

An Act of worship for Pentecost Sunday

As you read this you might like to say the words marked 'All' in bold out loud

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All And also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

All He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Introduction

Jesus Christ, whom we worship, is our crucified, risen and ascended Lord
and we have walked with him through his journey of love.

We have faced the agony of his suffering and death on a cross.

We have rejoiced at his bursting free from the bonds of death.

We have enjoyed his risen presence with us
and his revelation of himself through the breaking of bread.

We have seen his return to the throne before which every knee shall bow
and every tongue confess that this Jesus is Lord.

And now, with the followers of his own time,
we await the coming of the promised Holy Spirit, his gift to his people,
through whom we make Christ known to the world.

Responsory

As we wait in silence,

All fill us with your Spirit.

As we listen to your word,

All fill us with your Spirit.

As we worship you in majesty,

All fill us with your Spirit.

As we long for your refreshing,

All fill us with your Spirit.

As we long for your renewing,

All fill us with your Spirit.

As we long for your equipping,

All fill us with your Spirit.

As we long for your empowering,

All fill us with your Spirit.

Observe a moment silence

The Collect for Pentecost Sunday

Let us pray that the Spirit will work through our lives to bring Christ to the world.

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.

All Amen.

Hymn

click [HERE](#) to listen or watch

'O thou who camest from above' by Charles Wesley

Bible reading:

Acts 2:1-13 (NIV)



The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. **2** Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. **4** All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled them.

5 Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6 When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7 Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9 Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11 (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12 Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

13 Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Sermon: Power dressing

I wonder what you think of when I say 'power dressing' ?

To me 'power dressing' reminds me of the American soap series Dallas, about the Oil tycoon family with JR and Sue Ellen, Bobby and Pam. I wonder if you remember it? I was a serious follower of it in my late teens – I think it was on a Wednesday evening - my Dad and I watched it together, religiously. The women made power dressing popular – they wore shoulder pads in everything!!



Power dressing really had its origins in the Chanel suit of the 1920's. John Molloy wrote 2 manuals in 1975 and 1980 about power dressing, suggesting a professional dress code for women workers in particular entering a masculine environment. He recommends a uniform that would help them acquire authority, respect and power at work. And Margaret Thatcher was the British power dressing icon, with her sharp suits, costume jewellery and famous handbags.

The resurrected Jesus promised his disciples that they would one day be **power dressed**: Standing among them, before he ascends to heaven, he says 'stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high' Luke 24:49. In other words: Don't go anywhere, stay in this place until I give you the clothing you need to be my witnesses in the world. They are effectively 'locked in' the upper room and waiting.

So as people locked in our upper room houses, what can we learn from them - how do we wait?

Here's three things:

They prayed: Acts 1: 14 tells us that the 11 disciples and the women, Mary Jesus' mother and his brothers – all joined constantly in prayer.

What do we imagine they might have prayed for?

Their safety,

...for comfort from their loss, firstly over his death and secondly his ascension, but also in joy that Jesus had risen,

...for understanding – Jesus had explained the scriptures to them but still I imagine there was more to understand and an increased hunger to know more of God too.

...for this power that had been promised: they knew that Jesus wanted them to be witnesses to the gospel but they also knew that the religious authorities would be angered by this, so they needed God's power and also courage.

And I imagine they prayed the Lord's prayer – because it's how Jesus had taught them to pray.

Was it all petition? Or did they wait in the quiet to hear from God? Jesus used to go away to a quiet place to pray – I imagine he waited to hear from God – had he taught them that too? What have you been praying your upper room in this time of waiting?

We've continued to use the 24/7 prayer for coronavirus as a household every Sunday night. I've noticed how we have prayed it differently each week, how we have become impassioned about different things as the time moves on, how sometimes we've been reluctant and what answers we have seen.

In this time it's easy to petition God – when we are used to the daily government briefings and press/public questions. That exchange, of information, questions and answers, Ben Chase's sent a video message on Monday, reflecting on Psalm 23 (it's now on the St John's Facebook page) he had a reminder for us all – what is the bigger story that God is writing now? Don't miss out on it, he said, just because we are walking in a dark valley! So, I encourage you to listen to God, rather than the news or the papers, and to ask God what is his bigger story in all of this, so that we don't miss out on it.

Secondly:

They prepared:

Two angels appeared to the disciples after Jesus was taken up into heaven and they said 'Men of galilee, why do you stand there looking into the sky?' in other words...Stop standing here looking up into the sky, look down to the earth and get on with it!! Be prepared for what is coming, even though you have no idea what it is!

They were one man down because Judas was no longer in their number, so they chose another disciple from the group who had been with them while Jesus was alive. 12 is a Jewish number of completeness, of all the tribes, and so there is a sense that they are being prepared to have enough apostle leaders to be witnesses to the whole world. It amuses me that they do it seemingly in a pragmatic way – they nominate and they cast lots.

What pragmatic things do we need to do to prepare for what God has in the future for us? You may have made face masks or worked out how to meet friends outside in your gardens. I am beginning to think about when and how we might use our church buildings again – weighing up the risks and receiving advice from the Diocese.

But its good in this time to ask for God's help to be prepared for what is to come even though we don't know what it is. God is a good father who longs to give good gifts to his children and who knows what we need better than us. So why not ask him to equip you ready for what is to come.

Thirty:

They **power dressed!**

Just as Jesus has promised, the Holy Spirit comes on the disciples as they wait and pray and prepare in that Upper Room. God gives them the gift he promised because he is faithful.



Two phenomena that the Jews associated strongly with the presence of God – fire and wind (or breath), came dramatically into the upper room. And the fire divided so that everyone was given the gift. Just like a small boy's picnic on a hillside – there was enough for everyone.

When Jesus first send out his 12 disciples to heal, to drive out demons and to proclaim the kingdom of God in his name in Luke 9, he tells them not to take a spare shirt.

Now they are sent out to be witnesses to the resurrection and the gospel they are clothed with what God gives them - power! They are **power dressed!**

And this power gives them the ability to talk to everyone who has gathered in Jerusalem.

It was the Feast of Weeks or Shavout – the second of three annual Jewish festivals and a festival of harvest of the later fruits. 50 days after Passover all Jewish men were required to go up to the temple at Jerusalem to celebrate it. So, the city is full of Jews from all over and the Holy Spirit enables the disciples to speak to them all in a tongue they can understand – innumerable languages but just what each person could understand!! God through these disciples begins again to do what he promised through Abraham – to bless his people so that they might bless others. He blesses them with the gift of language so that others might be blessed to hear the gospel in a way they can understand. The gift is the language that includes, that welcomes everyone to come and receive the love of God.

Paul in his letters picks up the power dressing idea over and over: in Galatians 3 :27 children of God through faith who have been immersed in baptism, filled with the spirit have *clothed themselves with Christ*. In Ephesians 6 we are told to *put on the full armour of God* to protect ourselves and be ready for the battle against the devil's schemes, temptations and attacks. And in Colossians 3:12-14 as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, we are called to *clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness and over them all to put on love*.

This is the language that I am sure today God wants to give us as a gift. If we speak without compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness and love, we will be like a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal (1 Cor 13). Sometimes the negative parts of our personalities, or our responses to our circumstances are the over coat that we put on and we have to make a conscious effort to take them off and be equipped with this Colossians 3 Holy Spirit's clothing instead.

If we speak in the language that God gives it will include, it will invite, others will understand and everyone will be welcomed to come and find out and receive the love of God for themselves. But also, if we act and meet everyone's practical needs without compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness and love, we do not bear witness to the gospel and to the resurrected Christ. We do not point people the one that will meet their deepest needs, Jesus Christ. This is the language he used, and that he still uses to us. This is the language that his Holy Spirit gives to us to speak to others and it's the language he speaks to them in. He invites **everyone** to come to him to receive his love – its freely given.

Isaiah the prophet heard this word from God – *Come all you who are thirsty, come to the waters, and you who have no money come buy and eat.* (Isaiah 55)
God calls out again on this Pentecost Sunday, through the voices of his church around the world 'Come'!

So lets pray:

Lord God we thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, come and fill us today.
Come Holy Spirit.

As we wait and listen to your voice show us the bigger story that you are writing, where you are at work for good and where you want us to join in.

Begin to write on the blank pages, Lord, to colour in the images, to give us a chapter heading, to tell us how it starts...keep us listening for the story you are writing.

Good Father and the provider of all we need, we ask you to equip us, to prepare us, to give us what we need for what is to come. Even though we don't know the future, you do, so please equip us.

And clothe us with your power by your Holy Spirit, Jesus.

Give us a language so that we can be witnesses to your love and grace, so that we can speak in a language which others will understand, a universal language of love.

Holy Spirit clothe us with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness and most of all love!

Come Holy Spirit.

All Amen

Being made one by the power of the Spirit,
Let us pray with confidence as our saviour taught us

**All Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,**

as we forgive those who 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.

Hymn

click [HERE](#) to listen or watch
'Come down oh love divine' by Bianco Da Siena

Dismissal and Blessing

May the Spirit,
who hovered over the waters when the world was created,
breathe into you the life he gives.

All Amen.

May the Spirit,
who overshadowed the Virgin when the eternal Son came among us,
make you joyful in the service of the Lord.

All Amen.

May the Spirit,
who set the Church on fire upon the Day of Pentecost,
bring the world alive with the love of the risen Christ.

All Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Filled with the Spirit's power,
go in the light and peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.

All Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.