

Pentecost 2018

Today is Pentecost - the Church's birthday - Pentecost is the old Greek and Latin word meaning fifty. Fifty days after Passover – came the Jewish Harvest Festival – Shavout – and this was being celebrated on the day when the disciples were altogether in Jerusalem – and why the city was filled with people gathered from everywhere to take part in the festival.

When Jesus announces the coming of the Holy Spirit he completes the revelation of the Holy Trinity – God the Father sent his Son and through the Father and the Son the Holy Spirit is upon us.

Before he left them Jesus speaks to us of his relationship with the Father, but now he is telling the Apostles about the Spirit of Truth who will come as his witness.

As Jesus leaves the earth, he promises that the 'Helper' will come to communicate God's will for his people on earth.

And what do we have to do to receive that? Well – exactly what the disciples did – watch, wait and pray! – Simply ask – Jesus has always promised that what we ask for in his name will be so – but then the gift is in the listening and discerning – being attentive despite the clamourings of the world that can drown out the voice of God in our lives. It is not always easy to know the difference between God's will and our own – that's why it is good to put our prayers and inspired thoughts in common with others – to gather at church, to worship and honour God together so that we can build up the spirit of the place so that our understanding of God's will can be more strongly known and his Spirit of love and truth more strongly lived out.

Very often, we concentrate on the actual event of Pentecost – let's face it, Luke tells a good story in the Acts reading – full of excitement, humour, drama, awe, wonder, mystery – violent winds – tongues of fire, suspected drunkenness and prophesy.

But there's more. There are the promises of Pentecost. First declared by prophets of old. Joel declares that God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh – all people – and daughters shall prophesy, and young men shall see visions, and old men shall dream dreams..' And we hear from Prophet Ezekiel as the dry bones of Israel – God's people who had lost their way - come alive with the breath of God 'O dry bones, here the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live ... and you shall know that I am the Lord ... you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken and will act, says the Lord.

The second promise comes as Jesus tells the disciples that what he hasn't been able to teach, the Holy Spirit – the Spirit of truth - would continue. The Spirit will make the teachings of Jesus relevant to each new generation and to each new age.

Isn't it wonderful – God knows no boundaries. When we are prompted by the Holy Spirit to explore faith in a deeper way – and when we respond - we are shown special and new ways to meet and come to know Jesus, the living God

So on this day of Pentecost - the birth of the Church - I invite us all to renew our sense of child-like wonder for the joy of what our baptism brings to the foundation of our lives and what the mystery of Holy Communion brings to our sense of being loved by God and connected to each other and to renew our gratitude for all that God has done for us through Jesus Christ - and continues to do through the healing and transforming power of the Holy Spirit - available for everyone who truly reaches out to receive it.... Happy Birthday Church of God

Amen

Rev Jacqueline Drake-Smith
Pentecost 2021

