**Sunday 4 June 2017**

**Pentecost Sunday**

***Prayer before worship:***

*Like a mighty, rushing wind, like tongues of living flame, the Spirit fills the place where God’s people meet. Fill us as we gather, empowering us to go out with your grace, Amen.*

**Welcome**

**Call to Worship**

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You blow like the wind in a thousand paddocks,

***Inside and outside the fences,***

***You blow where you wish to blow.***

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the sun who shines on the little plant,

***You warm him gently, you give him life,***

***You raise him up to become a tree with many leaves.***

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the mother eagle with her young,

Holding them in peace under your feathers.

***On the highest mountain you have built your nest,***

***Above the valley, above the storms of the world,***

***Where no hunter ever comes.***

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the bright cloud in whom we hide,

In whom we know already that the battle has been won.

***You bring us to our Brother Jesus***

***To rest our heads upon his shoulder.***

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You are the kind fire who does not cease to burn,

***Consuming us with flames of love and peace,***

***Driving us out like sparks to set the world on fire.***

Lord, Holy Spirit,

In the love of friends you are building a new house,

Heaven is with us when you are with us.

***You are singing your songs in the hearts of the poor***

***Guide us, wound us, heal us. Bring us to the Father***

  – James K. Baxter, ‘Song to the Holy Spirit’

**Songs of Praise:** Come, now is the time to worship

Spirit come and fill me now

**Opening Prayer**

Awesome God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

we approach you with the freedom of the richly blessed.

Enlighten our minds to perceive you,

and enlarge our capacity to receive you,

that being together in one place on this day of Pentecost

may see us possessed by that whole-iness

which makes everything new again.

With many voices we praise You, O God.

In different ways we serve You.

As we gather together we pray that you would send your Spirit upon us

and that you would take our diversity and mould it

into a common theme of thanksgiving.

We pray that you would weave us and the gifts that we offer

into a whole cloth of service that will blanket the world with your love.

May we know your presence here as we worship

So we may be encouraged and inspired

To live more fully in your ways, Amen.

**Notices**

**Thank you and flowers for Amanda ☺**

**Birthday Basket**

**Offering and Dedication**

We bless you, Creator God, with these gifts you first gave us.

We bless you, Holy Spirit, with these gifts for the work of your church.

We bless you Lord Jesus, with our hearts and our hands.

We dedicate to you, all that you have given us.

Use it to bring healing to others and glory to your name, Amen.

**Bible Reading:** Acts 2:1-21

**Time with the children**  **Holy Spirit Holes**

What is special about today?

Do you know anything special that has happened here on past Pentecost Sundays here at Kohi?

Campbells and Tony Ward became members in 2013, Jessica 2007 and Katie 2010 were baptised...

We remember stories that are important parts of our lives...

And we tell the stories... But sometimes we forget...

When I said to Debbie about the baptisms of her girls both being on a Pentecost Sunday she remembered Katie’s but not that Jessica’s was also on Pentecost Sunday... as she reflected she referred to her fog of tired with her first baby...

So others often help us remember...

We can remember stories with the help of reading –but a long time ago in medieval times, most people couldn’t read –imagine that –not being able to go back to your favourite book...

So the church had to use other ways to help people remember the important stories...

Pentecost is one of those special important stories to remember...

When we celebrate God’s gift to us of the fire of the Holy Spirit –the same fire that burnt the bush before Moses and helped the prophets say what they needed to... the same Spirit that move as a wind at creation...

When we read the story we hear that the Holy Spirit came on everyone –not just the adults, not just the extra good people, not just the men... everyone...

So anyway, back in the Middle Ages, in Europe, where so few people could read for themselves, and there were no mass produced books to read anyway, the church worked hard to offer other ways to remember the stories of faith.

They had lots of paintings and murals, sculptures and icons, stained glass windows and they used lots of drama in their church services.

Pentecost was a favourite time for lots of drama and big parties! As they celebrated the church’s birthday and the gift of the Holy Spirit to all people, the churches were decorated with bright red to symbolise the fire of Pentecost.

As the people entered the church, the choir and organ would make amazing whooshing noises of rushing wind!

Danita???

And one of the really amazing things in some of the churches in Rome was the holes that were made in the church ceilings –they called them Holy Spirit holes, opening to the sky. Through them, they would drop symbols of the Holy Spirit, like real doves and red rose petals fluttering down on the people!

It reminded them that just as we are the church we need to be open for the Holy Spirit to enter us –we need to create holes in us –space for the Holy Spirit to move

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Ask children to move down the aisle amongst the people as we sing...**

**Song:** Holy Spirit, you are welcome

Make rose petals fall off the air thingies as they sing

***Children leave for Young Church programme***

**Prayer of Confession**

Our God, we come in humility,
confessing who and what we are.
We are often unresponsive for we are afraid.

When your Spirit speaks, we turn deaf ears,
for we fear what you might call us to do.

When your Spirit touches our lips, we close our mouths,
embarrassed to speak your Word.

When the wind of your Spirit blows, we close the windows of our hearts,
afraid the breeze will disrupt our ordered lives.

When the fire of your Spirit touches us, we quench the flame,
afraid of the new life it might bring.

Forgive us, O Lord.

Loving God, we confess that too often we have stifled your Spirit within us.

You have sent us the Spirit of love,

but we have preferred to hate those who oppose us.

You have sent us the Spirit of joy,

but we have taken your gifts for granted and been ungrateful.

You have sent us the Spirit of peace,

but we have allowed our selfishness to cause division and disharmony.

You have sent us the Spirit of patience,

but we have been worried and anxious.

You have sent us the Spirit of kindness,

but we have been indifferent to other people’s needs.

You have sent us the Spirit of goodness,

but we have been thoughtless and hurt others.

You have sent us the Spirit of faithfulness,

but we have been fickle and unreliable.

You have sent us the Spirit of gentleness,

but we have been insensitive to the feelings of others.

You have sent us the Spirit of self-control,

but we have lived recklessly, and lacked discipline.

Forgive us, merciful God.

Teach us how much we need the power of your Spirit in our lives;

and breathe new life into us; for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen.

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

Sisters and brothers in Christ, God’s Spirit did not leave us after that first Pentecost. The Spirit is still with us, empowering us to know mercy and grace, forgiveness and service. In this Spirit, and through Christ, we proclaim the Good News:
**We are forgiven Alleluia! Amen.**

**Song:** Spirit of the living God

**Bible Reading:** I Corinthians 12:1-13

**Sermon**

I have been thinking this week about the way the Spirit works in our lives –or doesn’t as the case may be... as I find that when I take the time to listen, to be, to wait, then the Holy Spirit is able to work more in my life. But when I get full of worries and to-do lists and expectations, I am less able to feel the nudge of the Spirit. I miss the opportunities when I don’t make space for the Spirit to work through me.

Around our worship space today are some different Pentecost images... and as I talk you might like to look at them... and ponder why they are images of the Spirit.

... and during the week perhaps you will play with the images in your minds and see where they take you...

The kite -that is lifted by the wind –another word used for the Spirit. -Wind that can be a gentle breeze or a violent storm, carrying seeds and moving waves. -Wind that isn’t seen in itself, but its effects can be clear.

The flame –that can be warming and comforting and yet can also be threatening and scary.

The dove –that speaks of peace, purity and holiness. That reminds us of the bird sent by Noah to find the promise fulfilled of dry land. The bird that descended on Jesus at his baptism.

The Bible talks about the Holy Spirit in lots of ways and uses lots of images right from creation through to the early church –a range of images there to help us understand more... because the Holy Spirit is not all that easy to comprehend.

Lots of the way the Bible refers to the Holy Spirit though, is more in terms of the role of the Spirit –it seems that seeing what the Holy Spirit does is a simpler way into finding some understanding.

The writer of Acts uses metaphor –a sound like the blowing of a violent wind, and seeing what seemed to be tongues of fire resting on each of them.

But most importantly is what happens to the people once the Spirit enters them.

So let’s look closer at the passage

–slide 1- and note I’m learning from Grant ☺

***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 languages as the Spirit enabled them.*

Firstly we see this is something that happens in the midst of community –where the people were gathered together in one place. Just before the ascension Jesus had told his disciples to go back to Jerusalem and gather there and wait for the Spirit. And here these ten days later, they are still there, gathered together and waiting. Note how Luke keeps emphasizing that –they were **all** together; the fire rested on **each** of them; **all** were filled with the Holy Spirit. –three times in this short piece of text –Luke is making sure we get that this was not an individual event. Pentecost was not some individual moment of personal bliss.

The Holy Spirit affected each one of them there. And there is no sense of one person having more of the Holy Spirit than another… all received the Spirit –there was no room for any sense of hierarchy.

It is interesting because in this situation it seems that they all even receive the same ability... to communicate in other languages... but then in Corinthians we read of the many different gifts people are given.

Such diversity of gifts is amazing, and great for the church as a whole, but it can lead us to look sideways... and compare gifts. Still though, Paul teaches that God’s Spirit is given to all and empowers all so that all of God’s people may serve one another.

And at Pentecost the flame descended on each person gathered there, and we are reminded that each one of us are given gifts by the Spirit. Any diversity in the gifts is for a purpose that God knows best –but we all receive.

And as well as involving everyone gathered, the Holy Spirit also encompassed their whole beings –through all their senses –it was heard and seen and felt… it isn’t just about how we feel and it isn’t just about how we think and it isn’t just about action… the Holy Spirit works in our whole being.

So what is the result of this new experience of the Holy Spirit? On this day of Pentecost the gift is a new ability to communicate –

*-Slide 2*

***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*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202:1-21#fen-NIV-26959b)*]****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!”*

They start to speak in other languages... and so there is a new level of understanding… those around them are amazed and excited because they hear their own language being spoken.

Here we see the people being empowered –and they all are given a new language –a way to communicate with the people around them in the wider community with whom they would otherwise have huge language barriers. It is this moment which changes everything, in which their lives are equipped and marked for God’s reign, and in which their quest to follow Christ is made possible through this gift of the Spirit.

*Slide 3*

***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.”*

And then in the next part of the text, we see the response of the people… some of those watching and listening were amazed –this was impressive! –some of them were perplexed –they were full of questions… while others made fun of them… that “they have had too much wine”.

It is such a real response to people who are empowered by the Spirit. We are not to expect that all will be amazed just because we have been equipped to be God’s people… and nor are we to expect that all will scoff.

Peoples’ responses will be wide ranging when they see the Spirit at work. We cannot assume people will understand even if we are speaking their language

–If *we* find it difficult at times to comprehend the Spirit, how much more will onlookers be confused. So the story can’t finish there. More dialogue has to happen.

*Slide 4*

***14****Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say.****15****These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning!*

As we read on, we see how the disciples responded to the people’s response –this is an ongoing to-ing and fro-ing as people grapple with what is going on. Peter sees the need to explain, as much as he can, what has been happening.

Firstly he turns to the scoffers, and affirms the integrity of those gathered –they are not drunk –it is only 9 in the morning.

And then he goes on to offer an explanation to the others who have questions –Peter is able to do that because he knows his Scriptures -our Old Testament –and so he is able to refer back to the Prophet Joel.

*Slide 5*

***16****No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:*

***17****“‘In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.****18****Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.****19****I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.****20****The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.* ***21****And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202:1-21#fen-NIV-26971c)*]*

Peter quotes the words of Joel about the last days... the expectation of the pouring out of God’s Spirit on all people. Sons and daughter, men and women, amidst blood and fire.

I wonder if the tongues of fire and sound of wind... accompanied by the extraordinary empowering of languages made Peter think immediately of Joel’s words.

Here was the experience of God in a new way –the way promised by Jesus before the ascension –what they were told to wait for as they gathered in Jerusalem.

This was the empowering of a new community, which would come to be known as the church. A community where all are given what they need to be the people of God.

For that first small community of Jesus’ friends, they were being called out in mission as followers of Jesus and empowered to reach out into their wider community. It did not make them indestructible –they would still be hurt –some would even be martyred... but they were now a people sent out.

So what does all that mean for us gathered here in 2017?

It means that for us to be the church, the evidence will be seen not in particular gifts displayed here within these walls... but in the way our lives of grace and service are brought to the world as we too are sent out. We are filled with the Spirit not for our own feel good factor but for the sake of the wider community.

Our place in the community is to bring people together; to offer grace and reconciliation...

The gift of Pentecost is the inspiration and empowerment we need to become those who, like Christ, seek to empower others. The Pentecost Spirit drives us back into the world to engage it and serve it.

And if we find that difficult –which is where I started… my difficulty –and perhaps yours- to make space for the Spirit to work through me when I get too full of worries and to-do lists and expectations…

So perhaps a useful and simple way to make space for the Spirit is to use a breath prayer. When you find yourself in a space where listening to the Spirit is difficult –try simply breathing, -and as you breathe in you say “God’s peace” and as you breathe out you say “God’s presence”. Make it your prayer as you breathe, in and out, in and out… seeking God’s peace, and then go back out into what you were doing, remembering you are in God’s presence.

And as we continue to be filled with the Spirit, we may find ourselves called to work in all sorts of places, and communicating in all sorts of ways as we are empowered to speak the languages of those around us we might otherwise never meet… languages of compassion, of other cultures, of different worlds of people…

And as we are called, we will find ourselves being empowered by God’s Spirit, we will find ourselves working to bring diverse people together and to reconcile and unify those who are separated, and we will find ourselves drawn into communities of care, engagement and compassion.

There will be a range of responses… but we are called to continue to be the presence of God out in the community, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

So be it, Amen.

**Song:** Take my gifts and let me love you

**Communion** led by Grant Ridout

**The children lead us in our Prayers of Intercession**

Let the flame of your Holy Spirit spread

***Bringing the warmth of Your love***

**Song:**  Holy Spirit living breath of God

**Benediction and sung Amen**

In the power of the Holy Spirit, we now go forth into the world, to fulfil our calling as the people of God, the body of Christ.

Go in peace, be filled with the Spirit and remain Christ's forever, and may his redeeming and sustaining work come to full flower within you and give wholeness and healing to those around you - both now and forever. Amen



The Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21



|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Pentecostsoundblowingwind | firefilledHolySpirit | speakothertongueslanguage | heardeclarewondersamazed |