

Rev Tim Perkins
May 19th 2021

“When the day of Pentecost came, the disciples were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Acts 2: 1 – 4

Dear Friends,

I wonder what you think about Pentecost and what you believe about the Holy Spirit? The words above describe a quite unusual and amazing experience for the disciples. Some might say too strange to be anything other than pictorial language. Yet others might describe an experience of meeting with God, which whilst not exactly identical, was indeed beyond the rational explanations of the physical world.

As we celebrate Pentecost on Sunday so we also remember that Monday marks the anniversary of John Wesley’s strange “heart-warming” experience. Whilst he did not speak or write of hearing a rushing wind or seeing tongues of fire, he was able to speak of the assurance that he suddenly felt of being loved by God and being adopted by God into God’s family. In a sense this is much the same outcome as the people who heard those first disciples speaking to them in their own languages. The good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ became real for them personally.

I find it helpful to think of the rushing wind as breathing the life of Jesus into our own spirits and the tongues of fire as warming our hearts and refining our characters so that we become the place where Jesus dwells and works to transform us from within.

But the real point of the giving of the Spirit is not simply about the effect it has upon the individual believer. The real point of the giving of the Spirit is that it always enables us to share the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in ways that are real and understandable to others. The Spirit is given to make Jesus known to the world. That is what the strange tongues is all about. Rather than making us all speak one language the Spirit works to enable us to share the Gospel in ways that can be understood in each and every language and context. As Archbishop Stephen Cottrell says in his Pentecost message for the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative, *“By enabling us to speak about the Christian story in every language and every culture, the Holy Spirit affirms that not only is all this variety from God but helps us understand and appreciate and serve the world in all its variety and difference. The Church should reflect this diversity and help every person hear the Gospel in their own language and in their own place. No one should be excluded.”*

So perhaps the challenge for us this Pentecost, is to ask ourselves how is God’s Spirit calling us to work and live and speak in our own contexts in ways that make the Gospel real and understandable to those around us? What might that look like for you and for your church?

The Spirit works in manifold ways both in us and through us. The account from Acts 2 describes that work in quite elemental language. The Christian poet, Gerard Kelly has written a poem titled “Elemental” which might just help us to reflect upon who the Holy Spirit is for us:

You catch us when our heart is fading.
You warm us when our love is cooling,
You ignite us, enlighten us, consume us, refine us.
You are fire and we welcome your flame.

You fill the space we make for you.
You shape the lives immersed in you.
You cleanse us, refresh us, flow through us, renew us.
You are water and we submit to your tide.

You feed the seeds we plant in you.
You strengthen roots laid deep in you.
You hold us, sustain us, nourish us, bring life to us.
You are earth and in you we ground our being.

You fill the lungs of those who draw on you.
You fill the sails of those who wait for you.
You carry us, move us, lift us, caress us.
You are air and to breathe of you is life.

Burn us, fire of heaven;
Wash us, holy water;
Grow us, ground of our being;
Inspire us, breath of God.
Remake us, great Creator,
In your elemental image.
(Taken from Spoken Worship by G Kelly, Zondervan, 2007, P. 29-30)

Every blessing,

Rev Tim

Circuit Website

The Circuit website is a great place to look for resources to help you worship and for news and events from around the circuit. The address for the website is: www.wandamethodists.org.uk

One of the new things added to it this week is the District Pentecost "Real Love" Service. You can also find an all-age Pentecost praise service created by "Thy Kingdom Come" by using this link: <https://youtu.be/o5m8rfXqEqQ>

"Climate Change Emergency: Resources for a Green Church Conference."

This will take place via zoom on Saturday 12th June from 9.30am – 3.00pm. As we approach the Global Climate Summit to be held in Glasgow in the autumn, this conference is a great opportunity for us to engage in some key issues for how we as Christians respond to our climate crisis. To register for the conference please contact Sue Cutting at sue.cutting1209@gmail.com

We are promised: "Inspiring keynote speakers to stimulate your imagination, develop your understanding of the Bible and reinvigorate your worship life. Engaging workshops with pioneers who are already bringing together faith and action for a better world. Topics covered include:

- Biblical Theology for a Green Church
- Climate change as an existential crisis

- Liturgy & Prayer for a Green Church
- COP26: what are we doing to campaign?
- Craftivism for COP26
- The Church as a Prophetic Community
- Green Church and Evangelism
- The God Plot – The city allotment and Green Church

The Living Library

We have lots of fabulous Books ready in our 'library' each with provocative or interesting subtitles and stories – who could you invite to come along and engage with the stories in these Books?

When?

Saturday 22nd May, online 10am – 12 noon

Deadline for booking, noon on Thursday 20th May www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/living-library-tickets-141975914783

What is it?

A Living Library is a space where Readers engage with the stories of the Books.

A place to ask the 'silly questions' which you don't want to ask people you know locally

A place to challenge stereotypes about who is 'suitable' for a particular ministry

Who is this event aimed at?

- Ministers and other church leaders who want to enable intentional conversations about vocations in your Circuit - come along and experience the event to see if this is something you might host locally
- People who wonder if one of these ministries is for them
- People already in one of these ministries and feeling a little jaded or lacking in confidence, to talk with others from other contexts.

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Local Preacher: Rhodes Must Fall & Black Lives Matter - Does it matter to the Church?

Worship Leading: Putting Welcome into Worship?

Administrator: More than meets the eye

Administrator: Administry

Church Steward: Meet and Greet?

Circuit Steward: The invisible senior manager

Presbyter: Of Word and Wonder?

Presbyter: Who Is on the Lord's side?

Making New Members: Past Sell-By Date?

Deacon: Why Couldn't We Get A Proper Minister?

Deacon: A Call Outside Your Comfort Zone

Children Youth & Families Worker: It's more than playing games!

Global Mission Partners: We Are Together

Pioneer: A Waste of Church Money?

Youth Rep: Brining Down the Average Age

COP26 Campaign Worker: Should Christians be taking climate action?

Chaplaincy: A calling; or a bolt on?

Chaplaincy: Some will welcome your company

Please contact Alison Ransome if there is anything else it would be helpful to know ransomea@methodistchurch.org.uk

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