



# The **Methodist** Church

## **Welshpool & Bro Hafren Methodist Circuit**

Home Worship Sheet – 31<sup>st</sup> May - Pentecost

This short act of worship has been prepared and written  
for you by Kat Bond.

Call to worship – verses from Psalm 104:

How many are Your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom You made them all.  
The Earth is full of Your creatures.  
When You send Your Spirit  
They are created  
And You renew the face of the Earth.  
I will sing to the Lord all my life  
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.  
May my meditation be pleasing to Him as I rejoice in the Lord.  
Praise the Lord O my soul,  
Praise the Lord!

What a reminder of Who it is that is in control - Who it is that we belong to, and how and why we are here. Our God is the God, Jehovah, maker of Heaven and Earth. - In the familiar words of our creed "We believe in one God - the Father, the Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth, of all that is - seen and unseen - - - -

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ - the only Son of God - - through Him *all* things were made - - -

We believe in the Holy Spirit - the Lord, the giver of life".

And it is *this* Holy Spirit that we remember and celebrate today - God's Holy Spirit - "The Lord, the giver of life" given to us to help us live our everyday lives - wherever we are - whatever we are doing. The Spirit that means we need never *be* alone, we need never *act* alone, we need never *speak* alone.

## **Hymn: Gracious Spirit, dwell with me**

To listen to this hymn in a new tab: press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

**1 Gracious Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would gracious be;  
and with words that help and heal  
would thy life in mine reveal;  
and with actions bold and meek  
would for Christ my Saviour speak.**

**2 Truthful Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would truthful be;  
and with wisdom kind and clear  
let thy life in mine appear;  
and with actions brotherly  
speak my Lord's sincerity.**

**3 Mighty Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would mighty be;  
mighty so as to prevail  
where unaided man must fail;  
ever by a mighty hope  
pressing on and bearing up.**

**4 Holy Spirit, dwell with me:  
I myself would holy be;  
separate from sin, I would  
choose and cherish all things good,  
and whatever I can be,  
give to him who gave me thee!**

Thomas T. Lynch (1855)

### **Prayer**

**Dear Lord God, we praise you for your loving care and provision. You are the creator of the Universe, and yet you treasure each and every one of us. You are Almighty God, and yet you are our loving Father. You know all our faults and our weaknesses, and yet you still love us.**

**You give us freedom to make mistakes, but you are always ready to forgive us when we come to you in repentance. You allow us to go our own ways, even ‘though it breaks your heart, and you are ready to guide us back to the light, when we are in deep darkness.**

**We come to you now, O Lord, aware of our failures and inadequacies; aware that all too often we shut you out of our lives, but knowing that we only have to ask, to pray, and you will answer.**

**Teach us, and help us to walk with you, to talk to you every day through your Holy Spirit so that we may follow your design and plan for our lives. Keep us close to you, so that our lives may speak to those around us and they may see your love and come to know you for themselves.**

**In the name of your Son Jesus Christ we ask this – Amen**

## **Readings**

Today we have two dramatic accounts. In each we hear words spoken to huge crowds gathered in Jerusalem at Festival time - words that were shockingly direct. Words that speak of life and hope.

### **John 7:37-39**

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway, in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

**On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, ‘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. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.**

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**Can you imagine being there, seeing such “an ordinary man” making such a claim? The temple guards got in serious trouble for not arresting Jesus, but they could tell something big was happening "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (vs 46).**

Now move on several months to Pentecost and we find Peter, “an ordinary fisherman” daring to address the crowds! - What *is* going on?

### **Acts 2:1-21**

To listen to this reading, by David Suchet from BibleGateway, in a new tab press Shift and Ctrl together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the reading.

When the day of Pentecost came, they 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.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’

Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: ‘Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

**“In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.**

**Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.**

**I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.**

**The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.**

**And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”**

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## **Reflection**

**As I write this it is windy - very windy - in fact gale force! - I feel nice and snug sitting inside - nice and safe - nice and warm and comfortable. Why move? Why risk being buffeted and blown about? Why risk getting cold and breathless? Safer to keep the door shut! Something, however, tells me that I really should open the door, and take at least a breath, a taste of fresh air. I know very well that opening the door will bring an end to my comfortable lethargy, but I also suspect that, somehow, I'll feel better if I do. Sure enough, as I open the door I am nearly bowled over - I am almost deafened, and my breath is taken away and replaced (temporarily) by a gust of wind. . . . But I feel exhilarated, fresh, awake and alive.**

**Here in Acts we hear of the arrival of the Holy Spirit to the first disciples, and it is very dramatic! This isn't something that can be kept quiet -**

- It takes them by surprise, although it is expected ("suddenly....")**
- It is vigorous and loud ("a sound like the blowing of a violent wind")**
- It cannot be ignored**

- It is all encompassing ("filled the whole house")
- It breaks the rules (fire that doesn't burn)
- It is not constrained by barriers (wind that goes through walls)
- It is for all disciples ("all of them were filled with the holy spirit")
- It speaks to the disciples
- It speaks through the disciples

Now substitute "He" for "It" and we begin to comprehend the magnitude of Pentecost.

In our Easter service sheets, Rev Marian spoke of the "lock-down" experience of the first disciples following Jesus' crucifixion. Well here we are again - 7 weeks later - maybe not literally in lock-down, but as good as. Following Jesus' ascension back into Heaven they have done as Jesus told them - they have stayed in Jerusalem and they are waiting (Acts 1.4). They are all back in the Upper Room - but there is one big difference between this "staying in" and the previous lock-down. "By common consent all these men, together with the women who had followed Jesus, Mary his mother as well as his brothers, devoted themselves to prayer." (Acts 1.14).

This is athletes lining up waiting for the starting pistol - and, while they wait, they limber up, they go through their warm-up exercises: they pray!

I don't know about you, but I'll admit that, if I were to make a list of my activities during lock-down, Prayer would not be at the top of that list. And yet, surely, all this spare time, all this quiet, all this solitude should be very conducive to prayer, to reflection and meditation - speaking and listening to God.

### We can't shut the Holy Spirit Out.

The wonderful, exciting truth is, that no matter where we are, whatever our circumstances, we cannot be out of the reach of the Holy Spirit. God can always reach us through doors, through walls, even through depression and despair - believe it!

Our God is powerful – *He* made the laws of science and *He* can break them if *He* chooses. *He* knows our weaknesses and *He* can

overcome them. He is our Father, and He loves us - and He wants to communicate with us - what Father wouldn't?! He has a message for all mankind and He wants to make sure they hear it - - -

**We can't shut the Holy Spirit In.**

No sooner had the disciples received the Holy Spirit than they were out there - telling everyone. - They couldn't help themselves -they were driven by an inner compulsion to share God's message of Salvation and hope with the World - starting there and then. Were they hampered by lack of training or education? Were they worried about what people would think? Were they precious about the message - wanting to keep it to themselves to feel special or superior? - Not a bit of it!

And what a response! Yes, we know some made fun of them - (vs13) - but, importantly, vs 41 tells us that "about 3000 were added to their number that day" - a tally that increased daily over the following months.

Currently we are in lock-down. We are experiencing inconveniences and difficulties, disappointments and anger; fear and confusion - life is not easy. But nobody ever promised that it would be!

We need to ensure that we aren't just marking time. We need to make sure that we are growing in our faith - not letting go. We need to make sure that we are talking to our Father and listening to Him through His word and His Spirit. Spiritually we should be limbering up - ready for action.

And while we wait we could even be looking for ways to spread the gospel message here and now. In this time of Worldwide crisis, people are searching for hope, searching for God. We have hope - We know God - How can we let them know?

Impossible? – Maybe . . . but so was a group of uneducated fishermen speaking Greek, Latin, Arabic, Egyptian, Phrygian, Cappadocian .....

## **Prayer**

We turn again to Prayer using the words of a contemporary hymn that calls on the Holy Spirit directly, to intervene both in our personal lives, and in the problems and injustices of our world. – Pause after each verse to add your own thoughts, your own requests.

- 1**      **When deep despair casts out all light  
            and hope is wearing thin;  
come Spirit, dance with gentle grace,  
            shine through the dullness we embrace  
and make the colours sing;  
            and make the colours sing.**
  
- 2**      **When greed dictates that children die  
            and poverty holds sway;  
come Spirit, burn as living flame,  
            prompt us to act to end this shame;  
cast apathy away;  
            cast apathy away.**
  
- 3**      **When colour, lifestyle, creed or name  
            cause groundless hate and fear;  
come Spirit, weave a web of peace,  
            that prejudice and violence cease;  
reveal God's purpose here;  
            reveal God's purpose here.**
  
- 4**      **When guilt and fear tear us apart  
            and faith's a bitter thing;  
come Spirit, dance with gentle grace,  
            shine through the dullness we embrace  
and make God's colours sing;  
            and make God's colours sing.**

**Spirit of our Father God - help us never to underestimate your infinite power, and your unrestrained love for this world. Help us always to bring all our needs and our fears to you in prayer, knowing that you alone can, and will answer us. - Amen.**

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

***Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your Name;  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins,  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil,  
For the kingdom,  
the power and the glory are yours,  
now and forever. Amen***

### **Hymn: How small a spark has lit a living fire!**

We may not know this hymn but the words are challenging, and, at the same time, moving and re-assuring. For these troubled times it brings a message of hope, growth and working and building together whatever our circumstances.

To listen to a tune for this hymn in a new tab: press **Shift** and **Ctrl** together and click [here](#). Close the tab after the hymn.

- 1**      **How small a spark has lit a living fire!  
How small a flame has warmed a bitter world!  
How great a heart was moved to hope, to dare  
and bring the faith out in the open air!**
  
- 2**      **No boundary sign will stand against this faith,  
no wall restrain this preaching of the Word:  
the Good News travels on, it rides the road  
and draws to unity the realm of God.**

**3** The single note becomes a psalm of praise,  
the single voice grows to a swelling choir  
and born in song, new stories now are sung  
of freedom, chains unbound and loosened tongue.

**4** Thank God for all who listened and believed,  
who still are by the Spirit set on fire —  
our hearts be warmed again, for Christ will wait  
on beach, in upper room, or Aldersgate.

*Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931)*

*Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 408*

*(Aldersgate Street is where John Wesley had his conversion 1738)*

### **Blessing**

**Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place. He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister His grace. No work too hard for him - in faith receive from Him. Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place".**

**Amen.**

*David J. Evans (b. 1957)*

*Reproduced from Singing the Faith Electronic Words Edition, number 20*