

Greatham, Empshott and Hawkley with Priors Dean - Prayers at Home

Order of Service

31st May 2020 – Pentecost

Hymn

O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up the gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat;
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Introduction

Today is Pentecost or Whitsun. Pentecost – a Greek word meaning 'fiftieth day' – yes, it is 50 days since Easter. It is the Greek name for the Jewish Feast of Weeks which fell on the 50th day after Passover. It was the day when the Holy Spirit fell upon the disciples, almost crashing down and if you read the account in Acts there was wind and fire and the cacophony of different languages but still everyone could understand. Whitsun is the English word for it and probably has its origin in the white robes that people wore for Baptism.

If you have the opportunity, read the account in Acts 2 – its printed out in the order of service for today. The Gospel reading from St John which young Ollie reads for us offers a more intimate moment where the risen Christ appeared to the disciples behind locked doors.



"O Thou Who Camest from Above" was published by Charles Wesley in 1762. It is the fourth in a series of twenty-one hymns written on Leviticus. Though the hymn appears in well over 100 collections, the text in the second stanza, "There let it for thy glory burn with inextinguishable blaze," is said to be the reason this hymn was not used in many collections. John Wesley edited the line to read, "There let it for thy glory burn with ever bright undying blaze." The problem was the word "inextinguishable" – just too many syllables for congregational singing! Five syllables they thought was pushing the boundaries but six!

This hymn uses the passage from Leviticus 6:13, "The fire shall ever be burning upon the altar, it shall never go out". This passage is the Lord speaking to Moses to command Aaron and his sons about the ritual of the burnt offering. In many churches a candle or light is kept burning in the sanctuary.

The composer of the tune HEREFORD, Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876), was the son of Samuel, Charles's son. A famous performer and composer of hymn tunes, church services, works for organ, anthems, and psalm settings he was organist at Hereford Cathedral.

Charles Wesley, 1707-1788, the great hymn writer of the Wesley family, is said to have written over 8900 hymns or poems. He was the youngest son and the eighteenth child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, born at Epworth Rectory on December 18, 1707. Charles and his brother, John, became known as the "Oxford Methodists," as they set about to reform the Church of England.

Collect

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.

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power." ¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" ¹³But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

¹⁴But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷'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.

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

¹⁹And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,

before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

²¹Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.'

Psalm 104:25-37

People go forth to their work
and to their labour until the evening. [R]

O Lord, how manifold are your works!
In wisdom you have made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.

There is the sea, spread far and wide,
and there move creatures beyond number, both small and great.

There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan
which you have made to play in the deep.

All of these look to you
to give them their food in due season.

When you give it them, they gather it;
you open your hand and they are filled with good.

When you hide your face they are troubled;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return again to the dust.

When you send forth your spirit, they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth. [R]

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
may the Lord rejoice in his works;

He looks on the earth and it trembles;
he touches the mountains and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;
I will make music to my God while I have my being.

So shall my song please him
while I rejoice in the Lord.

Let sinners be consumed out of the earth
and the wicked be no more.
Bless the Lord, O my soul.
Alleluia.

A reading from the Gospel of John

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Reflection

There's a Dominican saying: 'If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.'

Most of us have seen our plans turned upside down but just imagine the disciples in that upper room, or the thousands of people who showed up in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost. The disciples had planned a quiet evening in to work out what to do next. The pilgrims in Jerusalem had tuned up for a festival – expecting the same thing that had happened there year after year for hundreds of years. And then whoosh -the violent sights, scenes and noises in Jerusalem turned everything upside down and the presence of the risen Christ breathing over his disciples changed everything l....and the Church was born.

God the creator shaped it; Jesus came as its focus of truth and life; and the Holy Spirit, the gift that binds it together.

If the disciples tried to make a plan of what the church would look like 2000 years on they'd have be surprised with what the church is now but not surprised that the Holy Spirit does the unexpected, still turns things upside down and still enables us to belong to God - and to each other.

A slightly worrying thing for those of us who like to be in control, and I include myself in that group, is that the Holy Spirit doesn't have much regard for the status quo. The Holy spirit will, if we let it, change us so that we like the people in Jerusalem or the disciples in the locked room come to know more about God and therefore, more about ourselves.

At the moment, the thought of Jesus breathing over his disciples is a bit disturbing. We very much get the point of how dangerous it can be if what comes out of our mouths is in any way infected. Rightly we have learnt to protect ourselves from each other with masks and with distance. But turn that upside down and imagine something so pure as that which emanated from the mouth of Jesus or so powerful that filled the square in Jerusalem. So life giving then as now to be the gift of God that binds us as the people of God today.

So make God laugh and tell him your plans.

But then be open to what God might want to say to you.

How do we do that?

Praying is a pretty good place to start. But if you don't want to change, don't pray. If you do want to change and know more of God, then do. But praying is more than say words; it is about listening and waiting; it is about being surprised when all of a sudden what you have planned becomes something else.

So take a risk and let God have a little more control over who you are and who you might become.

Prayers



Let us pray

Spirit of the living God, in your world:

bring wisdom, compassion and humanity to the leaders of this and very nation

befriend and accompany those who are isolated or alone

be with the poor, the homeless, the prisoner and the destitute.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



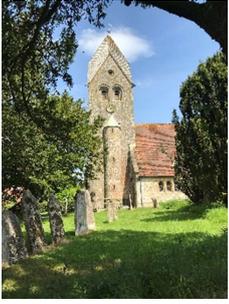
Spirit of the living God, in your Church:

inspire us to follow the way of Christ more diligently

be with those waiting to be baptised and with couples delaying weddings

and help to find safe ways to worship.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



Spirit of the living God, for every family:

be in our schools, with teachers, children and those who support them
give parents patience and hope to young people whose futures are uncertain
and assurance to those who worry about older parents that they cannot visit.
Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**



Spirit of the living God, in time of need:

bring relief and rest to those working in health service and social care
bring healing to all who suffer
peace to those who have died and comfort to the thousands who mourn.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit accept our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Please join with me in the words that Jesus taught us:

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing

Come Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire, and lighten with celestial fire.

God bless us and all your people in this new week.
Bless your world with healing and wholeness, truth, justice and peace.
Bless your Church and all your children.

Teach us to know the Father, Son, and thee of both, to be but one;
That though the ages all along this may be our endless song.
Praise to thy eternal merit, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Veni, Creator Spiritus

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
and lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
with the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far from foes, give peace at home:
where thou art guide, no ill can come.

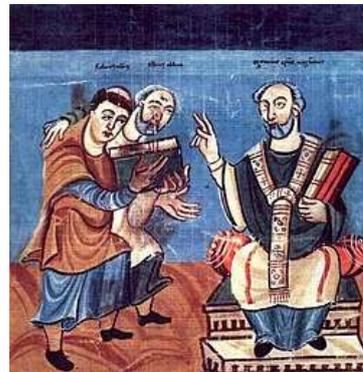
Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but One,
that through the ages all along,
this may be our endless song:

Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.



Veni Creator Spiritus ("Come Creator Spirit") is a hymn believed to have been written by Rabanus Maurus in the 9th century.

When the original Latin text is used, it is normally sung in Gregorian Chant. It has been translated into many modern languages, as a hymn for Pentecost.



Rabanus Maurus (left) with Alcuin presents his work to Otgar of Mainz (right). Illustration from a Fulda manuscript, c. 830–840.

Rabanus Maurus was born c.780 and died on 4th February 856.