

**WORSHIP SHEET FOR PENTECOST
2020**

CALL TO WORSHIP:

Spirit of life

Fill our emptiness with your fullness

Spirit of power

Stir our hearts afresh

Spirit of love

Touch us, and through us, our neighbour

Spirit of Creativity

Enable and empower the gifts you have given

Spirit of Eternity

Draw us ever deeper into your Kingdom

HYMN: StF 8 God with us, Creator, Father

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ftfZDbpuJg>

1. God with us: Creator, Father,
bringing everything to birth;
Mother of the whole creation,
fire of stars and life of earth:
down the countless years composing,
from the earth's evolving night,
love's response to love, and forming
mind and soul to seek your light.

2. God with us: Redeemer, Brother,
Friend for ever at our side,
here, in flesh, you walked among us,
taking up your cross, you died.
Crucified, despised, rejected,
Perfect Love, who shared our shame,
streaming from the cross, your judgement,
full of mercy, clears our name.

3. God with us: Unwearied Spirit,
from the birth of time and space,
surging through unconscious being,
joyful, Life-Creating Grace:
through the centuries you find us;
you, as God, inspire our prayer;
Life and Power at work within us,
Love for ever, everywhere!

4. God, Transcendent, far beyond us,
closest Friend, unfailing Guide:
through the ages, wronged, affronted,

in your poor, still crucified!
God with us: condemn, forgive us;
by your holy love destroy
all that hinders peace and justice:
fill this aching world with joy!

Alan Gaunt (b 1935)

PRAYERS

The Spirit came
and your Church was born,
in wind and fire
and words of power.

The Spirit came
blowing fear aside,
and in its place
weak hearts were stronger.

The Spirit came
as your word foretold,
with dreams and signs,
visions and wonders.

The Spirit came
and is here today,
to feed the hearts
of a world that hungers.

For the Spirit of Peace that calms our mind
and stills our life, we give you thanks.
For the Spirit of Love that touches hearts
and reaches out, we give you thanks.
For the Spirit of Joy that lifts our soul
and gives us faith we give you thanks.
For the Spirit of Power, that gift of grace
for this your church, we give you thanks.

We ask for your forgiveness, Lord, when we forget
the power that lies within, and trust instead upon our
human strength.

Remind us of that glorious day when your Spirit
transformed the lives of those who hid in fear, into
people of power.

Renew these hearts which have grown cold with
flames of fire, as on that Pentecost, that this might
be the church that you desire.

Thank you Lord that you hear our prayers, that
you pour your love and forgiveness upon us and
that you renew us by your Spirit to love and
serve you, today and always. Amen.

HYMN: StF 394 Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy8AZ46GKqc>

*Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,
gentle as is the dove;
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love.*

1. You spoke to us long, long ago,
gave us the written Word;
we read it still, needing its truth,
through it God's voice is heard.

Refrain

2. Without Your help we fail our Lord,
we cannot live His way;
we need Your power, we need Your strength,
following Christ each day.

Refrain

Margaret V Old 1932-2001

READING: Acts 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. ² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "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.

¹⁸ Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

GOSPEL- John 20: 19-23

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."



REFLECTION

Have you had birds nesting in your garden this year? If so have you been able to watch the birds as they grow? We have seen several fledglings being fed on our lawn and it struck me what a huge step the act of fledging must be for these small chicks. They have never been outside the nest and have no idea what awaits

them and although they have stretched and preened their wings countless times they have never had to use them to fly. It is a leap of faith as they spring out into the great unknown and some are more eager to go than others.

It seems to me that their situation relates well both to the Pentecost story and to where we are as a church at this time. We hear at Pentecost of how the disciples, who have been gathered in the upper room since Jesus' ascension, worshipping and waiting (stretching their wings if you like) suddenly receive God's Spirit in a powerful way and burst out of the room and into the crowds. After this moment and experience nothing is the same again. Their news travels, the church grows and the disciples themselves begin to move out from Jerusalem in order to spread the good news. They are never together in quite the same way again. This is a watershed moment when everything changes. It is the birthday of the church yes, but it also means the disciples leaving behind the security of the familiar.

There will be aspects of this situation that we recognise in this time when we are not able to meet and as we begin to look forward to what will happen as restrictions are lifted. We may find it difficult to see ourselves as Pentecost people in this context as we adjust to the changed landscape and wonder how our Christian journey will continue.

In order to take that first step into the unknown there are things that we can do to prepare ourselves. Fledglings in the nest do plenty of stretching and preening, even if they don't actually fly. This is time for us to re-evaluate our faith; to think about what it is that helps us to be strong and close to God and to flex our muscles. When Jesus ascends into heaven he doesn't send the Spirit in power directly, he gives the disciples a time of waiting so that they can prepare for what is to come. This time in our homes can be preparation time for us, let's use it well.

It is worth remembering though, that Pentecost is not the only mention of the Spirit in the bible, nor is it the only account of the disciples receiving this gift from Jesus. There is another, much quieter revolution that also takes place in

the upper room shortly after the resurrection. The risen Jesus appears, calms the disciples fear and simply breathes the gift of his Spirit into them, no rushing wind, no tongues of flame, just a soft breath and words of peace. More than this though, Jesus very quietly passes them the authority to forgive – a huge gift, quietly given. We know from elsewhere in the Gospels that forgiveness is something that only God can grant the authority for, this is why the Pharisees got so angry with Jesus. Yet in John's Gospel Jesus passes this authority to the disciples, in an atmosphere of intimacy and peace with no fuss and fanfare.

This is a huge comfort and a reminder to us that God's Spirit is present at all times, in quietness as well as busyness, in sorrow as well as in joy. God has given us this precious gift and we have received it, are receiving it and will go on receiving it in different ways day by day. The Spirit is here as we worship, just as it was present in the peace of that upper room and it will be with us today and in the days, weeks and months to come. Whether we burst out of the nest as restrictions are lifted or whether we hover reluctantly on the edge, whether we take to the air with ease or 'fall in style' God is waiting for us and he will help us to stretch our wings and find our way in His changing world. Amen.

HYMN: StF 391 O breath of life come sweeping through us.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5QHZB_v0ZaY

1 O Breath of life, come sweeping through us,
revive your church with life and pow'r;
O Breath of Life, come, cleanse, renew us,
and fit your church to meet this hour.

2 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.

3 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 ev'ry part.

4 Revive us, Lord! Is zeal abating
while harvest fields are vast and white?
Revive us, Lord, the world is waiting,

equip your church to spread the light.
Elizabeth Ann Head 1850-1936

PRAYERS

In the power of the Spirit, we are able to bring all our prayers and concerns to God and we are reminded in the letter to the Romans that God's Spirit helps us to pray even when we ourselves cannot find the words. In confidence then, we pray to God...

For the people of Stowmarket Methodist Church as they celebrate their Church Anniversary O Living God have mercy.

On all those who are sick, in body, mind and spirit, O Living God have mercy.

On those who are lonely or afraid, those who suffer from anxiety or whose souls are dis comforted, O Living God have mercy.

On all those whose lives are dedicated to service; our NHS staff, the hospitality industry, our farmers and many others, O Living God have mercy.

On those who are never able to attend their place of worship, who suffer persecution and oppression and live in deprivation, O Living God have mercy.

On those who fear they are unworthy and unwelcome in church. Who do not feel included in your Kingdom, O Living God have mercy.

On those who do not know your peace, for whatever reason, O Living God have mercy.

Time to add our own prayers of the heart, either spoken or unspoken.

Everlasting God, whose very nature is love that has no end, hear our prayers. Help us to never make you in our own image but remain in awe of your mystery, the God who was, who is and who will always be. In the name of Christ, who shows us how to love, **Amen.**

We say the Lord's Prayer...

BLESSING OF OUR GIFTS

Lord God we thank you for your unfailing love and care, for the good things that you give to us and for the gift of your Holy Spirit, helper, comforter and guide. As we offer our thanks and praise today, we pray that you will bless our gifts, that they may be used to build your church

and care for your people, all to the glory of your name. **Amen.**

HYMN: StF 564 O thou who camest from above

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMRSFGHCBpQ>

1 O thou who camest from above
the fire celestial to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart!

2 There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

3 Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up the gift in me.

4 Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat;
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley 1707-1788

DISMISSAL AND GRACE

Holy God, guard me and guide me and hide me in your heart. Bless me and all those made in your image in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. AMEN.

Some prayers taken from www.faithandworship.com others from www.methodist.org.uk



People of God by Revd Ally Barrett