

# twelvebaskets



## PENTECOST A

A complete Sunday service ready to use  
for worship and inspire ideas in your church

Produced by **twelvebaskets**. Subscription available from **theworshipcloud.com**

**Pentecost Sunday - Year A**  
31st May 2020



## **Order of Service**

Call to worship

**Hymn:**

**385 STF – Holy Spirit, we welcome you OR**

**38 STF – Come, O Holy Spirit, come**

Opening Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

All Age Talk

**Hymn:**

**388 STF – Let every Christian pray OR**

**373 STF – Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire**

Readings: Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23

**Hymn**

**660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples OR**

**499 STF - Great God, Your Love Has Called Us**

Reflections on the readings

**Hymn:**

**389 STF – Like the murmur of the dove's song OR**

**393 STF – She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters**

Intercessions

Offering / collection

Blessing the offering

**Hymn:**

**313 STF – Thine be the Glory OR**

**400 STF – Wind of God, dynamic Spirit**

Blessing

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The Vine Services are compiled and produced by twelvebaskets.

Many more resources and inspiration for this week's lectionary, leading worship and other church use are available on [www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com).

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## **Call to Worship**

Sovereign Lord, we meet together to celebrate the gift of your Holy Spirit to the church.

Bless us as we seek to serve you today. Fill us with your Spirit, as you filled your followers early one morning in Jerusalem over 2000 years ago, that we might be your voices, hands and presence in the world, and draw others into your kingdom.

Amen.<sup>1</sup>

## **Hymn:**

385 STF – Holy Spirit, we welcome you OR

38 STF – Come, O Holy Spirit, come

## **Opening Prayers**

A prayer of adoration

Your Spirit—  
present from the beginning  
of beginnings;  
present in the message of the prophets;  
present in provision for your people;  
present in the life  
and words of Jesus;  
present in the cross  
and crucifixion;  
present in the lives of the apostles;  
present in the church that you empower.

For your Spirit,  
the presence of the divine  
in hearts and lives,  
we praise your name.

Amen.

A prayer of confession

We remember the Holy Spirit,  
the power in the early church,  
strengthening lives,  
giving courage to the faint-hearted,  
enabling fishermen to harvest the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from The Act of Prayer by John Birch

We remember the Holy Spirit,  
the power in the lives of saints,  
who offered their lives  
and suffered persecution for the sake  
of the gospel and their strong faith.

When we forget  
the sacrifice of those who, by your Spirit,  
spread the flame of your good news,  
forgive us.

Fill our lives, that we might live for you,  
speak for you and, with courage,  
stand up for you.

Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving

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.

Amen.<sup>2</sup>

## **We say together the Lord's Prayer**

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from The Act of Prayer by John Birch

## All Age Talk

Think for a second of something that is impossible.

*[Pause].*

Thought of something? Share that with the person next to you for a minute.

*[Pause].*

I have couple of things here that are impossible.

- Licking your own elbow (feel free to try it if you don't believe me)
- Travel at the speed of light (unless you are in a film)
- Fly (again, without being in a film)
- Run a two minute mile (even Usain Bolt can't manage that)
- Teach a goldfish to play the cello
- Eating simply one pringle
- Licking your lips when eating a sugary doughnut (okay, so that's not impossible but it is very hard)
- Reading this list a 1000 times and not getting tired
- Visiting your friends after you come back to life

These are just a small handful of things that seem impossible. However the last one is not actually impossible because it happened. In John's gospel we read how Jesus, who you might remember died on a cross and was put in a tomb, actually rose again. Here we find him doing the impossible and visiting his closest friends the disciples. These are the people that he had lived and travelled with over the past years. Here, in this this wonderful passage Jesus shows he can do the impossible.

Isn't that amazing?

This is just another reason why we should follow Jesus because he is capable of doing the impossible.

Here, on this Pentecost Sunday, let us celebrate the impossible.<sup>3</sup>

## Hymn:

388 STF – Let every Christian pray OR

373 STF – Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire

**Readings:** Acts 2:1-21; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23

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<sup>3</sup> Taken from Palm Sunday Dialogues by David J Woodman

**Hymn:**

660 STF – Called by Christ to be disciples OR

499 STF - Great God, Your Love Has Called Us

**Reflections on the readings**

It is typical of God's calling to us that on the day of Pentecost, instead of being allowed to dwell on what it feels like and means to have tongues of fire resting on you, the disciples have to go straight out and start preaching. The Acts account has got it just right. The description of the giving of the Holy Spirit is over in four verses, and the sermon takes most of the rest of the chapter. The first four verses are full of vivid detail – the wild wind rocking the whole house, the tongues of flame, and the strange speech – but we are not allowed to dwell on them. We don't even hear how the disciples got out of the house and into the crowd, but suddenly, that's where they are. And now that they have reached their destination, the narrative slows down, and there is time for dialogue, reaction, emotion. But not from the disciples. Instead, we are now focusing on the crowd, on their bewilderment, amazement, disbelief. 'What about the disciples?' you want to shout. 'Were they bewildered, amazed, disbelieving? Or were they filled with joy, certainty and power?' 'You don't need to know,' Acts tells us firmly.

And that makes it clear what the gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church is for. It is not designed to fill us with religious feelings, or give us unshakeable certainty, or impress others with our power, or even to form us into The Church, though it may have all those effects too. The gift is given primarily to allow the disciples, and us, to do what Jesus told us to, which is to be his witnesses 'in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1.8).

So when at last we hear directly from the disciples, it is Peter's voice, lifted in praise of God. He knows, with utter clarity, that what has happened to them is a sign of God's huge and faithful purpose. This is what God has always promised, through his prophets, and the point of it is our salvation. The verses that Peter quotes from Joel could be frightening, with their talk of the 'last days', the sun darkened and the moon turned to blood, but Peter is here to tell the crowd that God's presence is opportunity, not terror, salvation, not condemnation.

Peter's excitement and joy bubble through this speech. The immediate effect on Peter of the gift of the Spirit has been to make him wildly generous. He longs to see him. He looks on the crowd around him, and he knows he is now responsible for them. He must, he absolutely must, make it clear to them what God is offering through faith in Christ.

That same dynamic is at work in the verses from John's Gospel. The Spirit is given as the disciples take up Jesus's mission, and its immediate effect is to send them out to take responsibility for the world. Throughout John's Gospel, the way in which people react to Jesus signals whether they will accept or reject God's forgiveness

offered through him. Now the same thing is to happen to the disciples. Their mission, too, is to do with forgiveness and judgement. It sounds rather as though Jesus is giving the disciples a blank cheque when he says they now have the power to forgive sins or retain sins. But remember to whom this charge is given, and in what circumstances.

This is a group of people who have just betrayed and deserted their leader, and now they have locked themselves in an upstairs room, fearing for their own lives. When Jesus comes to them, he shows them the marks of the nails, not just so that they can be sure who he really is, but so that the tremendous mission he is about to entrust to them can be founded in the reality of who they are too. These disciples know how much they have been forgiven. They are not going to take the power over sin lightly. The Christian mission starts in the knowledge of our own need.

The temptation is to see the gift of the Spirit as something for insiders, to be jealously guarded and enjoyed. But instead we need to share in Moses's generosity of vision, and long for the Spirit to come down on all of God's people. It is with that longing that Peter preaches, a longing that all should share in the forgiveness and new life that God has given to us. We receive in awed gratitude, and share because we know that God has given us what we do not deserve. Should we be more grudging than God?<sup>4</sup>

*[Pause]*

The Spirit of Pentecost descends at a strange time this year, in 2020. So much of what we have been through in recent weeks and months is unprecedented. How can we listen to the Spirit in these strange times?

Spend a few moments reflection on that question, on your own journey with God and whether the Spirit is saying anything to you this day...

*[Pause]*

Let us pray,

Holy Spirit, come amongst us and inspire us by your holy fire. Show us how to be preachers, pastors, carers, supporters and builders of your Kingdom, your church, in these times.

May we take courage from an encounter with you, and face the world of uncertainty with the certainty of your love in our hearts.

In Jesus' name we pray

Amen.

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from Lectionary Reflections by Jane Williams

**Hymn:**

389 STF – Like the murmur of the dove’s song OR

393 STF – She sits like a bird, brooding on the waters

**Prayers of intercession**

Come, Holy Spirit.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, bringing order out of chaos,

bring order to our actions and purpose to our lives.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, moving in the deep places of creation,

move in the depth of our hearts.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, breathing life into all creatures,

refresh, renew, restore your people.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, giver of all good gifts,

help us to use our talents and abilities aright.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, giving life to dry bones,

give hope and joy to all who are weary.

Restore the lives which without you are dead.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Holy Spirit, giver of love,

kindle the hearts which without you are dull and cold.

Come,

renew the face of the earth.

Come, Holy Spirit, upon the newly baptized and all new Christians.

Come upon the recently confirmed and all who are growing in their faith.

Come upon all who are testing their vocations and all who are in new work.

Come upon all bishops, priests and deacons, upon all who seek to serve you.



Come upon all who strive to proclaim your power and your presence.  
Come upon the powerless and the oppressed.  
Come, be known among the unemployed and the exploited.  
Come and comfort the anxious and the fearful.  
Come and give strength to the ill and the dying.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Come,  
renew the face of the earth.

Amen.<sup>5</sup>

### **We will now take up the offering.**

#### **Blessing the offering**

As we celebrate the story that began the church, we give thanks for the church across the ages, and we pray for the church of the future. Heavenly Father, by your mysterious Spirit, transform our gifts into the work of your Kingdom.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.<sup>6</sup>

#### **Hymn:**

313 STF – Thine be the Glory OR

400 STF – Wind of God, dynamic Spirit

#### **Blessing**

Go in peace, Pentecost people, and may the Spirit of God go with you.

Go in peace, and build a better world, in Jesus' name,

Amen.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from Clouds of Glory by David Adam

<sup>6</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker

<sup>7</sup> Additional prayers by Tim Baker