

Prepared by Rev. Diane Smith

Call to Worship John 20:19-24

Hymn – O Breath of Life - Singing the Faith (STF) 391 (*Elizabeth Ann Head – Bessie Porter Head*)

O Breath of life, come sweeping through us.
revive your Church with life and power;
O breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,
And fit your Church to meet this hour.

O wind of God, come, bend us, break us,
till humbly we confess our need;

then in your 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 your Church in every part.

Prayer of Adoration

We praise you God of all time and places. We thank you and praise you for the gift of your Holy Spirit. Your Spirit embodied in Christ our Lord. Your Spirit offered freely to the open heart. You Spirit given since the dawn of time. Your Spirit given at Pentecost to unite, inspire transform and heal. Your Spirit given at the birth of the world, the birth of Jesus and the birth of the Church. Your spirit given to all work and witness in accordance with your will. For the Gift of the Holy Spirit, we praise your Holy name. *Amen.*

A Prayer of Confession

Forgive us good Lord for the times we do not hear the prompting of the Spirit. Forgive us good Lord for the times we do not act upon your guidance. Forgive us good Lord for the times we struggle in our own strength and fail to love you and our neighbours as we should. *Amen.*

Bible Readings Genesis 1:1-5 and Acts 2:1-21

Sermon/Reflection

We live in a world of instant and mass communication. From Zoom meetings to text messaging and email, through to the more traditional letter writing and daily newspapers. We have the means and the technological advancements to know what is happening on the other side of the world, as it happens. It is a fact however, that many barriers and walls still exist physically and psychologically across the globe. With all our technological advancements we do not always engage in open, frank and honest communication.

We currently find ourselves in that part of the liturgical year when we reflect more deeply upon the work of the Holy Spirit. The Feast of Pentecost, on this Sunday and Wesley Day tomorrow. The work of the Spirit is diverse, multifaceted and complex. For some the Holy Spirit is the most neglected part of the Trinity. Certainly, we have great difficulty in framing words that help us have some understanding of both the Trinity and the Holy Spirit.

Maybe picture language helps us more. St Patrick's famous shamrock illustration or St. Augustine's image of the River may help us.

Maybe it also helps to concentrate on what the spirit does. The Holy Spirit's power in our life equips us to do God's work, to do those many things that we know that we would never ever be able to do in our own strength. One of the major functions of the Holy Spirit is to help us communicate the Gospel message of Love and Forgiveness and Reconciliation with God.

We do not know fully how the spirit works but we do know the signs, Love, Joy, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control (Galatians 5 v22). When I see this list, I know for sure that I have a lifetimes work set before me, but surely these are the very things that we would want to nurture and develop in our own lives and communicate verbally and non-verbally to those around us.

The Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost proved to be the best and most effective communicator of all time. Using a diversity of language, all present heard the spirit speaking in their own language.

To speak another's language is more than a question of learning a different dialect, it is about a willingness to be alongside and listen very carefully to the stories of those around us. To train our hearts and minds to discern God's story weaving its way in the lives of others, to be very open to learn from all we meet.

I am convinced the Holy Spirit, as a guide, helps to understand the language of those who grieve, the language of those who carry terrible burdens, the language of the mentally ill.

When other means of communication break down or fail completely, we have in the Holy Spirit a very real helper and guide. This does not mean a quick fix, rather a sustained living presence that will help challenge, inspire and enrich all of our living.

The Holy Spirit of God is seen in a unique way on the day of Pentecost, giving the infant church a much-needed surge of energy. However, we must not limit the work of the Spirit to Pentecost alone. The work of the Spirit began at Creation and continues today.

May God the Holy Spirit fall afresh on us all. *Amen.*

Hymn – Spirit of the Living God – STF 395 *(Daniel Iverson)*

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 of Intercession (followed by your own time to pray for others)

Holy Spirit of God, moving of the face of the waters at Creation, teach us we pray to care for both people and planet.

Holy Spirit of God, giving life to dry bones, we pray for who are suffering in body, mind or spirit.

Holy Spirit of God, give your strength we pray, to all leaders seeking to bring liberty, justice and freedom.

Holy Spirit of God, bring we pray, your powers of healing and reconciliation to a world in great need.

Holy Spirit, speak into broken relationships and broken hopes and dreams.

Holy Spirit of life, breathe your life into those who are experiencing grief and loss.

Holy Spirit of God, touch transform your Church worldwide, that she may ever be true to her calling to follow Christ.

(Your own Prayers of Intercession)

Our Father ...

Hymn – Come O Everlasting Spirit – STF 375 *(Charles Wesley)*

Come, O everlasting Spirit,
bring to every thankful mind
All the Saviour's dying merit,
suffering still for humankind

True recorder of his passion,
now the living faith impart,

now reveal his great salvation,
preach the gospel to our heart.

Come, O witness of his dying;
Come, remembrancer divine,
let us feel your power, applying
Christ to every soul, and mine.

The Grace

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and ever more. Amen.