



St Mary Magdalen Church, Knighton

Sunday 31st May 2020

Pentecost Sunday

**Join us in prayer this Sunday
and through the week**

Approaching Worship

*Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples
'I am with you always'.*

Be with us today, as we offer ourselves to you.

Hear our prayer for others and for ourselves

And keep us in your care.

Amen.

Collect

*Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;*

strengthen your children with the gift of faith,

revive your Church with the breath of love,

and renew the face of the earth,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Post Communion

Faithful God,

who fulfilled the promises of Easter

by sending us your Holy Spirit

and opening to every race and nation

the way of life eternal:

open our lips by your Spirit,

that every tongue may tell of your glory;

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Renewal in Tough Times

*“Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit”
Galatians 5.25*

Times are changing once again. Some of our lockdown restrictions are being lifted, or at least modified,, and we are beginning to imagine getting back to something like a ‘normal’ life. At the same time many of us face the need for continued isolation as the virus is still common and dangerous. We long to shake off this time and be active again.

Pentecost reminds us that *God*, by the Holy Spirit, is continually active. He has been at work as we have been confined, and needs no prompting or permission to work today.

St Paul reminds us in this one verse that our calling is not to *do* the work of God as much as it is to walk *alongside* God, to work *with* him ... or rather to observe what he is doing and then join in.

This will be the source of the Church’s renewal as we emerge from lockdown—not slicker technology that enables us to worship from home at ease, not strict hygiene that removes all risk of infection, and not a focus on instant return to “things as they should be”. We need to be attentive to what God is doing *now* by his Holy Spirit and then walk in step with the Spirit.

This is a task for the *whole* church, at parish level as well as diocese and nation—and it is the calling of *all* of us.

Please be attentive in your prayers and thoughts to what the Holy Spirit is beginning to do now in our church, what needs to change and what is new—and please let the Benefice Ministry Team know what you are hearing.

Keep safe and stay well.

Adrian

“Thank you for caring at home and in our community” : this is the message of appreciation that, as St Mary’s and St Guthlac’s churches, we want to send loud and clear to the staff of our local care homes and to all those carers who have been supporting clients, friends and relatives in their own homes during the pandemic. We are particularly conscious that we have at least nine care homes in our benefice, and that the staff will have been under extraordinary strain and pressure over the last two months—often, it seems, unappreciated by those who make key decisions, and perhaps also by ourselves, until now.

To express our appreciation to these care home workers we are aiming to give a gift to as many as possible—probably a gift token to be redeemed when times are easier and leisure seems possible again. We have a generous grant from our Ward Councillors to start things off, but if each gift is really to convey true appreciation then we want to add to it substantially through our own generosity.

Please do make a contribution to our Carers Fund to show your appreciation. We are collecting money through the St Guthlac’s bank account, so please make a cheque payable to ‘St Guthlacs PCC’ (no cash please) . Alternatively you can pay by Direct Transfer:

Sort code 20-49-08

account 53861341

Reference "Carers"

You can send a donation by post or drop your envelope through the door of 62 Elms Road (Matthew), 5 Church Lane (Adrian) or the St Mary’s Parish Centre, Church Lane (but *not* at St Guthlac’s Church please!).

Thank *you*, in anticipation, for helping us thank our care staff.

Adrian

STILL no change to lockdown restrictions for churches soon

This week the Prime Minister has announced some changes to our lockdown restrictions— but there are no changes for churches yet. The Vicar and authorised others (such as construction and maintenance engineers) can enter the building for essential tasks, but only with all the appropriate precautions. There are no immediate plans to allow the people of the church to gather.

The most hopeful timetable puts this date into July, and there would certainly be very many restrictions and precautions surrounding any re-opening of churches: we would have to maintain social distancing, refrain from singing and from using paper or books, take a register of all present, guarantee hand cleaning on arrival and departure, as well as deep clean the building afterwards. You will see that there are still very many hurdles to cope with before anything like Sunday worship as we know it could resume. Whilst this is disappointing it is wise and understandable caution of course.

The Pre-School group (Your Cherubs) that meets in the Parish Centre have made enquiries about restarting on a limited basis but this has yet to be finalised. I will endeavour to keep you updated with any changes.

Adrian

Benefice Magazine—May Edition : If you haven't received your copy of the magazine, either by email or post, and can't see it on our Church website, then do please let me know and I'll make sure it gets through.

Adrian

Thy Kingdom Come!" - Thanks to everyone who took part on our 24 hours of prayer this week., either at home on their own or via Zoom. Although 'Thy Kingdom Come' ends at Pentecost do keep praying both for more people to come to faith, growing the Kingdom of God, and for a deepening of the spiritual life of the Church, through the Holy Spirit.

Keeping in touch and sharing worship together remotely.

On-line worship Each Sunday we aim to have a short recorded, reflective act of worship by members of St Mary's congregation on both the website and our Facebook page—do have a look and join in worship together.

Wednesday Compline (Night Prayer) - Each week we are meeting virtually for Compline at 8pm on Wednesday. It has proven to be a meaningful way to have fellowship and prayer together as well as being quite good fun, especially as we find our feet with the technology and with more people joining us every week.

You can join by just phoning up and inputting the code or using 'Zoom' online. It has been democratic with several voices joining in with a line of liturgy each. If you would like to participate with a speaking part, please do contact Matthew by 4pm on Wednesday.

To join by phone only, call this number **0131 460 1196** and when prompted input Meeting ID: 746 767 4408

To join by Zoom on the internet, go to this address and click 'Open Zoom'
<https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/7467674408>

Please join our regular online Coffee Morning on Thursdays, anytime between 10am and 11am.

To join by phone only call this number 0131 460 1196 and when prompted input Meeting ID: 997 6372 8548

To join by Zoom on the internet go to this address and click 'Open Zoom'

<https://leccofe.zoom.us/j/99763728548>



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers

0800 804 8044

Are you in need of some daily hope during this lockdown?

We have a new FREE telephone line for you to ring to hear comforting hymns, daily prayers and reflections.

Listening to God's Word

Our Bible readings for this Sunday are:

Acts 2. 1-21 and **John 7.37-39**

Jesus promises the Holy Spirit

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.

Reflections on how the Bible's images for the Holy Spirit speak to us today from the Benefice Ministry Team

Fiona Wingate: DOVE

The dove descended onto Jesus at his baptism at the River Jordan (John 1:32). Noah sent out the dove to see if the waters had receded and peace had returned after the flood (Gen 8:8-12). The poor of the old testament could afford the doves to make their offering to God for their sins as their worship and law required (Lev 5:7).

The dove,

a symbol of purity in the whiteness of its appearance,

of coming down from above (as God did in Jesus),

of being available for all to offer their worship no matter how poor

a symbol of the peace that reigned after the havoc
of the storm

In the same way the Holy Spirit comes down from God. Where Jesus was God-with-us, the Holy Spirit is now God-in-us enabling and facilitating our daily encounter with God, there for all people and bringing the peace, which the world cannot give, into our hearts and our lives.



Aphro McCullough: BREATHE

Breathing is one of the most natural and unforced activities of the human body, one that we cannot live without. So why do we use the metaphor of breath or breathing for God's Holy Spirit? Well I think it's because the Holy Spirit is as essential to our spiritual wellbeing as breathing is to our physical wellbeing. The corona virus pandemic has shown us that unless we can breathe in the natural air around us we cannot live.



The Greek words for Holy Spirit are Aghios Pneumatos, Holy Breath. So it is that unless we breathe in the Holy Spirit of God, God's Holy Breath, we cannot live a full spiritual life. As we pray on this day of Pentecost, let each of us breathe in God's Holy and life-giving breath gaining strength to face whatever the future may hold. Come Holy Breath, come. Amen.

Matthew Gough: WATER



On my ordination stole are two hands connected, one rescuing the other from the depths of water. It is a detail from the story where Peter is saved from his fear and drowning by Jesus. Throughout the bible, water is presented as a paradox—a source of threat and the source of life. Water destroys the Egyptians but also separates the Israelites, freeing them from captivity. Isaiah 43 promises that we as are redeemed by God waters of death will not overwhelm us. The waters of baptism offer new life. Christ himself compares himself to living water both to the woman at the well and to the temple crowds in Jerusalem.

Water is hard to control. I have traced the source of the Wash-brook to Stretton where it little more than a tiny stream. This tiny stream gives life to the fields, parks and gardens of Oadby and Knighton but also caused floods on Saffron Lane. Christ promises that faith in Him changes our hearts so living water may flow from us. The Holy Spirit is dynamic, needing us to be receptive vessels as individuals and as Church. It can flow through us and from us, but we also can become dry and need more of the Holy Spirit.

Let us not despair when dry, this need not be permanent, we can pray and seek God as the prayer in Psalm 51-‘Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me’ and instead may we know delight in the living water of Psalm 1, seeking to ‘be like trees planted by streams’.

Janet Gough: FIRE

"On the Day of Pentecost divided tongues as of fire appeared among them and a tongue rested on each of them, and they were filled with the Holy Spirit."

Without the fire of the sun nothing will grow. Fire brings comfort, light, warmth. A forest fire can destroy all in its path and bring devastation, and house fires take lives and homes. Fire is a powerful symbol. Moses experienced the presence of God in the burning bush and Elijah is taken into God’s presence in a chariot of fire. At Pentecost the disciples experience God’s power like a fire burning in their hearts, and in our centuries Christians like Richard Rohr experience the Spirit as this fire of love. May we look to this symbol of fire and experience the Spirit in our hearts this Pentecost. Amen.



Adrian Jones: POWER

I *have* been camping without a torch, but I usually regret it. True there are nights when a soft, natural moonlight picks out familiar landmarks, but more typical are the cold, wet and windy thick-dark nights when it seems a very long and difficult way to the campsite toilets... without the power of a torch. Jesus tells his disciples to wait for 'the power from on high', the Holy Spirit.

All Christians have the gift of the Holy Spirit, but we don’t all turn on the power. With that power, even in darkness we can see our way—the way of life, the way of Jesus.



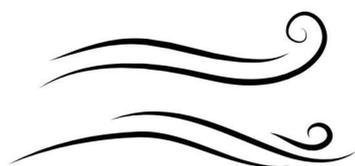
Stephen Foster: WIND

In the Ancient Greek World, the word 'anemoi' from where we derive our own word 'animate' were the 'wind gods' who were each given a direction from which their wind came. Hence the classical compass with which we are all familiar. These gods were also attributed seasonal variations which characterises them in a similar way. For example, a northerly wind for us is a cold one!

Similarly, in Hebrew thought, there are again four winds, again directional, but to do with the one God Yahweh. In the Old Testament, by far the most common wind is a hot dry easterly one which is mostly destructive in character. The plague of locusts in Exodus was carried by such a wind to Egypt. But it would be a mistake to suggest that the power of 'wind' in the Old Testament is always destructive. On the journey to the Promised Land, Moses crosses the Red Sea aided by the power of an easterly wind. More especially, think of the Priestly account of Creation in Genesis 1 written in the the time of the Exile. Here the Hebrew 'ruach' (normally pronounced 'ruak') 'hovers' or (better still) 'broods' over the waters of chaos and from whose power in the will of God the earth is formed. And in the prophet Ezekiel and the Valley of Dry Bones, the last vital part of the 'resurrection' of this totally destroyed army is the summoning of breath, of wind, this time from the four winds to enliven and raise this fallen host.

So, is it any wonder that at Pentecost that 'pneuma', a wind of renewal, re-creation, enlivening and empowering is present in exactly the place where the disciples were gathered and waiting. Here the 'new creation' is nothing less than the Church itself, where mortal flesh is endowed with spirit, with a totally new life, and empowered to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ to 'the ends of the earth' .

The Holy Spirit ...fascinating in its spiritual roots and partly to do with 'wind'.



"Ride+Stride 2019

Last year's Ride+Stride was a great success thanks to the hard work of all the church and area organisers, helped by lovely warm and sunny weather for participants and welcomers. Over £42,600 was raised across city and county, an amazing 20% increase on the previous year. Individual churches receive half of all money raised each year, with the other half given out by the Trust in grants to churches and chapels for repairs and improvements.

Accommodation wanted: Hilary is an ordained C of E minister but currently without a parish. She is urgently looking to rent or buy a two bedroom house in this part of the city. If you know of anything that might be suitable please get in touch with Adrian.

Church Family News:

Greetings & good wishes come to us all from ***Gill and Derek Atkinson***, who are both well and thinking of us back in Knighton. They enjoy our Virtual Worship on the church website.

Greetings from Wendy Magee (née Smith) - Wendy used to attend St Mary's as a child and teenager, with Mum Joyce, and then moved to Birmingham. She writes *"For 30 years I did not attend church and I lost sight of God but now I look back I know he never lost sight of me and he guided me back to faith and church. I now worship at Lyndon Methodist Church in Solihull where I am senior steward.*

Anyway the point of my email is to say 'thank you' for your weekly video service which I have started watching each week. It is wonderful to be able to be a part of St Mary's again and share in your worship. It brings so many memories back and it was St Marys where I learnt all the gospel stories and many times I felt the love of Jesus. So while lockdown has changed my life in many ways this is a wonderful positive enrichment! Thank you to everyone involved in the production of your services. God Bless you all."

Contact details:

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Parish Administrator: James Gutteridge 0116 270 2705

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The Parish Office is currently closed to the public.

PLANNED GIVING SCHEME

Regular giving is an integral part of our church life supporting our day to day costs, ministry and mission. A good way to achieve this is through a weekly envelope or a monthly bank standing order as part of our Planned Giving Scheme. Scheme details can be obtained from Lorna Pollard, Planned Giving Scheme Secretary: telephone 0116 2704272 or e mail: stmarysknighton.giving@gmail.com. If you are a taxpayer and gift aid your giving, our church can claim an additional 25%.

During the current Coronavirus pandemic please put aside your weekly offerings ready to bring to church when things return to something like normal. The costs of the church are largely unchanged even though we cannot meet, so your regular giving is extremely important to our collective 'health' and the mission of God here.

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Please pray..... "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."
(*1 Thessalonians 5.16-18*)

Give thanks: for all teachers and school staff, as they receive some pupils back into school in the coming weeks.

A prayer for the Coronavirus outbreak

Keep us, good Lord,
under the shadow of your mercy,
in this time of uncertainty and distress.
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low;
that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love
in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

We pray for all those who are unwell at the moment, whether in body, mind or spirit, and all those with troubling investigations and diagnoses.

We pray for all those on our parish 'Continuing Prayer' list. May they know the power of God's healing love at work in their lives today.

We give thanks for those who have been healed and restored.

We remember those who have died recently and pray for their families and friends: **Wendi Stevens, Pam Whinnett, Brian Pinder.**

Jesus said "Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11.28.