



Christ Church News (13)

by and for the Christ Church Family

Pentecost Sunday 31st May 2020



Word for today. Acts 2 vv.1-21

Pentecost is the least well-known and observed of the feasts in the Church's annual calendar. It is understandable, given the event it commemorates.

"Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing. Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages". (Acts 2: vv 3&4).

What are we to make of these fantastical happenings? They are not the ravings of a lunatic, for the record of these events were set down by the apostle Luke, a doctor by profession and a very precise historian. He wrote the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles - a biography of Jesus and a history of the early church - both of which are highly regarded for their accuracy and attention to detail. However, he was not a disciple when these events occurred, so he is recounting a story told to him.

So, what are we to make of this fantastical account? We don't really know, but there are some things we may deduce. Fire is associated with sterilising or purifying. The mighty wind speaks of great power. This mystical event is equipping the disciples for the task of proclaiming the gospel to the world. Whatever you think about the events of the first Pentecost, the results cannot be denied. From that moment the disciples were transformed. Fear changed to boldness. Uncertainty and confusion became clarity and confidence. Sorrow turned to joy. God still gives his Holy Spirit to all ask him. Maybe not in such a startling way but just as effectively. When God calls us to the life of faith, he will equip us for the task. We just have to ask. *Ian Field.*

Pentecost Meditation

No warning, no tell-tale signs, just bang! – and our lives were changed forever! Truthfully, I never thought I had it in me - to get out there and speak fearlessly for Christ. And as for sharing in His ministry, continuing where he had left off, the very idea seemed ridiculous. Only that's what happened. Gifts beyond our wildest imaginings, power beyond our most fantastic dreams, a joy that burned unquenchably within us and a sense of purpose that nothing could contain. We were no longer on our own gazing wistfully to the heavens. Christ was with us and, in a way, more wonderful than he had ever been before - not just by our side but in our hearts, filling our whole being with his presence. It was more than we ever expected, more than any of us dared hope for and we had to pinch ourselves to be sure it was true. But it was and, impossible though it seems, I shouldn't wonder if God has more yet in store - new experiences of his love, new expressions of his purpose - not just for us, but for everyone - his Spirit poured out on all, just as the prophet said. Nothing will surprise us now!

Prayer

Gracious God

We are reminded today of the renewing, transforming power of your Holy Spirit,
through which you have fired ordinary people like us across the years
to live and work for you in joyful and fearless service.

Help us to know today, through the same Spirit,
that you are able to take any person, any place, any moment, any situation,
and achieve, within each one,
things far more wonderful than we can ever begin to imagine.

In Christ's name we pray.

Amen

The Rev'd Dan Balsdon

Dan is the probationer minister serving Bognor, Felpham and Westergate Methodist churches. He was to be ordained at the Methodist Conference later this month, together with all the other candidates for ordination this year. The Conference has had to be cancelled in accordance with safety measures currently in place. Understandably this is a big disappointment for Dan. His training and service over several years has been directed to this point in time.

To show our care and support, Joyce Stroud of Felpham Methodist Church is preparing a surprise photo book for him. If you would like to send a message or a photograph for inclusion you can phone Joyce on **01243 586815** or email her at joycemstroud@hotmail.com or send your photos to jsphotos2020@gmail.com

Whole-Life Discipleship

Christ Church signed up to participate in a learning hub with the Southern Synod of the URC in conjunction with the LICC (London Institute for Contemporary Christianity) and we committed to attend workshops about whole-life discipleship and work on these ideas within our church. You may remember that we talked about the idea of the 'gathered church' when we meet on Sundays and the 'scattered church' as we go about our normal Monday to Saturday life as Christians.

I am sure that, over recent weeks, our experience of the gathered church has been somewhat different and we have found various ways to join in gathered worship. I hope that you have all experienced and shared Christian love and support within the scattered church in these times of restrictions and staying at home for more of our time.

We hope that the next workshop will take place in September, when a whole day (10 am – 4 pm) at Crawley URC is planned, (subject to advice on meetings at that time). **Please read the letter attached.** I invite as many people as possible involved in Sunday worship to consider attending this day - ie preachers, worship leaders, elders, trustees, musicians, readers, communion stewards, welcomers, those who operate visual and audio input, prayer ministry team, outreach teams, pastoral visitors, etc. Those who have attended previous days have all enjoyed them and been encouraged.

You can explore some of the links on the LICC website <https://www.licc.org.uk/> or speak to Lindsay if you want to know more.

Lindsay Marchant

This is one of the orchid species named flower of the holy spirit. It starts blooming during pentecostal period once a year. Before bloom, it looks like praying saints, when the flower blooms, it looks like a flying dove. How amazing is God's Creation!



*submitted by
Elizabeth Manson*