



Opening Words

May the glory of the LORD endure for ever; may the LORD rejoice in his works—who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being.

Words from Psalm 104

Hymn – O Breath of Life - Singing the Faith (STF) 391

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3bsgoPjcg4>

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.
(Elizabeth Ann Head – Bessie Porter Head)

God declares:

I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Opening prayer.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful people, and kindle in us the fire of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hold silence for a minute or so and reflect on your life.

Gracious and holy God, we confess that we have sinned against you and against our neighbour. Your Spirit gives light, but we have preferred darkness; your Spirit gives wisdom, but we have been foolish; your Spirit gives power, but we have trusted in our own strength. For the sake of Jesus Christ, your Son, forgive our sins, and enable us by your Spirit to serve you in joyful obedience, to the glory of your Name. Amen.

There is now no condemnation for those who live in union with Christ Jesus; for the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law of sin and death.

Amen. Thanks be to God.

Faithful God, you fulfilled the promise of Easter by sending your Holy Spirit and opening the way of eternal life to all the human race. Keep us in the unity of your Spirit that every tongue may tell of your glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Reading Acts 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

"In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.

Reflection:

I apologize because there is a bit of theme emerging to my preaching. I am writing this reflection in the week following the success of Ipswich Town in securing a place in the Premier League and the images of the scenes in Ipswich earlier this week are still buzzing around in my mind. Having had a conversation with a clergy friend during the week we both reached the same conclusion the football is the new religion. We were lamenting in a Church meeting a few weeks ago that people no longer gravitate to the town centre, shops are closing, the high street is not the buzz that it once was and church attendances are down, yet, when Ipswich Town is playing a home match people flock into the town in their thousands.

Watch any TV quiz show and when the host asks, "and what subject would you like to see come up?" invariably the answer is "football" and if they are lucky enough to get their chosen subject, they have little problem getting their tongues around some pretty unpronounceable names, I find the whole thing fascinating. Grown men can act like children, can sob when their team loses and are euphoric when they win. Footballers are like Gods and in modern language have become "influencers" raising public awareness and even swaying governments "what is going on?" I ask myself. When all is said and done, this is just a game, yet it has become a new religion, people are no longer defined as being Jew or Gentile, but by which football team they support.

Today the Christian Church celebrates the events of Pentecost, or "Whitsuntide" as it was known when I was a lad. This is a significant event in the life of the Christian Church when God Poured out his Spirit on the Disciples, enabling them to do amazing work. The significance is that ordinary men and women were given confidence to articulate the message of the gospel and bring hope, peace, and love into a world that was cruel. They were driven out to far corners of the world to share this message and changed the world.

I look at the news today and see cities around the world destroyed in the name of war, wrecked by earthquakes, floods, and storms. I hear about young lives wasted because teenagers are carrying knives, I hear about cyber bullying causing youngsters to take their own lives, and it saddens me. I long to hear the message of Christ on the lips of all people, striving to bring hope, peace, and love in the twenty-first century.

Some questions to think about:

- Do you think that God is getting on with his work using football as the new religion? I sometimes think that they are achieving what we are struggling to do.

- What can the Church in the twentieth century learn from secular society if we are to change a world of hatred into a world of love.
- How alive is the Holy Spirit in the Church today?
- Are we ready to change with the times?

Hymn – Spirit of the Living God - Singing the Faith (STF) 395

Watch on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19i72kDhm1U>

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.

(Daniel Iverson)

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God, whose Spirit helps us in our weakness and guides us in our prayers, we pray for the Church and for the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

Renew the life and faith of the Church; strengthen our witness; and make us one in Christ . . .

Grant that we and all who confess that Christ is Lord may be faithful in your service and filled with the Spirit, that the world may be turned to you.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Guide the nations in the ways of justice, liberty and peace; and help them to seek the unity and welfare of all people . . .

Give to all in authority wisdom to know and strength to do what is right.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Comfort those in sorrow; heal the sick in body or in mind and deliver the oppressed . . .

Grant us compassion for all who suffer, and help us so to carry one another's burdens that we may fulfil the law of Christ.

Lord, in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

Receive our thanks and praise for all who have served you faithfully here on earth, and especially those who have revealed to us your grace in Christ . . .

May we and all your people share the life and joy of your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn: Ye servants of God (StF 340) **Watch on YouTube** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptLLr_WjCz8

Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,
 and publish abroad his wonderful name:
 the name all-victorious of Jesus extol;
 his kingdom is glorious, and rules over all.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save;
 and still he is nigh, his presence we have;
 the great congregation his triumph shall sing;
 ascribing salvation to Jesus our King.

'Salvation to God who sits on the throne!
 Let all cry aloud, and honour the Son:
 the praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,
 fall down on their faces, and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore, and give him his right,
 all glory and power, all wisdom and might,
 all honour and blessing, with angels above,
 and thanks never-ceasing, and infinite love.

Charles Wesley 1707-1788

Blessing

The Spirit of truth lead us into all truth, give us grace to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and to proclaim the word and works of God; and the blessing of God, Spirit, Son and Father, remain with us always. **Amen.**