

Order of Service (Pentecost Sunday 31.5.20)

Welcome: Good Morning and welcome to this online service as we celebrate this Lord's day, knowing with confidence that because it is Pentecost Sunday Jesus, the risen Lord, is here with us by his Spirit. Also today, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, we celebrate with great joy the birth of the world-wide Church.

We especially welcome you if you're visiting us online and hope you will appreciate this special service. For our regulars – you're in for a treat; Elizabeth, Neil, Joyce, Bruce, Yvonne, Tyrrell and Les are here with me to conduct this service. The Government has allowed us to have up to 10 get together to record worship services.

Prayer Adoration

Dear heavenly Father we come before you this Pentecost morning to express our adoration and love to you. We praise you for the extraordinary good news of that first Sunday – at Jesus' request you sent the Holy Spirit to rest on all his followers and create the birth the Church.

It is with joy we sing and praise you here now and lay before you our love and faith, rejoicing that, because your Holy Spirit you're with us now to guide this service for your glory. Amen.

Elizabeth please come and lead us for a couple of praise songs

Songs TIS 93 Praise the Lord, you heavens adore Elizabeth
SIS 262 For I'm building a people of power

Prayer Confession

Merciful God Jesus' cross reminds us that it was human injustice that put him there and human sin that he absorbed in that darkness. We confess our part in that and rejoice in our forgiveness because Jesus died and rose from the dead to send us his Spirit.

Gracious Lord - Although the COVID 19 virus is causing uncertainty and disruptions – you are our Rock, our Hope, our Joy. May our celebrating today reflect the celebration around you there in heaven. And our worship shows our love and delight to be your people in your presence praising your glorious name. Amen

Please enjoy these next two videos produced for us by the UCQ St Morton presbytery. After these Bruce, Yvonne and Elizabeth will lead us in a prayer, a Bible reading and another song.

Video 1 Sth Morton - Holy Spirit come down

Video 2 Sth Morton Reading, 1 Cor 12:ff

Prayer Thanksgiving Bruce

Bible Reading John 20:19-23, 30-31 (NLT) Yvonne

Song TIS 457 The Church's one foundation vv.1,2,5 Elizabeth

Announcements (Elizabeth &/or Neil? Offering comment)

Prayer Offering & Intersession (**+ Lord's Prayer**)

Dear Lord, we offer our gifts to you for the building of your kingdom here locally and further afield. Thank you for Neil & Elizabeth and the CC as those who administer these gifts wisely - to impact as many as possible. Today is when we celebrated **the coming of the HS to empower the Church** and our witness to our needy world.

Father we pray for key leaders in Australia and across the world – guide their COVID 19 decisions so that safety and economic health are in a good balance. Grant us grace and common-sense as we personally balance our lives. Be with all those who are struggling with ill-health, those recovering (Lindsay, Noelene & Malcolm) and for each other ... Lead us by your Spirit to live god-honouring, upright and caring lives – to the glory of your holy name.

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever, Amen.*

Friends, here's another offering from Synod – our own Presbytery Minister David Busch wrote both words & music. After which Terryll and then Yvonne will come and read to us from God's word and lead our next song.

Video 2 Sth Morton – Pilgrim song David Busch

Bible Reading Acts 2:1-16a (NLT) Terryll

Song TIS 158 God has spoken (Ode to Joy) Yvonne

Sermon 'Pentecost: Birth of the Spirit-empowered Church' [Click Here](#)

Song TIS 675 Shine Jesus Shine Yvonne

Benediction 2 Cor 13:14 John
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all Amen.

Vesper SIS 303 Spirit of the Living God x2 Yvonne

Pentecost: Birth of the Spirit-empowered Church Acts 2:1-16a

In 1926, a wealthy Canadian lawyer named Charles Millar died, leaving behind a fortune that mystified the citizens of his home city of Toronto. Because he had no close heirs to inherit his wealth, he divided his inheritance in a way that aggravated his newly chosen heirs. Here are just a few examples of his legacy.

He left shares in the biggest local Racing Club to two prominent men who were well known for their opposition to racetrack betting.

He also left shares in a local Brewery Company to every tee-totalling Protestant minister in Toronto.

But his most famous bequest was that he would leave the bulk of his fortune to the Toronto woman who gave birth to the most children in the ten years after his death.

With the country entering the great Depression of the 1920-30 this clause in his will caught the public imagination. The prospect of an enormous windfall was naturally quite alluring.

Despite sever hardships many women took up the challenge. Newspaper reporters scoured the public records to find likely contenders for what became known as **The Great Stork Derby**. Nationwide excitement built quickly in late 1935.

In 1936, four mothers, proud producers of nine children apiece in a ten year time span, divided up the Charles Millar's bequest, each receiving what was a staggering sum for those days (\$2-3Ms). Sadly many more women who had produced 8 or 7 kids got nothing.

Charles Millar caused much mischief and hardship to many families with his ultimate bad joke will. This was his final legacy to humanity.

When Jesus of Nazareth left this earth, his **legacy** was very different for the whole world. He left his mighty Holy Spirit - to create his Church and empower believers to be all that God had called them to be and do.

Today is **Pentecost** – the birth of the Spirit-empowered Church.

Prayer

I've divided the passage Terryll read to us into 3 parts. The first is 'what happened' vv.1-4a; the 2nd part is the immediate outcome for those present vv.4b-13; and 3rd Peter's explanation vv.14-16a

Part 1. What happened? Vv. 1-4a- The 120 disciples are filled with the Holy Spirit and The Church is born. 4 bits

i. **It's on the Day of Pentecost v.1:** The word 'Pentecost' means 50th. It was a Jewish festival held fifty days after Passover. It was a time to celebrate the first fruits of the coming harvest. The first-fruits were offered to God in anticipation of a great upcoming harvest.

Jewish tradition also taught that **Pentecost** commemorated the day when the Law (Torah) was given to Israel. The Exodus remembered Passover – then 50 days later at the foot of Mt Sinai God gave the Israelites his Law.

So on the OC **Day of Pentecost**, Israel received the Law, and on the NC **Day of Pentecost**, the Church received the Spirit.

ii. v.1 Notice that the followers of Jesus were **together and united in one place**. They had the same heart, the same love for God, the same trust in His promise, and the same anticipation. There is nothing worse for a Church than major **division**. Prayer must always be for unity.

iii. v.2 *Suddenly, there was a sound from heaven like the roaring of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting.* Here, the sound is '**from heaven**' because that's where the Holy Spirit is from. The Spirit brings heaven to earth – like Jesus himself had done but more universal in scope.

iv. v.3 *Then, what looked like tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them.* Every one of the 120 were included and touched.

The idea of **fire** is usually purification. As a refiner uses fire to make pure gold so the filling of the Holy Spirit is not just for power, but also for *purity*, to produce his fruit in our lives.

NB Under the Old Covenant, the Holy Spirit rested on special people for special tasks – eg on David to kill Goliath. But under the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit rests upon **all** of God's people - the fire *settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit.* v.4a

What a magnificent occasion: 120 people filled with the Holy Spirit, ready to serve God. No wonder Paul calls us all to *be filled with the Spirit*.

Part 2. The Immediate Outcome (vv. 4b-13); The Church's First Campaign. After Jesus' crucifixion his followers had been afraid for their lives and locked the door of the upper room when they met together. The resurrection of Jesus and esp the coming of the Holy Spirit transformed them. They went from fear to confidence.

The Holy Spirit gave them the courage to go out into Jerusalem and declare God's glory to a city whose people had just weeks before called for Jesus' death. Again 4 little bits

i. *V.4b They began speaking in other languages,^[b] as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability.* In response to the filling of the Holy Spirit, those present spoke in languages that they had never known or used before. The Holy Spirit enabled them to speak new languages or tongues.

ii. *Vv.5-8 there were devout Jews from every nation living in Jerusalem. When they heard the loud noise, everyone came running, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were completely amazed. "How can this be?" they exclaimed. "*

The crowd gathered in Jerusalem because of the Feast of Pentecost. These devout Jews came from all over the Roman Empire and amazingly they said, *v.8 These Jews are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking in our own native languages. **What a miracle.***

When God called Abraham he promised *'in you, and your offspring, all the families of the earth will be blessed'* Gen 12:3. This came right after the story of the **Tower of Babel** when arrogant humans want to make great names for themselves. God's response is language confusion.

Now the opposite is happening. To quote John Stott *"Ever since the early church fathers, commentators have seen the blessing of Pentecost as a deliberate and dramatic reversal of the curse of Babel."*

iii. *v.11 The crowd heard these people speaking in our own languages about **the wonderful things God has done!**"* Jesus' followers declared the praises of God, thanking Him with all their might in unknown languages. Their praises were magnetic – crowds came from all over.

The gathered crowd **overheard** these expressions of praise - in their own language and *v.12 They stood there amazed and perplexed*

iv. *vv.12-13 "What can this mean?" they asked each other.* For some this was a moment of **honest** inquiry. **Others** in the crowd ridiculed them, *saying, "They're just drunk, that's all!"*

There will always be a mixed reaction to God's mighty deeds.

Part 3. Peter's Explanation & Message vv.14-40. (vv.14-16a)

Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and cried out to the crowd, "Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem!"

Peter raised his voice and spoke loudly to them in Greek, the trade language – so everyone could understand together. The *earlier 'speaking in other languages'* stops as Peter preaches to them.

Other languages may sound like drunken gibberish to some, so Peter assures the crowd that is not so. *V.15 ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as some of you are assuming. Nine o'clock in the morning is much too early for that.'*

16 No, what you see was predicted long ago by the prophet Joel: 17 'In the last days,' God says, 'I will pour out my Spirit upon all people.

Peter quotes the prophet Joel and explains about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a consequence of Jesus' resurrection. He goes on to further explain the Good News about Jesus and then says vv.36ff

36 "So let everyone in Israel know for certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, to be both Lord and Messiah!" 37 Peter's words pierced their hearts, and they said .., "Brothers, what should we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Each of you must repent of your sins and turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

41 Those who believed what Peter said were baptized and added to the church that day—about 3,000 in all.

This is massive – many of the very people who had demanded Pilot crucify Jesus are totally won over by Peter's gospel message. The Holy Spirit touched the hearts of 3,000 people – who were baptised and added to the newly formed Church.

Imagine starting a new church with 120 and on the 1st Sunday 3,000 extras want to join. Wow.

And from there the Church has spread, as the Spirit has filled and empowered believers, to ever nation in the world today. Isn't that good news. Hundreds of people have come to Christ **this very hour**.

Application for Today Blind American sprinter Dave Brown

competed in the 100, 200 & 400 m distances at the 2012 and 2016 Paralympic Games and won the 100m gold medal in 2016. He is the first totally blind athlete to [run 100 m under 11 seconds](#) (10.92).

Brown credits his success to God, his mother's early advice to never be lazy and his running **guide** Jerome Avery (a former sprinter himself). To run well Brown relies heavily on Avery to guide him. How?

Tethered by a simple string tied to both their fingers, Avery runs alongside Brown guiding him on his winning ways, with small finger nudges and words. *'It's all about listening to his cues'* says Brown *'Day in and day out we're going over race strategies and communicating with each other.'*

I'm sure you can see where I'm going with this. In our own life's race as believers we are hugely privileged with a **divine guide**; our Helper, the Holy Spirit. As for Dave Brown so for us: *'It's all about listening to his cues'* says Brown *'Day in and day out we're... communicating with each other.'*

We may never be a great sprinter like Dave Brown but God still wants to use you. And because we live in a fallen world, like Dave we equally need a **guide** to be with us – to comfort, encourage, advise, and empower us. That's God's Spirit. Amen

Jesus left us a brilliant legacy in the Holy Spirit. The awesome challenge for us is to do what the Apostle Paul instructs his friends in Galatia:

Gal 5:16ff ¹⁶*I say to you, let the Holy Spirit **guide your lives**. Then you won't be doing what your old nature craves...*

²²*For the Holy **Spirit produces** this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, and self-control...*

Therefore, ²⁵Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

That's the **Pentecost joy and challenge** – to be witnesses of Jesus – to love others in word and deed – living by the Spirit and letting him guide your life.