

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 31 May

Pentecost

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use for this week's Sunday morning service. This is based on a service that is being broadcast as a video on Sunday morning through the YouTube channel. It will be available on YouTube from 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it. If do not have access to watch the YouTube video, we hope you will be able to use these words and join us too in spirit.

Introduction from Peter

This Sunday is called Pentecost Sunday, a day when frightened fearful stumbling followers of Jesus, were empowered by the Spirit and became emboldened and courageous enough to spread the message of Jesus, and begin to live this out in something that came to be known as the Christian church. That Spirit is no empty concept or idea, but a gift available to us all.

Greeting

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

Alleluia. Christ is Risen
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia

Prayer

In a famous story told of Jesus, ten people were healed of a horrible disease called leprosy, and only one turned around to say thank you. It can be easy

to blame the nine for not doing so, but so many things, so many different emotions may have stopped them returning, as they do us. Before we go any further in our service, we are going to say thank you, to acknowledge the blessings, the moments of wonder, the times of grace, sometimes so incidental we might not have taken time to notice. We call those things to mind now.

For kindness we have received:

we thank you, Lord.

For those who have helped others:

we thank you, Lord.

For the chance to play our part in helping people through this time:

we thank you, Lord.

Ann Lewin

Hymn: 732 The Spirit lives to set us free

1. The Spirit lives to set us free,
Walk, walk in the light.
He binds us all in unity,
Walk, walk in the light.

Walk in the light, (x3)
Walk in the light of the Lord.
2. Jesus promised life to all,
Walk, walk in the light.
The dead were wakened by his call,
Walk, walk in the light.
3. He died in pain on Calvary,
Walk, walk in the light.
To save the lost like you and me,
Walk, walk in the light.
4. We know his death was not the end,
Walk, walk in the light.
He gave his Spirit to be our friend,
Walk, walk in the light.

5. By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,
Walk, walk in the light.
The Father's kindness is revealed,
Walk, walk in the light.
6. The Spirit lives in you and me,
Walk, walk in the light;
His light will shine for all to see,
Walk, walk in the light.

D Lundy (1944-1997) © 1978 K Mayhew Ltd

The Confession

We have just sung the words the spirit lives to set us free. Too much of the time many of us live in guilt and regret. Guilt for what we have done, or even sometimes perceive we have done (as what we imagine our failings to be may be worse than they would be seen by others), and shame for the hurt we may have caused others. I believe passionately that whatever mistakes we make along the way, whatever we get wrong, Gods love is always calling us on, not to dwell, but to be set free by the spirit. So let us say sorry now.

For the people I have hurt and those I have failed to love.

Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

For the times I have let myself and others down.

Christ have mercy
Christ, have mercy

For the choices I have made and the things I have done that I regret.

Lord, have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love
Bring us back to himself,
Forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Collect

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Readings

Acts 2: 1-11

Luke describes the coming of the Spirit, and the exuberant response of the apostles who speak in a multitude of languages. Bystanders thought they were drunk – Peter explains that this was what a prophet, Joel, had told them to expect. (Joel 2: 28-32).

Read by Mark in the video.

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because

each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

John 20: 19-23

John describes how Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to his followers on the evening of the first Easter Day.

Read by Julie in the video.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

A Reflection from Ann Lewin

Paula Gooder, a contemporary theologian, in her book about Easter *This Risen Existence*, tells how in the middle of a family meal, one of her daughters suddenly said, 'How does Jesus make us real?' While she and her husband were searching for a bite-sized answer, the girl said, 'Does he draw us first and then colour us in?' Paula comments that this is a wonderful description of resurrection life – which is another way of talking about living as Christians.

When we are born, we are an outline full of immense potential which develops as we grow. That potential is not just physical, but emotional and spiritual too. For Christians, our spiritual life grows as we respond to God as we see God in Christ, and become more Christlike.

Today we remember how the Holy Spirit was given to the first Christians, God the artist colouring us in with his gifts. When we talk about people being gifted, we are usually talking about the particular talents or skills they possess: we define the gifts in terms of what people are able to do. These are all God-given gifts, but the gifts the Holy Spirit brings as we are 'coloured in' are more to do with how we are as people in relationship to one another. These gifts are on offer to everyone: gifts of wisdom, kindness, patience, tolerance, gentleness, generosity of spirit, all springing from the greatest gift of all, love

Love is not just about feelings, important though they are. Love has a tough edge to it, as it refuses to let people exploit others; as it challenges injustice; speaks truth to power; fights for a better deal for poor and marginalised people. As we allow God's Spirit to colour us in with all those aspects of love, whole communities, whole churches will be

transformed. This colourful existence is never just for our own good, so that we look more attractive, but for the good of all around us. If we are to be Christlike, we are called to be life-givers. In the Gospel reading we had to day, Jesus commissioned us to be that: 'As the Father sent me', he said, 'so I send you.' The gift of the Spirit is for all, not just for an 'in' crowd: On the day of Pentecost, everyone could understand, whatever their background or ability.

It would be wonderful if that transformation happened automatically like our physical growth which usually follows a fairly predictable course. But life has a habit of challenging us, personally or more generally, as it has done recently with Covid 19. People have commented on the growth of neighbourly kindness, as people have given time to care for vulnerable people around them, and courage as people have put their lives at risk to care for those who are suffering from the virus. We all hope that these gifts of love will grow as we move out of immediate danger.

But in all honesty, we have to recognise that sometimes our colouring-in has been overlaid with fear, or anxiety about how we will cope, or whether we will even survive. In artistic terms we need to be restored, cleaned up, our fading colour deepened again. That's where today brings us hope and encouragement, for God's Spirit is the Spirit of renewal and strength.

Let's pray with Christians everywhere that God's Spirit will help us to keep hope alive:
Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your people, and kindle in us the fire of your love. Colour us in with the gifts of your Spirit, so that we may give you glory in all that we are as well as in all that we do

In the video there is now some time to reflect while the music for "O breath of life come sweeping through us" plays. You may like to reflect on the words:

O breath of life come sweeping through us

O breath of life, come sweeping through us,
Revive Thy church with life and power;
O Breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,
And fit Thy church to meet this hour.

O wind of God, come bend us, break us,
Till humbly we confess our need;
Then in Thy tenderness remake us,
Revive, restore, for this we plead.

O breath of love, come breathe within us,
Renewing thought and will and heart;
Come, Love of Christ, afresh to win us,
Revive Thy church in every part.

O heart of Christ, once broken for us,
'Tis there we find our strength and rest;
Our broken, contrite hearts now solace,
And let Thy waiting church be blest.

Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
While harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive, us Lord, the world is waiting,
Equip Thy church to spread the light.

B P Head, 1914.

Prayers of Intercession

Written and read by Sarah in the video

Let us pray. As we pray, I invite you to respond to the phrase "*Lord, this is our prayer*" with "*May your spirit spur us on in love*"

Heavenly Father, we praise you for your heart of love. For your love that is so wide, so long, so high, so deep, that we find ourselves your treasured possession, fearfully and wonderfully made, Embraced and sung over with rejoicing. For your heart that turns towards us in mercy and grace, bringing beauty for ashes, And light and hope where we thought only darkness could dwell. We thank you that you hear and answer our prayers as we bring them to you today.

We pray for our leaders, that they would act with integrity, honesty and humility. That they would choose the right way over the easy way. Soften their hearts and fill them with compassion for all those they govern over. We pray for leaders across the world, as they face the management and implications of the pandemic alongside all the other issues facing their countries.

Lord, please give teachers your wisdom and strength as they face the uncertainties and challenges surrounding children's return to schools, we pray for their safety, for their anxieties and that they would not be overwhelmed by all they need to get their heads around. We thank you for their dedication to the children they teach over these last 10 weeks, shown in so many ways. And as we pray for the teachers, we pray for all children who will return to school over the coming weeks – for those who are anxious about returning, for those who will be unable to return, for those traumatised by the changes to how school will work, for those desperate to go back but not yet on the list to.

Father thank you for those gifted with scientific understanding and knowledge – we pray for those involved in finding effective and sustainable ways to manage and control the current pandemic, may their voices rise above the clamour and confusion of our anxieties to provide concrete answers and solutions.

Whilst our news remains consumed with Covid related stories, we remember your precious children across the world caught up in other tragedies and distress. We pray for those affected by the cyclone last week in Kolkata, left homeless and without basic needs. For all those caught up in conflict. For those still waiting in Calais and other ports, desperate to find a better life. We take a moment to bring you places we are aware of that especially need our prayers right now.

Lord we lift up all who are unwell and thank you for your promise that you are with them always. May they know your presence as a reality and experience your comfort and peace and may those supporting and treating them have the wisdom and understanding they need to be effective. We pray for all those who are struggling in any way – financially, with their mental or physical health, with loneliness, fear, addiction. We take a moment to name those known to us who need to know your comfort today.

When you sent your Holy Spirit at that first Pentecost, your church was born – we wonder what you feel when you look at the church of today and whether it's what you had in mind. But we ask that in all its frailty and vulnerability you would empower your body on earth to rise up and stand up for justice, for compassion, for the vulnerable, for what is right and to share the love you have for all creation. Give us the strength we need to be your hands and feet, your voice, in our world, our country, our community, our street.

Finally Lord, as we seek to know how we can serve you best even as we cry out these prayers to you. May hope dwell long in our hearts. May love fill our minds. May kindness spill from our mouths. May generosity tumble from our hands. In the name of the infinite well of love.

Amen.

Hymn: 746 There's a spirit in the air

1. There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world!'
2. Lose your shyness, find your tongue,
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!
3. When believers break the bread,
when a hungry child is fed,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.
4. Still the Spirit gives us light,
seeing wrong and setting right:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!
5. When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.
6. May the Spirit fill our praise,
guide our thoughts and change our ways
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today!
7. There's a Spirit in the air,
calling people everywhere:
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

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Closing Blessing

May God,
who comes to us
in the things of this world,
bless your eyes
and be in your seeing.

May Christ,
who looks upon you
with deepest love,
bless your eyes
and widen your gaze.

May the Spirit,
who perceives what is
and what may yet be,
bless your eyes
and sharpen your vision.

May the Sacred Three
bless your eyes
and cause you to see.

*In the Sanctuary of Women, © J Richardson.
<http://paintedprayerbook.com/>*

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. **Amen.**

*Thank you for joining in with us. If we can support you in any way, please get in touch. 023 8055 4231
peter.dockree@outlook.com*

The Sunday Service Video will be on YouTube at 10am on Sunday. Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

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