

Pentecost Service Sheet for Kingswood May 23rd 2021. Rev Melanie Stoodley

Call to worship: On this day of Pentecost, we come to sing to the Lord, with the breath & wind & fire of the Spirit.

Hymn: StF 28 Jesus calls us here to meet him.

Prayer: We come before you, in awe & wonder & praise, to bring you our love & to celebrate the gift of your Holy Spirit. We thank you for those ways in which we see your Spirit at work in creation & in our world. For the breath of wind in the trees, for the amazing colours in the sky at sunrise & sunset, & for the ways in which you can challenge us & convict us when we lose heart, or feel that we've failed you. Forgive us for those times when we doubt your power, or fail to trust you. We open our hearts to you now, thank you for your Spirit of truth who reminds us of your words & of your presence with us, as we say together:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial & deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power & the glory are yours, now & for ever. Amen.

Setting the scene: Today, we celebrate the Church's Birthday. In our readings, we'll hear about the way that the Holy Spirit, which was promised by Jesus, burst out into the world on that first Pentecost. Many different Jews were staying in Jerusalem, from places which are hard to pronounce! Pentecost is about the power of God which transforms ordinary believers into Christ-like people. When a balloon is filled with air, you can't see it, but when we let it out, it's lifeless, just like Jesus' followers before the Spirit came at Pentecost. In the gospel passage, Jesus was preparing his disciples for a time when he would no longer be with them, but he promised to be present by his Spirit to all who called on him.

Reading: Acts; 2: 1 – 8, then 12 -16. Pentecost.

Hymn: StF 397 The Spirit lives to set us free

Reading: John: 15: 26 – John16: 4.

Message: The Holy Spirit empowers prayer when we don't know what to say & is an advocate, pleading to God on our behalf. Before the Pandemic, when I was still able to volunteer at the Derby Community hospital & we were allowed to have Communion Services in the chapel, I met a lady called Esme. She was feeling very down and hopeless about being stuck in hospital, and life didn't seem worth living. She came to the Communion service and at the end Dinna, another patient, shared how, 3 months before, she had been very down, after suffering a stroke. She too had wanted to die, and felt that she was no longer useful. A Christian friend visited & gave her encouragement & gradually, she made more progress. Dinna's testimony was that now, she thanks God every day that she is alive. A positive reminder that the Holy Spirit can speak and act through believers and also convict

Just as the Spirit burst forth at Pentecost, so Jesus can use Christians as 'Living Christs' and bring good out of what may seem like a hopeless situation.

3 weeks ago, my sister, Avery had a fall, broke her hip and had an operation. Then, while she was in hospital, she had a slight stroke. She's now at home, being looked after by my nephew and niece, who are taking turns to have time off work. Now that we're allowed to visit family and friends indoors, I've been wanting to help, but we're all stubborn in our family, and Avery's a very private person. I wanted to change the situation, but I learnt that I had to be prepared to change my attitude as well. My prayer changed, as I trusted that the Counsellor, the Spirit of truth, would guide and give me the grace to follow God's lead. Then I got a phone call from my niece and I spoke to my sister. There were lots of positives and I was invited to visit and also to help out next week to give my niece some free time. The Holy Spirit achieved more than I could have expected!

That Spirit, given at Pentecost, and available to us, here and now, goes beyond words, crosses language barriers, borders and cultures, and even works in emotions. The main function of the Spirit, or Helper, is to witness to Jesus and to glorify him. Like the disciples, we, too are called to use our experiences, gifts and talents to show the difference that makes in our lives. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession: Glorious God, we pray for ourselves & our world. May we be open to the moving of your Holy Spirit & listening for your voice in the stillness.

In our news headlines, we've heard about many areas of the world where there is tension, especially in the Holy Land & in India, with so many hospitals overwhelmed & people struggling to get help. In places like Afghanistan, we pray for the many families affected by terrorism, & in our own country, the Indian variant of covid is affecting many people. In the silence we bring the prayers of our hearts about these & other situations in the power of the name of Jesus. Amen.

Hymn: StF 394 Spirit of God, unseen as the wind.

Blessing: Loving God, send us out with the gift of your Holy Spirit, like living flames & comforting winds to move among our family, friends & neighbours, & bless us, now, Father Son & Holy spirit. **Amen**