

Bulletin for Sunday 23rd May 2021

Good Morning, friends.

This Sunday we celebrate Pentecost - which used often in the past to be called Whitsun - remembering how the Holy Spirit came to the disciples, and changed their whole outlook on the world completely.

Let's pause as we prepare to worship..... and then praise God as we sing:

Hymn: Morning has broken (R&S 45)

Prayer: We praise you, Living God,
for the powerful energy and life in the world around us:
for the irresistible strength of wind and wave...
for the life in seedlings, forcing their way upwards...
and for the inspiration of your Spirit within each of us,
overflowing into your world in creativity and compassion.
We ask your blessing on everything we do,
and everything we give in your service,
today and every day.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

followed by The Lord's Prayer

Readings: Acts 2: 1-21

Reflection: On that day, everything changed. They were all together, indoors - these disciples who were so unsure and afraid that they had been living behind locked doors - when the Spirit was absolutely poured out on them and their world turned upside down.

The Spirit is a difficult thing to describe; here it's compared to a strong rushing wind, or fire. Over the last few days we've seen and heard some very strong winds, which battered our houses and damaged trees and garden plants, while photos from the coast showed spectacular waves crashing against the shore: powerful winds can be very destructive. If anything, fire can be even worse. Yet there is another side to these massive forces. On Thursday night and Friday morning this week, the wind set new records for electricity generation in the UK - more than 60% of our electricity came from wind turbines for the first time. Such awe-inspiring power and unpredictability...

This is a very familiar passage, and we need to reflect on what we're hearing. Peter, so recently embarrassed by his denial of Jesus, had become a confident and articulate leader and speaker; and he wasn't the only one. All the disciples, after weeks of hiding away quietly to avoid attention, are speaking out and drawing a crowd. And they are being heard, in many languages. The message is getting through. Generous, irresistible, powerful and transforming, the Spirit has been

poured out and changed those disciples and their world forever. May the Spirit change our lives too. Amen!

Hymn: O Breath of life, come sweeping through us (R&S 302)

Prayer: Compassionate and generous God,
you have given us so much,
and yet we dare to pray for more:
for the outpouring of your Spirit in our lives,
in our churches, in our communities and in our world.
We pray for those who grieve, those who suffer,
those who live in fear, or hunger or thirst;
and we pray too for those who offer support and care.
We hold before you our local communities,
and those we love and are concerned about.
Loving God, hear our prayers, spoken or unspoken,
in Jesus' name Amen

Hymn: There's a spirit in the air (R&S 329)

Blessing: May we be invigorated by the fresh wind of the Spirit;
and may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and with all those we love
now and always. Amen

We remember in our prayers the family and friends of Mrs Joan West of Billingshurst, who died last weekend.

In all our churches morning worship at 10.30am is now being held indoors.

Please remember masks and social distancing; congregational singing is not allowed, services are short and well ventilated!

Please let your Church Secretary know you want to attend.

On Zoom, the evening 'Sunday at Six' service, with hymns, is at 6pm. We continue to explore the book of Genesis - all welcome.

For all of us there is a chance to chat at the 11.30am 'After Church Coffee' Zooms.

Anne Lewitt