

THIS IS THE DAY THAT THE SPIRIT CAME, ALLELUIA!

A Service for Pentecost Sunday

Action Prayer

In the beginning your Spirit hovered over the waters.
(make two fingers on each hand do a walking motion)

Thank you, God, for your ever-present Spirit.
(make wave motions with hands)

Later your Spirit called to Sarah and Abraham to a new journey with you.
(blow as hard as you can)

Thank you, God, for your ever-present Spirit.
(make wave motions with hands)

As time went on your Spirit spoke through the prophet Ezekiel and brought dry bones to life.
(make a beckoning motion)

Thank you, God, for your ever-present Spirit.
(make wave motions with hands)

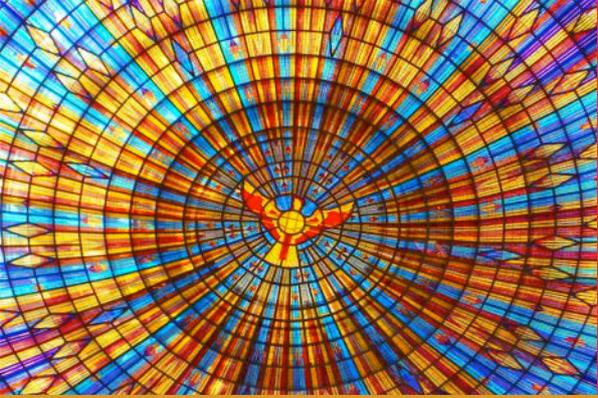
At the dawn of a new era your Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness.
(create a heart shape with your hands)

Thank you, God, for your ever-present Spirit.
(make wave motions with hands)

Jesus promised that your Spirit would never leave those who love him and keep his commandments.

Thank you, God, for your ever-present Spirit.
(make wave motions with hands)

Amen



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Address from Rev. Barbara

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

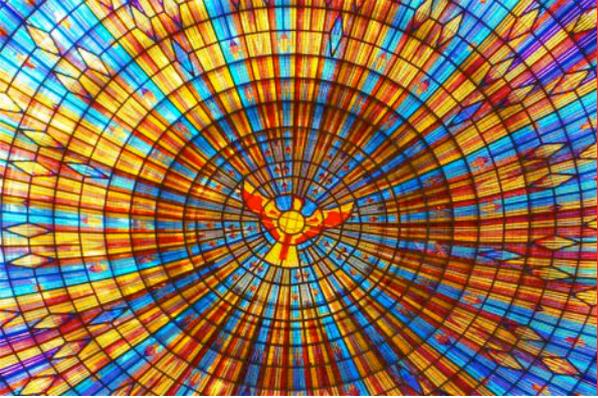
Hello – it is good to be sharing in worship with you at Pentecost when we think about the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples in a powerful way. The Holy Spirit has been described in many ways: as the breath of God, as wind, fire, comforter, advocate, guide, companion, wisdom, dove, wild goose. I wonder which one or ones you find most helpful or like best? I began with the grace which includes the words:

the fellowship of the Holy Spirit – the presence of God with us.

At baptism we are offered the gift of the Holy Spirit – but perhaps if we were baptised as babies it may be rather like a pilot light in a gas boiler. As you know a boiler needs to be turned on to work – to be set to provide power and then whoosh ... suddenly it is powered up and produces heat. We can control a boiler but we cannot control the Holy Spirit though if we want and pray and wait expectantly with open hearts we are promised the Holy Spirit will come to us. So when we are older and decide for ourselves we want to follow Jesus we can pray for the Holy Spirit and wait expectantly with open hearts.

That is what Jesus at his Ascension into Heaven told his followers to do – to wait expectantly for the coming of the Holy Spirit. This happened for them 10 days after the Ascension during the Jewish Pentecost festival which remembers the giving of the Jewish Law and the end of Harvest. The disciples were suddenly filled with amazing boldness, energy, enthusiasm and ability – all doubts and fears gone – driven outside their locked room to share the message of new life in Christ to the large crowds gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the festival.

How do we know if we have the gift of the Spirit? Do we have to have a dramatic experience like those first disciples? Do we have to speak in tongues? Actually at Pentecost the disciples' words were understood by people in the crowd unlike ecstatic utterance which is known today as speaking in tongues.



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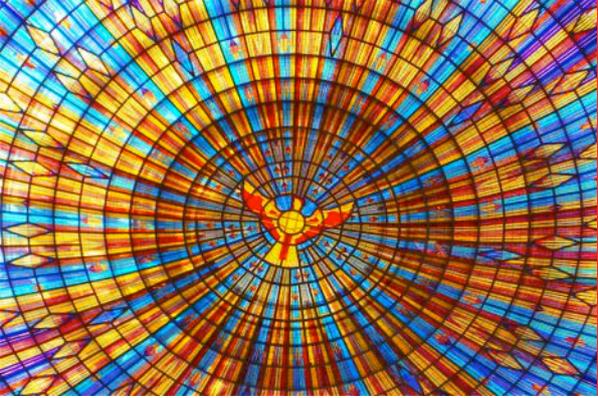
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A Modern creed I find helpful states: the Holy Spirit transforms us into the likeness of Christ. We need to want to be transformed, to pray in expectation. Our goal: to be like Jesus – Christ-like. The question we perhaps need to ask ourselves is: are the fruits of the Spirit obvious in our lives? St Paul writes in his letter to the Galatians (5:22) that there are 9 fruits of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. I always find hearing this list a challenge and a reminder of how I need to ask God to help me to continue growing these fruits to become more Christ-like.

Here is another heating illustration.... Are you a thermometer or a thermostat? A thermometer can show what the temperature is but cannot change it whereas a thermostat can tell the temperature and also transform the surrounding temperature if need be to make it hotter or cooler and more comfortable for those around. I think we need to be thermostats as the same modern creed as I mentioned before also says that the Holy Spirit teaches, guides and empowers us to be co-workers with God. We are transformed not just for our own benefit but also to share in God's mission of transforming the world around us. We are to be co-workers helping to bring God's kingdom of love, justice and peace into being. The Holy Spirit can work through us ordinary as we are and do extraordinary things.

When have you known power of Holy Spirit in your life? For me it has been in times of crisis when I have prayed to God for strength and guidance and waited expectantly for it – when I have acknowledged that I could not manage alone. I have also known the Holy Spirit in ordinary everyday times challenge me unexpectedly and nudge me to step out of my comfort zone.

So which descriptions of the Holy Spirit do you like? Breath of God, wind, fire, comforter, advocate, guide, companion, wisdom, dove or wild goose. I do like the last one the Celtic image of the wild goose – untamed, disturbing – there is an Iona song which describes the



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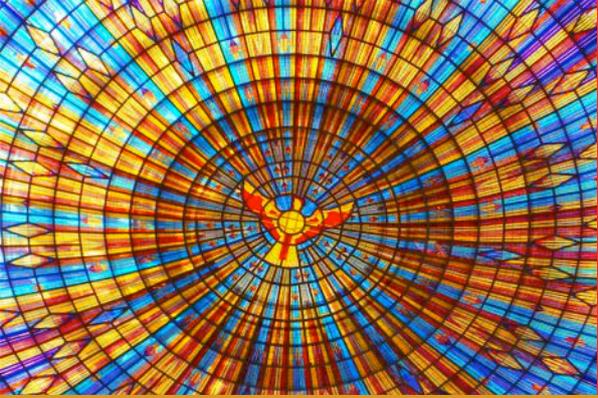
Holy Spirit as the enemy of apathy. This reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a dynamic force leading us forward stopping us being complacent with our lives and what is going on in the world. But maybe during these uncertain and anxious days of the coronavirus we may feel the need of the Holy Spirit as comforter or companion or maybe a guide or a giver of wisdom if we have difficult decisions to make about the future. Whatever happens I pray that each one of us may seek to become more Christ-like and be emboldened to share by our words and actions day by day in the transformation of the whole of creation through the power of Holy Spirit.

I finish with a prayer:

Let us pray: Come, Holy Spirit, make us messengers of your good news of abundant life for all. Gift us with energy, passion, wisdom and boldness.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill our lives and warm our hearts with your breath of courage that we may always be open to your newness, and follow where you lead us. In the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.



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Poem *Picture of Pentecost from Katrina*

God

Breathed

And

Explosion

Of

Fluorescent colours – vibrant red, radiant orange, sunshine yellow

Dancing flames

Words bubbling out of mouths of speakers who couldn't understand what they were saying

Complete strangers translating as they heard familiar words

Joyfully shouting and screaming simultaneously

Holy Spirit blowing

Excitement

Incomprehension

Rejoicing

Spectacular affirmation by God of His people

For some – fear – fear of not being able to control what was happening

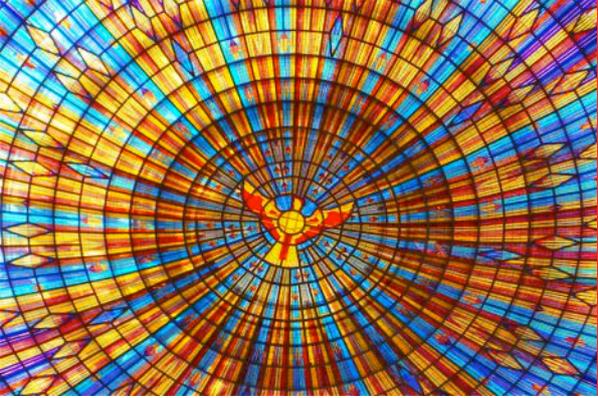
Cacophony of voices as people talked with each other

Talked at each other

Talked over each other

Stirring of many emotions and responses

Enjoyment of sharing with friends what individuals were



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experiencing

Feeling invigorated

Disbelief – could this really be happening to them? Ordinary people going about their everyday business?

Reminding each other of what they had heard Jesus say;

What He had done

Some would be reliving memories of being with him when he

Dramatically

Broke bread and shared wine

With the hands which had shaped the world and were to be

Nailed and

Broken

Others of being with him when someone was healed; restored and renewing life

Some would remember the things they had done for Him be it anointing Him lovingly with oil

Or providing hospitality and care

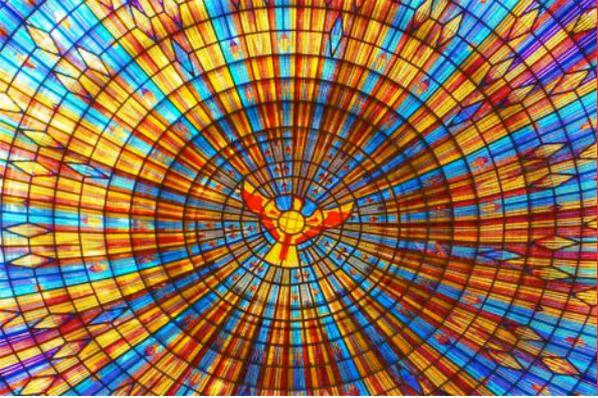
Recalling their terror and despair when Jesus was arrested, tried and crucified

And their inexpressible elation when they encountered Him risen and

Still loving them

Even though many had failed Him in different ways despite being His friends.

Laughing again as they pictured a huge camel squeezing through the needle's eye



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An impossibility

But learning that with God all things are possible.

Fizzing, frothing babble of sounds

For some fear – fear of being asked by God to do something they would not choose to do

Or to speak to someone they would not normally associate with

Sense of being in God's majestic presence

Questions and answers tumbling around

Movement of hands and bodies gesturing to accompany speech

Jumping up and down in sheer exhilaration

Unknown,

Unimaginable to them that a world wide church was being born

That people of many nations represented there and nations even yet to exist

That people of generations to come

Would be added to their numbers.

God had

Breathed the Holy Spirit upon them

As Jesus had promised.