

## **Greetings from Revd Jane .....**

Dear Friends

Over the last few days Andy and I have enjoyed some time off. During this time we have done several walks, including some new ones. Thanks to some friends we met on our first walk, we were able to explore new places that we had not been to before. We always feel very privileged that we can do these things from our front door.

As we were walking it struck me how the Spirit leads us into new paths, how he opens up fresh ways that either we hadn't seen before or had chosen not to go down. One of the walks we did, we had often seen but never followed and I wondered how often I had done that in the Spirit - seen something but never followed.

As we celebrate Pentecost this Sunday and the outpouring of the Spirit, we remember how the disciples were waiting in Jerusalem just as Jesus had told them to - waiting and praying for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. This was not a one off event but a present reality for us today. Paul tells us we are to be continually in the process of being filled with the Spirit.

As we continue through these uncertain times, how reassuring it is to know that the Lord walks with us - the Spirit who is our Guide, our Counsellor, and our Teacher. As we celebrate Pentecost this Sunday, I pray that we might come to know for ourselves the Spirit's transforming power in our lives and know what it is to walk in close fellowship with the Spirit.

God bless you,

with love, Jane

## **A Service for The Day of Pentecost 2020**

At the start of this time, let us be still in the presence of the Lord

**Hymn:** 20 Be still for the presence of the Lord

**Prayer:** Lord we thank you for your presence with us this morning. We thank you that you are the same yesterday, today and forever. We thank you that while the world and everything we know is changing, you are faithful and unchanging; you are the rock on which we stand. We thank you for the love of the Father, for the grace of the Son and for the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. May we worship you in Spirit and in Truth for your glory, in Jesus name, Amen.

**Hymn:** 385 Holy Spirit we welcome you

Jesus had told his disciples that he would be leaving... that, in fact, it was good for him to do so as he would send another who would be exactly the same as him - the Holy Spirit - and through the Spirit they would do greater things than he had.

The Spirit has a seven fold title, though he has many names throughout the Bible. He is the Comforter, He is the Counsellor, Helper, Intercessor, Advocate, Strengthener, and Standby. But He is also the Spirit of Truth, the Revealer. And it is in the person of the Holy Spirit that God now reveals himself, and to the

Church, it is the Spirit who is our source and supply of wisdom. We crave information but the Holy Spirit wants to give us revelation.

The Spirit is not an attribute of God, nor a divine influence from God. He **is** God, part of the Godhead - Father Son and Holy Spirit. Throughout the New Testament writers explore his character, identify his resources, stress the importance of his partnership with believers. He empowers us, affirms us, comforts us - we are no longer orphans but reconciled to God the Father (you can read it in the wonderful chapter in Romans, chapter 8), we no longer have a spirit of fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption.

The same Spirit who was there at the beginning, in Genesis 1, is the same Spirit who lives in me; the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead, dwells in me as a believer of Jesus Christ, just as he does in all who believe. If we want to learn from him, if we want to know him better, then we must learn to quieten ourselves so we don't lean on our own understanding, but instead, submit and surrender ourselves to him, so that we can learn from him. He wants to be part of our day to day lives, developing our faith, strengthening and empowering us as we learn what it is to partner with him.

Ephesians 5: 18 tells us to continually be in the process of being filled, continually - not one off. Being filled - what does that mean? To be overwhelmed, overflowing with the Spirit.

**Reading:** Acts 2: vs 1 - 42

In Acts chapter 1 Jesus tells His disciples about the promised gift of the Holy Spirit and He tells them, whatever you do, wait in Jerusalem until you receive the Spirit. Don't go anywhere until you have that which you don't have now. Wait for that which will empower you to go out and be my witnesses. And a few days later, while the disciples are all together, praying and praising God, the Holy Spirit comes, with the sound like that of a mighty wind and something like tongues of fire rest on each of them, and they are filled, empowered and transformed.

Holy Spirit fell, causing them to burn with a passion for Jesus that caused the fire to spread as the wind blew. It was like wildfire. In the same way God wants to set our hearts on fire so we too can spread the good news of Jesus. The Holy Spirit empowers God's people to continue the ministry of Jesus to the world. No longer was the fire of God at a distance as seen in the Old Testament, but God was coming to live in the hearts of those who loved Jesus. Pentecost isn't confined to history, it's a living reality for us today. Holy Spirit transforms us, bringing boldness and courage, just as he did to Peter and the other disciples.

Peter spoke the Word of the Lord under the influence of the Holy Spirit. When he preached the gospel of Jesus Christ and all that He had done, he used the prophecies of David to speak of the resurrection of Jesus and the prophecies of Joel to declare they were witnessing the fulfilment of those very same prophecies. And a mighty revelation took place as the Word and the Spirit came together. Pentecost was the time of the Feast of Harvest and First Fruits and 3,000 were added in one day.

When the Spirit is truly at work among us we don't get caught up in doctrines and dogmas, it's not about fresh expressions, there is only one thing that is important and that is Jesus. He was crucified and He has redeemed humanity and by His blood we are saved. God has reconciled us back to Himself through the saving work of Jesus. The blood of Jesus has cleansed us and we are forgiven. And where Jesus is exalted, that is where the Holy Spirit is, and where the glory goes to the Father.

Acts says from then on they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, to breaking of bread and to prayer. It wasn't a whim. It wasn't about being caught up in the emotion. It brought about a

deep inner change. They became established in the word, rooted and grounded and at the end of that chapter it says the Lord added to their number daily.

The work of God is not by our might, or our power but by the Spirit. He enables the Church to carry out its mission, empowers us to witness to the gospel, and anoints God's people to perform mighty wonders. The Spirit isn't reserved for the select, he is the promised gift given to all who God has called and who believe in his Son. The Spirit came to dwell in the hearts of the believers - in power. No longer with us, but in us. And through that indwelling presence we are made one with Christ just as the Son is one with the Father. Pentecost brought a new fellowship and through the Spirit, Jesus builds his Church. May each one of us ask God for a fresh infilling of His Spirit today. Amen

**Hymn:** 395 Spirit of the Living God

**Prayer:** Holy Spirit break down every barrier that hinders us from taking hold of all that you want to pour in to our lives, blow those barriers down with your wind, burn them up with your fire, open us up to you and all you want to do in our lives. Set our hearts on fire, burning with passion for Jesus and set our tongues on fire to declare the praises of Jesus, to declare His works and to glorify His Name. Holy Spirit help us to yield to you, to surrender to you, in Jesus Name amen.

Continue to pray for those things God has laid on your heart this morning.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the close fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore, Amen.