



Filled to overflowing

Introduction: This Sunday is the day of Pentecost when we remember that the first disciples were gathered together awaiting the Spirit of God. We still cannot gather as we would like to do, yet we are connected by the internet, by post, or by the phone, and we are still connected by a longing for what Jesus promised. We begin by reminding ourselves how God has been coming with power since the start of time. Genesis 1 verses 2 says

"the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God^[b] swept over the face of the waters."

Perhaps as you begin this time of reflection you might like to **open a window** and feel the air on your face?

Today we will pray that the wind from God, the very breath of God, may fill us again to overflowing.

Hymn: Spirit of God - Singing the Faith 394 (to the tune Skye Boat Song – "Speed bonny boat")

Chorus: *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.

Chorus: *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!*

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.

Chorus: *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!*

Margaret V Old 1932-2001

Prayers

Lord, help us to look out and listen for your Holy Spirit.

May we welcome you with open hearts and minds.

Call us, inspire us, surprise us and challenge us.

Give us confidence and calm assurance. Lead us to your power and love. **Amen.**

Prayer of confession & assurance of forgiveness

Forgive us, Creator God,
when we have not heard your voice in the song of the birds and the rustle of leaves: **Open the ears of our hearts.**

When we have not seen you in the grandeur of the mountains and the rhythm of the waves: **Open the eyes of our hearts.**

When we have not rejoiced at the vibrance of spring or the colours of autumn:
Unlock the joy in our hearts.

When we have stifled your Spirit and confined your love: **Deepen the love in our hearts.** Forgive us, and release in us the true Spirit of Pentecost.
Today and always. Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness The Lord hears our prayers: **Thanks be to God.**

A meditation reflecting on how God fills us with breath by Wendy Walker, our link student minis

I invite you to become aware of your breathing, inhaling slowly, exhaling slowly.

Never before has our ability to breathe been the focus of so much attention as in these years of a respiratory disease. I'm told we take about twenty-six thousand breaths a day. As we breathe in, we receive energy and life.

I invite you to breathe in, slowly.

As we breathe out, we rid ourselves of that which we do not need. We rid ourselves of that which would harm us and hinder the vibrancy of life.

I invite you to breathe out, slowly.

To become aware of your body from head to toe.

To relax your shoulders, loosen your muscles, breathe.

As we enter into worship on this Pentecost Sunday, we come to God with all of ourselves. Breathing bodies and beating hearts. We bring the parts of ourselves that are formless - the parts of ourselves that need shaping into the image of Christ. We bring the parts of ourselves that feel empty and void – longings or loneliness, disappointment or despair. We bring the parts of ourselves that feel dark. Those aspects of ourselves that we hide away, the parts of our lives or parts of this world that we fear.

We remember that in the beginning, when the earth was a formless void, God's Spirit swept over the chaos. Rushing wind. Breath of God, filling every crevice of creation.

As you breathe in slowly, I invite you to receive God's life giving Spirit.

As you slowly breathe out, I invite you to let go of all that is formless and dark.

As we enter into worship on this Pentecost Sunday, we surrender ourselves. We remember that we are made from dust. We recall the creation poem that envisions God breathing into the nostrils of that first human being, formed so lovingly from clay. Rushing wind, breath of God, bringing life.

As you breathe in slowly, I invite you to receive God's life giving Spirit.

As you slowly breathe out, I invite you to let go of all that is lifeless or lost.

As we enter into worship on this Pentecost Sunday, we are together - in separate rooms but united as disciples of Christ our Lord. As we wonder what happens next and await God's promise, we may feel small against the magnitude of a broken world. We may ask if it really is possible for God to use ordinary people like us. Then we remember the day that your disciples waited in Jerusalem. We remember the moments that they heard that rushing wind once again, how your Spirit ignited a fire in their hearts. Rushing wind, breath of God, bringing life, filling your children to overflowing.

As you breathe in slowly, I invite you to receive God's life-giving Spirit.

And, this time, as you breathe out, I invite you to imagine yourself sharing that Spirit with others.

As you breathe in slowly, I invite you to receive God's life-giving Spirit.

And as you breathe out, may you know that the Spirit overflows from your life into all the world.

Hymn: Breathe on me breath of God Singing the Faith 370

Breathe on me, Breath of God;
fill me with life anew,
that I may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldest do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,
to do and to endure.

till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God;
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)

Bible passage: Acts 2:1-4, 14, & 40 - 45

When the day of Pentecost came, all the believers were gathered together in one place. ² Suddenly there was a noise from the sky which sounded like a strong wind blowing, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ Then they saw what looked like tongues of fire which spread out and touched each person there. ⁴ They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to talk in other languages, as the Spirit enabled them to speak.

¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the other eleven apostles and in a loud voice began to speak to the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, listen to me and let me tell you what this means. ⁴⁰ Peter made his appeal to them and with many other words he urged them, saying, "Save yourselves from the punishment coming on this wicked people!" ⁴¹ Many of them believed his message and were baptized, and about three thousand people were added to the group that day. ⁴² They spent their time in learning from the apostles, taking part in the fellowship, and sharing in the fellowship meals and the prayers.

⁴³ Many miracles and wonders were being done through the apostles, and everyone was filled with awe. ⁴⁴ All the believers continued together in close fellowship and shared their belongings with one another. ⁴⁵ They would sell their property and possessions, and distribute the money among all, according to what each one needed.

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Reflection What are we here for? What's our purpose in life? Well today's Bible story tells us what we are here for and how we get help to do it. The first disciples of Jesus knew they were to be his witnesses throughout the whole of the known world. That's what Jesus had told them was their purpose. But after he left them they were timid and frightened. At that point they preferred to be inside and behind locked doors. That's where we find them at the start of our Bible passage today. But by the end of the events of this passage they are completely changed. They are out and about, baptizing and doing miracles and wonders. They have developed from being inward looking to outward serving.

What had brought about this change? Well it was the experience of God's spirit. We could say that they were filled by God's spirit until they overflowed. What had seemed so impossible then became possible. They were able to tell the good news, share what they had and help people who were sick.

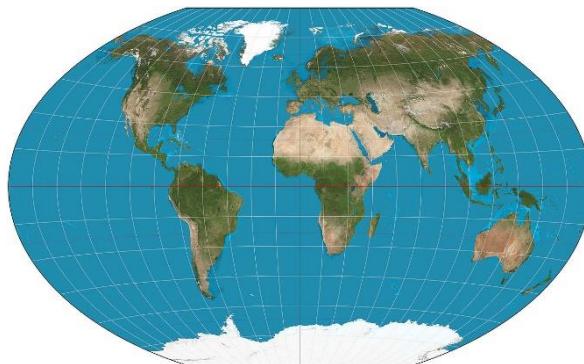
In my life I feel I have been very fortunate to be able to be a minister of the gospel. There is always an opportunity to work with others to do all sorts of

uplifting things such as create a service of worship, or run a lunch club, or children's club, or listen to someone who wants to share their story. Whenever I am feeling timid or anxious, it is being with others that really lifts my spirits.

Twenty years ago next month I was ordained as a minister in the Cathedral of Bury St. Edmunds. I can still remember walking to the front of the church to kneel and have hands laid on my head. It was an almost out-of-body experience. The ministers putting their hands on my head prayed that God's spirit would be with me. It was a big Holy Spirit moment. I guess when I am daunted by some of the tasks that are given to me I should remember that moment and be more confident.

Not all of us may have big moments when we know what we are meant to do – but yet God's spirit still comes, as gentle as a breath. Everyone's purpose is equally to share who we are and what we have, and in quiet ways to witness to the love of Jesus. May you be filled to overflowing with the gentle, healing, peace-giving, world-changing, spirit of God.

Prayers for the world: The Holy Spirit sent the disciples out into the whole of the known world. Here is a map of the world. Please pray for the different peoples and places and for anything you have heard on the news.



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Songs – God's spirit is in my heart *Singing the Faith 404*

God's Spirit is in my heart,
He has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do,
what I have to do.

*He sent me to give the Good News to
the poor, Tell prisoners that they are
prisoners no more, Tell blind people
that they can see,
And set the downtrodden free
And go tell everyone the news that
the Kingdom of God has come,
And go tell everyone the news that
the Kingdom of God has come.*

Just as the Father sent me,
So I'm sending you out to be

My witnesses throughout the world,
The whole of the world.
Chorus

Don't carry a load in your pack
You don't need two shirts on your
back
God's workers can earn their own
keep
Can earn their own keep
Chorus

Don't worry what you have to say,
Don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart,
Will speak in your heart.
Chorus

Blessing: May God's holy spirit of love, joy and peace, bless and keep you, and those you love, this day and always. Amen.