

Worship at Home – 8th June 2025 (Pentecost)

A short act of worship for use in people's homes prepared by Marilyn Britt.

Introduction

Good morning and welcome to Worship at Home on Sunday 8th June. My name is Marilyn Britt, and I am a worship leader at Thatcham Methodist Church. Today is Pentecost and is celebrated as the birthday of the early church when the Holy Spirit was released to the whole world.

Everyone can receive the Spirit. One of the lectionary readings for today is Psalm 104. God has not only created the world but wants us to maintain it. Looking at my garden today, I just wish I had a little bit more help. The fruit trees are showing the signs of little pears and apples, raspberries are coming, and we have already eaten and shared lots of strawberries. As I light my candle I remember God's provision is bountiful and always present with us.

Call to worship (Acts 1: 4-5)

⁴ One day Jesus was eating with them. He gave them a command. "Do not leave Jerusalem," he said. "Wait for the gift my Father promised. You have heard me talk about it. ⁵ John baptized with water. But in a few days, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

Hymn – STF 503 – Love divine, all loves excelling Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

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| 1 | Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven, to earth come down:
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown. | 2 | Jesu, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart. |
| 3 | Come, almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more thy temples leave. | 4 | Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love. |
| 5 | Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless may we be;
Let us see thy great salvation,
Perfectly restored in thee; | 6 | Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise! |

Opening prayers

Almighty God, on this special day, we open our hearts as we come to worship you. We come to give you praise and adoration for the fullness of life and wanting a fuller understanding of your greatness and all you offer us. We may know of the coming of the Holy Spirit into our lives and how it makes us move in the direction you want us to go. You have bestowed gifts on us that we may show others how to live your way and that others may come to know you. Open all our minds to the transformations that can take place in us all.

But we don't always say and do the right thing. We turn away from you, finding it too difficult to do as you ask. We don't acknowledge that the power of the Holy Spirit will be alongside us with the right words and in doing the tasks you plan for us to do. We are sorry. We know it isn't easy to do the right thing. You want to transform the lives of not just us but those around us, and by ignoring you we have got it so wrong. But you forgive us our sins, whoever we are, whatever we may have done and rejoice in your forgiveness. Bless our hearts today with the fullness of joy that your Spirit brings. **Amen**

Bible reading – Acts 2:1–13

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

¹ When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers gathered in one place. ² Suddenly a sound came from heaven. It was like a strong wind blowing. It filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ They saw something that looked like fire in the shape of tongues. The flames separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit. They began to speak in languages they had not known before. The Spirit gave them the ability to do this.

⁵ Godly Jews from every country in the world were staying in Jerusalem. ⁶ A crowd came together when they heard the sound. They were bewildered because each of them heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ The crowd was really amazed. They asked, “Aren’t all these people who are speaking Galileans?” ⁸ Then why do we each hear them speaking in our own native language? ⁹ We are Parthians, Medes and Elamites. We live in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia. We are from Pontus, Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia. Others of us are from Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene. Still others are visitors from Rome. ¹¹ Some of the visitors are Jews. Others have accepted the Jewish faith. Also, Cretans and Arabs are here. We hear all these people speaking about God’s wonders in our own languages!” ¹² They were amazed and bewildered. They asked one another, “What does this mean?”

¹³ But some people in the crowd made fun of the believers. “They’ve had too much wine!” they said.

Reflection on the reading - Wind, Fire, and the Holy Spirit

Today is that day. Pentecost. It was held 50 days after Passover. We’ve had the arrest of Jesus, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection but not the Ascension, Jesus told the disciples not to leave Jerusalem but to wait for the Holy Spirit. Then we have the Ascension when Jesus ascended to the Heavens and afterwards the disciples went back to Jerusalem. It was the Festival of the Weeks and there were many international visitors in Jerusalem to celebrate, to thank and to praise God for the first grain of the new harvest.

The disciples were quiet in the room. In the most spectacular way everything changed, God was sending a dramatic force of wind and tongues of fire bewildering everyone. It was the coming of the Holy Spirit which gives individual gifts of each member for use in the community. A gift that brings God’s living word to articulate expression in a host of individual tongues. Why tongues of fire? Tongues symbolise speech and the communication of the gospel. Fire symbolises God’s purifying presence which burns away the undesirable elements of our lives and sets our hearts aflame to ignite the lives of others. Remember Elijah needed a message from God – there was a great wind, an earthquake and a fire – but God’s message to Elijah came in a gentle whisper. God uses his creative elements to speak to us and sent the Holy Spirit in such a powerful way. What else could you do but absorb what was happening? After our next hymn, we shall hear what happens when Peter speaks to the crowd. This hymn asks God to breath on each individual so that we can do your will.

Hymn – STF 370 – Breathe on me, Breath of God Edwin Hatch (1835-89)

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| 1 | Breathe on me, Breath of God
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do. | 2 | Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure;
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure. |
| 3 | Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine;
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine. | 4 | Breathe on me, Breath of God:
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity. |

Bible reading – Acts 2:14–21

Peter Speaks to the Crowd

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the 11 apostles. In a loud voice he spoke to the crowd. “My fellow Jews,” he said, “let me explain this to you. All of you who live in Jerusalem, listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ You think these people are drunk. But they aren’t. It’s only nine o’clock in the morning! ¹⁶ No, here is what the prophet Joel meant. ¹⁷ He said,

“‘In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Holy Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy.
Your young men will see visions.
Your old men will have dreams.

¹⁸ In those days, I will pour out my Spirit on my servants.
I will pour out my Spirit on both men and women.
When I do, they will prophesy.

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above.
I will show signs on the earth below.
There will be blood and fire and clouds of smoke.

²⁰ The sun will become dark.
The moon will turn red like blood.
This will happen before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

²¹ Everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

Reflection on the reading – Moving On

The huge crowd was excited, celebrating and yet realised that something big was happening. Many thought people were drunk, and we remember that this is an international crowd and there were lots of different languages being spoken. The miraculous thing is that everybody understood what Peter was saying. But it was more than miraculous speaking that drew people’s attention; they saw the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. And afterwards the apostles continued to minister in the power of the Holy Spirit wherever they went. Christianity is not limited to one race or group of people. Christ offers salvation to all people regardless of nationality. Visitors were surprised to hear the apostles and other believers speaking in languages other than their own. God works all kinds of miracles to spread the gospel as he calls all people to become his followers. God speaks to us all whoever you are. Are you listening? It is for each one of us.

Back to Peter. He had been an unstable leader during Jesus’ ministry letting his bravado be his downfall, even denying that he knew Jesus. But Christ had forgiven and restored him. This was a new Peter, humble but bold; his confidence came from the Holy Spirit who made him a powerful

and dynamic speaker. Peter tells the crowd and quotes from Joel. Peter tells the people why they should listen to the testimony of the believers because the Old Testament prophecies had been entirely fulfilled in Jesus, because Jesus is the Messiah and because the risen Christ could change their lives. At Pentecost the Holy Spirit was released to the whole world so everyone can receive the Spirit. It is for each one of us.

Prayers for the world, others and ourselves

We pray for the church being led by your Holy Spirit, for the gifts it brings, the knowledge, wisdom and guidance which is for all. We pray for those who haven't heard of you yet. Give us the gifts necessary to find people who want to know more; to discover the truth and to learn of your ways. We pray for the countries where Christians are persecuted, unable to worship openly. We pray that world leaders will hear of you and discover that with you is the only way to live. We pray for the Church and all who are supporting the mission to pass on the love and joy of Jesus Christ.

We pray for those who suffer from physical, mental, emotional illness. You will be comforting them. Teach us like your disciples, to wait patiently through the empty times for a renewed sense of your presence. Shape us, like them, so that we truly embody you to our needy world. We give thanks for those who care, support and give generously of their time and money and use their power to get things done for those in need.

And Lord we pray for ourselves, that we may live in your light and follow your ways through the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

You may now wish to say The Lord's Prayer in a version or translation with which you are familiar.

Hymn – STF 388 – Let every Christian pray Fred Pratt Green (1903–2000)

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| 1 Let every Christian pray,
This day, and every day,
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Was not the Church we love
Commissioned from above?
Come, Holy Spirit, come! | 2 The Spirit brought to birth
The Church of Christ on earth
To seek and save the lost:
God never has withdrawn
Since that tremendous dawn,
Those gifts at Pentecost. |
| 3 Always the Spirit strove
To teach her how to love:
Come, Holy Spirit come!
Age after age, anew,
She proved the gospel true:
Come, Holy Spirit, come! | 4 Only the Spirit's power
Can fit us for this hour:
Come, Holy Spirit, come!
Instruct, inspire, unite;
And make us see the light:
Come, Holy Spirit, come! |

Blessing

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.

And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us today and evermore. **Amen**

Bible readings from [New International Reader's Version \(NIRV\)](#)

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