



March Team Ministry

March Team St John, St Mary, St Peter, St Wendreda

Welcome

Pentecost ~ Whitsunday May 31st 2020

Please keep in touch with one another, and I am always glad to hear from you on 01354 279232 or at
andrew.marchurch@gmail.com

There are a good number of services that can be viewed online, perhaps especially Ely Cathedral, and I hope you are also watching those on TV or listening to those on the Radio. Last Sunday I watched good contributions from St Albans, Ely and Leicester Cathedrals, and you may have found others.

"Stay in touch, take care, keep safe, continue praying and God bless."

I hope you have received the prayers and guidance for "Spiritual Communion"

Prayers for this Week

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Send down, O God upon your people
the flame of your Holy Spirit

and fill with the abundance of your sevenfold gift
the Church you brought forth from your Son's pierced side.

May your life-giving Spirit
lend fire to our words and strength to our witness.

Send us forth to the nations of the world
to proclaim with boldness your wondrous work
of raising Christ to your right hand.

We make our prayer through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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 our 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.**

Reading 1: Corinthians 12 v4-13

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

Meditation

Let's have a three-legged stool as our aid this morning; and start three times with each supporting leg.

1st Leg

It has intrigued me over the last few days to find many references to the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, yet when I have looked at several biblical passages, there never seemed to be a list of seven! Seven is a number in the bible which often signifies God's completeness, like the seven days of the Genesis chapter 1 creation. Today's reading from 1 Corinthians has; wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment, tongues and interpreting tongues. We also have a different sort of list in Romans; speaking, administration, teaching, charity, leading, consoling, and yet again a different sort of list in Galatians; love joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control. And all these are from the writings of Paul! and none are clearly seven!

2nd Leg

Also intriguing in the last few days, has been the speculation, interpretation, difference and debate about changing rules in this time of developing lockdown. We are seeing differences between countries both within and beyond the United Kingdom. We are seeing very different ideas about what is keeping, breaking or stretching rules which leads into discussion about what are exceptional circumstances, and about whether the same applies for those with influence or importance as to those of us who are living ordinary lives.

Some face anxiety that lockdown is being released too quick, and others because it is too slow. Some are only too aware of their own or others frailty and the risks a virus poses, whilst others are dominated by the reasonable human desire to be able to meet loved ones. Some people are by nature risk takers, others are wanting firm evidence first. Some will have lost confidence in inconsistency or partisan applications of rules, some have the wider good at the forefront of their minds and actions. Some have indeed faced exceptional circumstances, some have made huge and significant sacrifices.

As far as church services are concerned we remain unchanged; the Government have said definitely not before July 4th, and then only if the virus is waning, the church can meet any social distancing and hygiene rules, and lastly, and most importantly, if people have the confidence to come.

3rd leg – and remember 3-legged stools cannot wobble however uneven.

At the first Pentecost, the disciples were gathered together, but isolated from the wider world, in Jerusalem. It was a major festival, the wheat harvest and remembering Moses meeting God and been given a script to share with the people. They had been told to wait to receive afresh the Holy Spirit. The Spirit had been there from the beginning of time; blowing at creation, warming God's people at times of despair, inspiring prophets to blow a fresh gale through their world and time, providing that inner glow for those who wrote, compiled and read the Old Testament, appearing at Jesus's baptism and speaking to those who would hear throughout his earthly ministry, and now appearing afresh in flame, wind and speech to the disciples.

Giving them the energy, equipment, gifts, ideas and speech to start the movement of the church from Jerusalem to the ends of the world, from that time and day into the never-ending future. So that means we can say today in March, the Lord is here, his Spirit is with us.

And so to the seat of the stool, the useful bit...

...where we can sit and be, supported firmly and safely by those three legs.

From our reading, “*To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*” So, sitting securely on the stool, ask yourself, “What gift have I been given?” What are you good at, and how can it be used for the common good?

Yes, there are some things we enjoy and are good at, but if we are honest are largely for our own enjoyment or edification. You can sit in a comfortable armchair to think about and enjoy these. But, at the moment I am inviting you to sit on that stool, it is not too comfortable, but it is safe and secure.

So, what are you good at, that is for the common good? It does not have to be earth shattering; it does not have to be spectacular or dramatic. It does not have to conform to easy description and other’s expectations. It does not have to be many different gifts, but always at least one.

Some people have been so conditioned by others that they find it hard to identify their own talents, but the Spirit has got through and given you your gift. What is it? How do you use it? Where does it build the common good?

If you spend too long sitting on this stool, it will no longer be comfortable, but it will still be stable and secure. You will have rested awhile on the stool, but now the time has come to get up, but you can return to think, speak and rest.

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire, and lighten with celestial fire; thou the anointing Spirit art, who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart: but one gift will be enough for now.

God’s Holy Spirit is with us.

Andrew

Prayers

Be with us, Spirit of God; nothing can separate us from your love.

Breathe on us breath of God; fill us with your saving power.

Speak in us, wisdom of God; bring us strength, wholeness and peace.

The Lord is here. His Spirit is with us.

Faithful God, who fulfilled the promise of Easter by sending your Holy Spirit,
and made known to every race and nation the way of eternal life;
open our lips by your Spirit, that every tongue may tell of your glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Come Holy Spirit, creator; and renew the earth.

Come Holy Spirit, counsellor, and touch our lips that we may proclaim your word.

Come, Holy Spirit, power from on high; make us channels of peace and ministers of healing.

Come, Holy Spirit, breath of God, give life to the dry bones around us,
and make us living people, holy and free.

Come Holy Spirit, wisdom and truth; strengthen us to be bold in faith.

Minister: As part of God’s Church here in March, I call upon you to live out what you proclaim.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit, will you dare to walk into God’s future, trusting him to be your guide?

All: By the Spirit’s inspiration, we will.

Minister: Will you dare to embrace each other and grow together in love?

All: By the Spirit’s peace, we will.

Minister: Will you share your riches in common and minister to each other in need?

All: By the Spirit’s love, we will.

Minister: Will you dare to pray for each other until your hearts beat with the longings of God?

All: By the Spirit’s joy, we will.

Minister: Will you dare to carry the light of Christ into the world’s dark places?

All: By the Spirit’s power, we will.