

PENTECOST



Next Sunday, 24th May, we will be celebrating Pentecost.

Pentecost (which comes from the Greek word for 'fiftieth') has its roots in the Jewish Feast of Weeks.

The Day of Pentecost marks fifty days since Easter Day and brings the Easter season to an end. It is a major feast of the Church's year when Christians recall how God's Holy Spirit was given to the disciples after Jesus' ascension, empowering them to begin the work of making disciples of all nations. (taken from the Church of England website)

One of the readings set for Pentecost is Acts 2:1 – 21 – the following verses have been taken from the reading.

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

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.*

Just take a moment to pause to think about what this experience meant to the disciples. Try and put yourself into their shoes.

What does it mean to you to be filled with the Holy Spirit?

If you read on in the Bible, you can find out how the disciples

were empowered to go out and talk about Jesus and what he did during his ministry on earth.

The disciples went out and preached the gospel message of God's saving grace. Not only did they preach the gospel they lived it.

Over time new churches were developed – not buildings but bodies of people who gathered together to worship God and to learn about Jesus. These churches grew and grew and eventually spread right across the world – more and more people came to recognise God and to following the teachings of Jesus.

Today we need to renew our church – our body of people who believe in God and who want to follow the teaching of Jesus.

We need to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our lives and to give us the wisdom, the knowledge and the strength to encourage other people to come to faith or to return to the faith they once believed in.

There are lots of ways that you, yes you, can do this and none of them are time consuming, none of them are hard they just need a commitment from you.

Perhaps in the coming days if you can do one or more of them. Or you may have a different idea of how you can serve the church and help it to grow. If you can please speak to David or Alan (wardens).

Here at St. Mary's we have a team of people who are working hard to carry out the initiative called Growing God's Church. You could offer your services to the team to help them in their work.

In February we were all asked to think about how we, yes all of us, could support the worship in our church Sunday by Sunday. You do not need to be specially trained – help and resources are available. Each Sunday we have readings from the Bible and prayers are said – are these areas which you could support? If you haven't done this before please be assured that help is available.

Also on a Sunday there is a time of fellowship.

Tea and coffee are served in the Community Hall.

Helpers are needed to provide this ministry – if you can help please speak to Sheila Gough.

Another way you can help with the worship of the church family is to be a Sides Person/Welcomer. This is a very important role as you will be one of the first people a new member or visitor will meet. Again help will be available with your 'duties' and you will be given a rota for when you will be needed.

There is a service on Thursday morning, sometimes it is Holy Communion and sometimes is Morning Worship. During the school term the liturgy is linked to the needs of the school but everyone is welcome to attend. After the service several of the adults go to Coffee and Chat.

Open Church is another way to support visitors to church. When the church is open people who are visiting a grave often pop in to light a candle or have a short time of prayer or contemplation. There has to be at least two people doing this 'duty' so you would never be on your own.

There is also Messy Church on the third Saturday of each month. People are needed to support the leaders and to lead activities. Sharon Goodland can give you more information about Messy Church.

At various times during the year St. Mary's C of E Primary School needs to appoint Foundation Governors.

This is a worthwhile ministry and if this is something you can offer please go to the school and ask to speak to the Head Teacher – David Sherriff.

You might like to spend some quiet time during the coming days to think about what gifts you can offer to God.

We sing this hymn in church, you might like to say the words each day for the next week or two.

Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me,
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me.
Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me.
Spirit of the Living God,
Fall afresh on me.

Prayers:

You may like to use these prayers over the next few weeks.
(These prayers are based on prayers by John Birch for Pentecost)

Lord Jesus, bless me as I seek to serve you today.
Fill me with your Holy Spirit, as you filled your followers early one morning in Jerusalem, that we might be your voices, hands and presence in our community and in the world, and draw others into your kingdom. Amen.

Lord, for the gifts of your Spirit so freely given to those who ask,
I offer up my prayer of thanks.
Lord, for wisdom to discern your will and knowledge for the building of faith, I offer up my thanks.
Lord, for healing bringing to lives and prophecy to declare
your living word, I offer up my thanks.
Lord, for the gifts of the Spirit so freely given to those who ask,
I offer up my thanks. Amen.

Spirit of life, breathe on me;
Spirit of truth, speak to me;
Spirit of hope, inspire me;
Spirit of power, work through me today and all days.
Amen.