

## Sunday 24 May 2026

### Pentecost

#### 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 for this week:

*Numbers 11:24-30; Psalm 104:22-36, 37b; Acts 2:1-21; John 20:19-23.*

Throughout today's readings one major theme stands out – the gift of the Spirit of God and the new life it brings. We begin with Moses, in Numbers, sharing some of the weight of his responsibility with chosen elders. This involves a portion of God's Spirit being transferred from Moses to the elders, resulting in them prophesying. We see that while Moses is leader all members of the community are tasked to discern and do God's will, and to encourage others to join in, to be part of God's work in the world. Psalm 104 is a celebration of God's life-giving power that extends across heaven and earth, throughout the universe. The ability to give life is linked to the work of the Spirit, which is a creative and regenerative force. Yet what is described is not simply physical existence, it is also transcendent, it speaks of a relationship that moves creation, including humanity, into the presence of the divine. Our response, the closing verses of the psalm declare, is to praise God, not just in song or worship, but in thought and action.

The sudden, irresistible bubbling up of new life fills the reading from Acts, beginning in Jerusalem but with clearly global repercussions, as all people understand the message of the Spirit in their own language. The Spirit's irruption during the Festival of Weeks is significant, for this was an Old Testament feast that marked the end of spring celebrations, acted as a renewal of the covenant and moved the seasons from gestation to birth, to harvest. So, the birth pangs of God's new activity, the Church, are over: at Pentecost the first members join this fresh way of being in relationship. It is an outpouring of God's energy that is accessible to everyone and meant to touch everyone.

We have recently heard the passage from John as it forms part of the Gospel reading for the first Sunday after Easter Day. Then it includes Thomas' initial scepticism and subsequent declaration that Jesus is God. This time the focus is on the Holy Spirit, but also on the Spirit's relationship with Jesus – the Spirit enters the world through the breath of Jesus. This is John's description of the beginning of the Church, which is not intended to be a closed unit, Jesus immediately sends the disciples out into the world charged to bring forgiveness. Whereas in Acts we see the Church being formed via the action of the Spirit through the activity of the disciples, in John there is much closer continuity between Jesus and the Church. God sent Jesus with a mission, and now Jesus sends the Church out with a mission. Just as Jesus met opposition, so will the Church, but the task is the same for both, to bring everyone into communion with each other and God.

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

#### Readings for next week:

*Isaiah 40:12-17, 27-31; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20*

*Trinity Sunday*