***The Churches of St Mary, Cleeton St Mary; St Giles, Farlow; St John the Baptist, Middleton Scriven; Holy Trinity, Sidbury, St Michael, Silvington; and St Mary, Stottesdon***

**Sunday Worship for the Feast of Pentecost**

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In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

*First, let’s make our confession together:*

We have not always worshipped God, our creator.

Lord, have mercy.

We have not always followed Christ, our Saviour.

Christ, have mercy.

We have not always trusted in the Spirit, our guide.

Lord, have mercy.

The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

*In the quiet of the place where we are, at home, indoors or outdoors, let us be still and know God’s loving presence with us, now and always – wherever we are, however we feel, whoever we’re with.*

As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on ﬁre with love for you; now and forever. Amen.

*Today’s psalm is part of Psalm 104, a thanksgiving:*

26 O Lord, how manifold are your works! ♦ In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

27 There is the sea, spread far and wide, ♦ and there move creatures beyond number, both small and great.

28There go the ships, and there is that Leviathan ♦ which you have made to play in the deep.

29 All of these look to you ♦ to give them their food in due season.

30 When you give it them, they gather it; ♦ you open your hand and they are ﬁlled with good.

31 When you hide your face they are troubled; ♦ when you take away their breath, they die and return again to the dust.

32 When you send forth your spirit, they are created, ♦ and you renew the face of the earth.

33 May the glory of the Lord endure forever; ♦ may the Lord rejoice in his works;

34 He looks on the earth and it trembles; ♦ he touches the mountains and they smoke.

35 I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; ♦ I will make music to my God while I have my being.

36 So shall my song please him ♦ while I rejoice in the Lord.

37 Let sinners be consumed out of the earth and the wicked be no more. ♦ Bless the Lord, O my soul. Alleluia.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit ♦ as it was in the beginning is now and shall be forever. Amen.

*The first reading continues our series from the Acts of the Apostles, and tells the story of the disciples’ experience of the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.*

**2**When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2**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. **3**Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. **4**All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

**5**Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. **6**And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. **7**Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8**And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? **9**Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, **10**Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, **11**Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ **12**All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ **13**But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

**14**But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. **15**Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. **16**No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

**17**“In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
    and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
    and your old men shall dream dreams.
**18**Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
    in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
        and they shall prophesy.
**19**And I will show portents in the heaven above
    and signs on the earth below,
        blood, and fire, and smoky mist.
**20**The sun shall be turned to darkness
    and the moon to blood,
        before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.
**21**Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

*The second reading is from St. John’s Gospel, Chapter 20, and shows the Spirit as Jesus’ gift to his disciples.*

**19**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.’ **20**After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. **21**Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ **22**When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. **23**If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

*Today’s reflection is from Alex.*

***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.”*** [John 20:19-23]

How can we begin to understand this?

Today’s Psalm remembers the very earliest book of the Bible – Genesis, and the wonderful poetry of the primeval story that illustrates the very birth of Creation and the wonderful creative power that shapes all things. This is beyond our ability to understand, and of course it’s also beyond the limits of language, so we use imagery to express its deep mystery. One translation of Genesis says that: “…a wind (or a mighty wind) from God swept over the face of the waters…”; in another version we read: “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”

Now perhaps an old Hebrew word can help us here: *ruach* has been variously translated as breath, and wind and spirit. God’s *ruach* is the source – the breath - of created life.

So when Jesus, whom John tells us is God’s Word, “breathes” on the disciples it’s perhaps a way of saying that he gives them that *ruach*, and we hear how this gives them power to do extraordinary things. The Spirit is sometimes seen as the Helper – God’s creative energy, if you like.

The disciples can’t do the work that Jesus is sending them out to do without this energy, and perhaps if we think about energy today we realise how much we too need energy to be creative in our own time, in our work for God.

I’m spending far too much time on my computer at the moment. It’s a great blessing that I can use it to keep in touch with all those I love, but if I take too much of the wrong stuff from it my energy is sapped and it becomes destructive of my well-being. And to support my energy levels I’m tempted to drink too much tea, too much coffee – when I know I don’t need it, and a glass of water would be better for me and more refreshing too.

Water is another metaphor for the Spirit – living water, Jesus calls it – and this stream of living water is a lovely metaphor for that energy which gives life to our faith – and that ultimately means what we **do** with faith, and the way we live out our life.

And perhaps we need to think about what it is that powers the energy of our thinking and makes us do what we do. If we have a love for all of this glorious created world, so exemplified looking out from this place today, then we need that stream of living water now to inspire us to do better as we emerge out of lockdown. We need water – or we know growth won’t happen. We need spiritual water, or our own spiritual growth doesn’t happen.

We need to harness all this to create a better future. The world’s limited resources will run out. We must give time and attention in our thinking to the ebb and flow of the tides, the wind, the rays of the sun – and better ways of living.

If we rely on our own limited resources, we too will run out of supplies. But if we give time and attention through prayer and by faith, God’s *ruach* – breath, wind, Spirit – will give us the creative energy and the strength we truly need for what comes next.

I’d like to finish by reading two verses from that lovely Psalm:

‘When you send forth your spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth. May the glory of the Lord endure forever; may the Lord rejoice in his works. Amen

*Let’s pray together – you may like to use these words, and perhaps add your own words too. Take time simply to talk with God in your own way, in your own time.*

As we celebrate this feast of Pentecost, we make our prayers to God who is our creator, our redeemer, our source of spiritual energy – that he may be our guide, companion and strength upon our journey through life.

Creating Father, thank you for the good gifts of the world you have made for us – for its abundance and its beauty, for the joy we can take in being a part of it; help us to look after it and all our neighbours we share it with.

Lord, in you mercy, hear our prayer.

Word of the Father, made flesh to live among us, who touched the outcast and the diseased with your love and with your healing hand, reach out today to those in need: the sick, the lonely, the fearful, the burdened, the grieving. Be present to uphold those who are stumbling along life’s way.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Holy Spirit of God, empower us! Breathe new life into us, blow your sacred wind through our lives and refresh us to do your will. Give energy of spirit to all those who strive to work for their neighbours: our medical workers, our service providers, our politicians, and ourselves – that we may be aflame to do your will.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Lord God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us, and all those we hold in prayer on our hearts this day, in faith in your redeeming purpose, in hope for new beginnings and in the knowledge of your immeasurable love. Amen.

*Together with Christians across the world today, we pray the Covid-19 Prayer:*

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy.

Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick,

and lift up all who are brought low;

that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love

in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*The Collect for today:*

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

*We say together The Lord’s Prayer – the prayer that Jesus taught his disciples:*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

*Although we worship apart, we can share blessing with each other in the words of the Grace:*

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

*After this service is read here, Holy Communion will be celebrated; if you wish, you can share this through the Prayer of Spiritual Communion, which is for all of us in our homes:*

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ, for all the benefits you have given me, for all the pains and insults you have borne for me. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come spiritually into my heart. O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother, may I know you more clearly, love you more dearly, and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.

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*If you would like to sing a hymn for Pentecost, Sue recommends this one:*

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
and lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
is comfort, life, and fire of love.
Enable with perpetual light
the dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
with the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far from foes, give peace at home:
where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
and thee, of both, to be but One,
that through the ages all along,
this may be our endless song:

Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.