

Reflection for Pentecost

This morning we hear the familiar – and dramatic – account of the coming of the Holy Spirit. Suddenly the disciples are empowered and compelled to praise God for what he has done (and is doing) for us, in a way that is impossible to ignore. Many people hear the good news of Jesus's death and resurrection, and become followers.

What is your experience of receiving and living with the Holy Spirit? Was it as dramatic as that of the disciples on that first Pentecost morning? For most people (including me) it isn't like that. My experience is of a feeling of increasing closeness and understanding of God and his love for me, with occasional surges of something more acute. But I don't think that means I have got a second-rate ('Temu-quality') portion of God's Holy Spirit – rather, this gentle prompting is exactly how the Holy Spirit acts most of the time.

In today's Gospel, Jesus symbolically breathes on the disciples as he says 'Receive the Holy Spirit'; a gentle, intimate breath instead of the whirlwind of Pentecost. Jesus said he would send the Spirit as 'a Comforter'; but why would the disciples need to be comforted, since they would have just seen Jesus raised to new and glorious life? I think it's because, although Jesus had ascended to Glory – a good thing – they still would not have him with them like he had been for the previous few years. During that time they had lived alongside someone who they came to recognise was close to God in Heaven, and full of God's mercy and active love; and eventually they came to believe Jesus was one with God himself. So to have that taken away, even for a positive reason, must have been devastating.

The Holy Spirit given to those disciples enabled them to retain that closeness; in fact, God was now living in them. And God, who is more interested in having a personal relationship with each of us than in how we follow religious rituals, offers that closeness to us as well. We can nurture the Spirit that has been placed within us by prayer, reading God's word, and by obeying him – even when he pushes us out of our comfort zone like those disciples on that first Pentecost morning.

Ian Totterdell, churchwarden



NEXT SUNDAY 31.05.26 Trinity Sunday
10.30am in the Church



OT Isaiah 40: 12-17, 27-end
NT 2 Corinthians 13: 11-end
GOSPEL Matthew 28: 16-20

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St Thomas, Exeter

24th May 2026

**Day of Pentecost
Whit Sunday**

10.30am in the Church

Today

Sung Eucharist

Hymn Numbers

90 *Come down, O love divine*

454 *Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me*

392 *O thou who camest from above*

356 *O breath of Life, come sweeping through us*

Wednesday 27th May

10am Holy Communion (BCP)

7.15pm PCC Meeting in the hall

Thursday 28th May

9.30-11am St Thomas Tots

10.30-12noon Knit & Natter at Jenny
Tuckett's house

Friday 29th May

9.30am Morning Prayers

10am Staff Meeting



Collect

God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Acts 2: 1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.' But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it

will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13

No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.

John 20: 19-23

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the

Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.'

Intercessions

With our whole selves we pray
Come, Holy Spirit of God

Post Communion

Faithful God, who fulfilled the promises of Easter by sending us your Holy Spirit and opening to every race and nation the way of life eternal: open our lips by your Spirit, that every tongue may tell of your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Notices

Today we welcome **the Rev Joel Love** who will preach and preside at our service.

Ian, your Churchwarden, is taking part in the Hospiscare 100 Miles in May Challenge again this year. He will be walking from Bude to Minehead on the Southwest Coast Path. He can be sponsored via <https://justgiving.com/page/ian-totterdell-4> but he is also happy to receive cash donations at services.

We are intending to hold a number of **Summer Crafternoons** over the next few months. Full details to follow or speak to Liz.

We were very pleased to hear that **the Rev Hannah Alderson** has been appointed as our new Rector. Please pray for Hannah and her family as they prepare to move into our community.