**Worship Sheet for Pentecost on Sunday 23rd May, 2021: The Sounds of Pentecost**

**Prepared by Pauline Zähner of Hilton Methodist Church**

**Call to worship**

Holy Spirit, come to us today, breathe into our worship, confirm us as we hear your word and strengthen us as we sing and speak for you.

**Hymn:** Father of Everlasting Grace - StF 378/H&P 300 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAA_hTSCb5Q>

**Prayers (adapted from Roots)**

We praise you, for speaking to us through the tongues of Pentecost,
for stirring our longings with the excitement of Pentecost,
for uniting our communities with the inclusiveness of Pentecost.
We give thanks for the Spirit’s coming, for those who heard and believed, for those who saw and witnessed. Amen

Lord, forgive us for not always listening to your promises, for not always seeing your vision and dreaming your dream. Forgive our faltering courage when we, too often, withdraw into ourselves, struggling to speak out, to find the right words, to communicate honestly with one another. Free us from all that holds us back, for the sake of your gospel.

Fill our lives, we pray, with the enormity of Pentecost,
until they overflow with compassion and commitment
to care for and celebrate all creation to the glory of your name. **Amen.**

**Readings**:

1. Acts 2 verses 1-21 and
2. Romans 8 verses 22-27

**Reflection**

Before the pandemic, in the village, where I live, the church bells rang out calling people to church on a Sunday morning, to weddings and to funerals. The sound of the bells alerted village people to what was taking place.

In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit, like the church bells, alerts us to what’s happening. He arrives with the noise like the “blowing of a violent wind” and then what appeared to be fire in the shape of tongues symbolically points us to the tongues in which the disciples spoke. There is no mention of feeling the wind or of seeing any burning. Simply sound and shape making the disciples and all who were there that day aware of the arrival of the rejuvenating and energising effect of the Holy Spirit.

Both those who were going to speak as the Spirit gave them the capacity and those who were to listen became tuned into the tasks they were given that day.

In verse 6, we find out that it was the sound that drew God fearing Jews who were staying in Jerusalem to come and be part of what was new. The noise acted as their guide to find the right place. They were drawn there from their homes across the known Jewish world but living in what might be described as Gentile areas to come to the Harvest Festival in Jerusalem and even though they themselves are not Gentile they are often taken to represent the Gentile world and what a Harvest Festival they experienced! The Holy Spirit attuned the ears of those who needed to listen to take in the “wonders of God”. What would you imagine the wonders of God to be? Within our section of text, we might suppose that to be the reading from Joel. But if we read the rest of Peter’s speech from verses 22, we hear of God’s grace and Salvation, the crucifixion and resurrection of his Son and victory of Jesus over death.

Those who were speaking were enabled to communicate in ways which helped everyone understand. Peter takes a reading from Joel. Do you think he is saying to us or maybe even himself, “The message is there in the Scriptures. Why didn’t you see it before this? God told us he would give us his Holy Spirit and he pointed us to the creative and productive outcomes of the enabling Spirit.” Prophecy, visions and dreams, all means of communication and what’s more, creation shows this, too, in colour and depth of response.

Finally, we have the reassurance that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. Salvation is there for all but we have to be proactive. We have to claim it.

**Reflect on these**

1. Are you being called to listen or to speak this Pentecost? How do you know?
2. If you discern it’s listening make a list of what you can hear. This list might include church bells, sounds from nature (birds, insects), the sound of conversation, children playing, the noise of road and/or river traffic, the singing or sermon in a service on radio, television, zoom, Facebook or internet. Can you see any patterns or message for you?
3. If you discern it’s speaking, do you have a message you have long thought you should give someone? Could it be a word of reassurance or thanks, apology or a request? If so, why not do it this week?

***Lost for words?***

In one of his books, John Pritchard tells the story of the family of Desmond Tutu standing facing their house being bulldozed during the apartheid years. The family and friends decide to pray but are not quite sure what to pray for. One young man standing with them prays “We thank you God that you love us”. No doubt, during the past year and even today, many of us can identify a moment where we are so horrified by what we saw that we didn’t or don’t know really know what to pray. In Romans 8 verse 26 we read “the spirit helps us in our weakness” and learn that he even intercedes for us when we lack the words to say. So if we discern that the speaking we are called to do this week is in praying, may we be reassured that even if we are lost for words, the Holy Spirit will help us.

**Hymn:** Holy Spirit come confirm us - StF 382/H&P 288 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcccR_SZrv4>

**Prayers for Others**

God of love, we pray for all who are struggling with covid 19 and hold up to you especially the hardest hit areas of the UK as well as the peoples of India, Pakistan, Nepal and Bangladesh. We pray that the Holy Spirit will enable those in authority to react with wisdom and insight. We pray for people living in the Middle East and ask that leaders of all parties and those hoping to mediate will be enabled to return the area to a ceasefire and then a lasting peace.

We pray for those, enabled by the spirit to listen and discern your will, who have helped others, in turn, to hear you speaking; for those, enabled by the spirit, who communicate your love to others through word and deed and for those, enabled by the spirit, who bring hope, joy and peace to us and to your world. On this Pentecost Sunday renew us in our faith, remind us of the outpouring of your Spirit and help us to be the agents of hope, joy and peace in our world. **May all** **be filled to overflowing with your Spirit. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer:**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Hymn:** Holy Spirit, gift bestower - StF 383 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iaN5iG2OIcg> or H&P 304 - Holy Spirit hear us

**Sending out Prayer**

As we go out into the world once more, may the Holy Spirit accompany us, alert us to God’s grace and gifts, tune us in to see the wonders of creation and gift us with the ability to respond to his call. Amen