

# RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH SUNDAY SERVICE

## 31 May 2020—Pentecost

**Why?** There are two answers to this question. Peter assures the crowd that this should be expected because the prophets had spoken about it. Joel's colourful description of the event begins with the outpouring of the Spirit on all people (not just Jews) and ends with the powerful assertion that 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' Most simply, however, this happens because Jesus has said that it will happen; it fulfils his promise that once he has gone away (ascended) he will send his Spirit so that all who thirst and believe may be quenched (John 7:37-9).

**How?** We do not know how the Spirit works. This will always remain a mystery. We do know, however, that where Jesus is proclaimed as Lord then the Spirit is present (1 Cor 12:3). The descriptions of the Spirit as a strong wind and tongues of fire remind us of other words used in the Bible associated with the Spirit, 'energy' and 'power'. What occurs happens only because it is energised by God's energy, not because of any human strength or willpower. Nothing that the early church accomplished or anything we can do today will happen without this power. One of the more frustrating aspects of church life can be watching people struggling to function or suffering in some way because they have not allowed the Holy Spirit into their lives to lead, direct and empower. Someone once said to me something

like this: 'life can be difficult enough for us Christians at times; I really can't imagine what it must be like for those who don't know the Lord and don't have the Spirit in them.' The Greek word for power is the same word we get 'dynamite' from. Dynamis is the power of God, both spiritual and moral power, but also explosive energy power. Perhaps we need such a 'bomb' under us to move us from our comfort zones and to send us out. Perhaps this current crisis provides just that, or rather perhaps the Spirit's transforming power might make it so.

### SUGGESTED SONG

The Power Of Your Love  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9\\_OjiO5ZRM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H9_OjiO5ZRM)

### EPILOGUE

<sup>12</sup> Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. <sup>13</sup> For we were all baptised by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.  
(1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

### BLESSING

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.

<https://rydebaptist.xyz>

Dear Friends,

I don't usually begin this Sunday Service sheet by reflecting on the Bible reading for the day. Today I make an exception because you may have noticed that the first verse of Acts 2 says, 'When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.' There is no escaping the fact that on this Pentecost Sunday, the exact opposite is true. We are not all together in one place, and we haven't been able to be for some time. Furthermore, no one can really predict when we will be able to meet all together again, although be assured it won't be until it is safe to do so, and some of our practices and traditions may have to change or be adjusted to fit. That may indeed turn out to be no bad thing!

We may not be able to meet together but there is one thing that is true about then and now, something that we share in common. They wouldn't have used the word 'lockdown', but staying all together in the upper room in Jerusalem, both out of fear over what might happen to them and obedience to the last instruction of Jesus to wait until his Spirit comes to them, resonates with us. Similarly we wait in a state of lockdown until conditions are safe enough for us

to meet up, and that is no small thing. Yet that is where the similarity ends for we are at the other end of their story. Once the Spirit arrives they are energetically ejected from where they have been hiding to proclaim the gospel to the four corners of the globe. We, on the other hand, are the already scattered ones, even further afield, and the Spirit released at Pentecost is here to empower our mission too.

Pentecost is our theme today as we meet online via Zoom for our Sunday Morning Fellowship Meeting at 10.30am. Our online Monday Prayer Meeting is at 7.00pm. If you are able to join us, you will be very welcome. Don't forget that if you are reading this sheet on your computer or device you can also click on the readings and songs, and that you will find many other new Pentecost links at <https://rydebaptist.xyz>

### CALL TO WORSHIP

'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. (John 7:37-38)

## BIBLE READINGS

[John 7:25-44](#)

[Acts 2:1-21](#)

[1 Corinthians 12:3-13](#)

## SUGGESTED SONGS

Come Now Is The Time To Worship  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rmnE8JvRqy8>

Be Still For The Presence Of The Lord  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZugvUQ4m90U>

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus we thank and praise you for this new day. We celebrate the birthday of your church, the day when you sent your Spirit as promised upon those who first believed in you. And now we who believe in you today come before you in worship, humbly asking that as you have given us the gift of your Spirit, we might be filled to overflowing, empowered to be your people sharing the blessings of your love with our generation. We stand alongside all those who share our faith and tradition, on what BMS World Mission are calling Solidarity Sunday and as the Baptist World Alliance celebrate our Standing Together as world Baptists in response to the current Covid-19 pandemic. As we lift our hearts and voices today, we do so with all our sisters and brothers who declare that you are Lord and are filled with your Spirit.

## TO PONDER

Pentecost comes from the Greek word meaning 'fiftieth' and in the Jewish calendar is a harvest festival coming fifty days after Passover and also known as Shavuot, the Feast of Weeks. That the death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit coincide with these two great festivals must be significant. Have a think about this. How might a commemoration of a people's liberation from slavery, their foundation story, and an annual celebration of the wheat harvest help us to think about Pentecost more deeply? Think about what the death and resurrection of Jesus mean for us in terms of freedom, liberation, forgiveness, and fullness of life; think too about what a wheat harvest signifies, the provision of flour which guarantees daily bread, how hope and certainty for the year ahead are based on a good crop. Reflect upon things that happen once but have lasting significance, and things that continue to happen because of God's faithfulness and generosity, year in, year out.

## TIME OF PRAYER

Spend time in your own private prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to come and fill the space where you are, and to fill your life. Pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to keep us connected and motivated as a church at this time. 7/52 contains a lot more prayer ideas and suggestions.

## SUGGESTED SONGS

Holy Spirit Come And Fill This Place  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqU\\_32v0R\\_I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqU_32v0R_I)

Welcome Holy Spirit  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WPyqkFWqwTE>

## MINI-SERMON OUTLINE

Let us for a moment consider the Pentecost account recorded in Acts 2 as a major incident report. It was a very significant event after all. In writing such a report it is usual to ask six basic questions: 1) Who was involved? 2) What happened? 3) When did it happen? 4) Where did it happen? 5) Why did it happen? 6) How did it happen?

**Who?** There are two groups of people in our story. The first group we met last week, the eleven apostles with a new addition along with the close family of Jesus and possibly a few others. (Acts 1:12-26). Then we read that there was a crowd, largely composed of 'God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.' This description is emphasised by the long list of countries they come from, some more familiar than others.

**What?** This is easier to say than to explain. The first group were together behind closed doors when they experienced a sound like a strong wind and saw what looked like tongues of fire resting on them. They were filled with

the Holy Spirit, and enabled by the Spirit to go out and speak in different languages to the crowd who were bewildered by what they were witnessing, until reassured by Peter that this was all foreseen by the prophet Joel.

**When?** Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks was a time when very large crowds would gather. Unlike Passover, which was understandably more solemn, there was more of a festive atmosphere to Pentecost, celebrating the blessings and benefits of being the Lord's people. If you want a receptive crowd in a good mood, this would be a very good time!

**Where?** Jerusalem was at the heart of the action, both in the nation's story and this particular incident. Here, around the Temple, Jews flocked for all the major festivals, and here was the location of all the major events in the last days of Jesus' earthly ministry and where he had told his disciples to wait until all this took place. Jerusalem is such an important place that the significance of the place cannot be overstated. Up to now Jerusalem has been the *focus*, the place to which the people travelled; from now on Jerusalem would be the *locus*, the hub, out from which the good news of Jesus, carried by word and deed, is sent into all the world. In the old covenant the direction of travel is towards Jerusalem; the new covenant changes direction, fuelled by the Spirit, as the news travels from Jerusalem.