitude, essentially of heart. Ezekiel had, moved by God, foretold this: *'I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in*

you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.' (Ezekiel 36:26-27 & 11:19).

Our society needs Spirit-filled Jesus-shaped people – those with this new heart. Galatians tells us: ²²*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,* ²³*gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* ²⁴*Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.* ²⁵*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.'* (Galatians 5:22-25)

Consider what our families, our communities, our society and politics would look like if we lived like this – imagine, just one human conflict and imagine, Jesus walking in. We are called to take on the family likeness – to be like Jesus in our character.

Notice that it's one fruit – not fruits. One implication of this is that, like with a wooden barrel, where the lowest plank is where the water pours out, so our weakest point risks being the limit of our character. We all need help! Thank God for his grace and mercy! We can receive his forgiveness and he gives more, we can receive his Spirit to help us!

As Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 12-14, our character, our fruitfulness, is more important than gift – but ideally, we will develop both!

Our Church needs Spirit-empowered and Jesus-proclaiming people. We need more of God's presence, we need to hear His Word, and experience His power. We need a fresh anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we need along with the Church down the ages to be praying 'More Lord.' 'Go on being filled', says Ephesians.

As a church we need more resources for the different ministries – individuals, seeking God for fruit and Spirit equipped. God is less worried about ability and more about availability – are we available to God and open to his Holy Spirit? Ask, God gives generously! The promise of the Holy Spirit is for us all, and we all need to seek a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit.

Be available, ask, and receive!

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Pentecost: God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Almighty God, in Christ you make all things new: transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your heavenly glory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 21st June at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 28th June at 11am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise TBA.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.