**Sunday 23rd May 2021, Pentecost Sunday Service**

Welcome to our Pentecost service. My name is Andy Platt and I am a lay preacher at Bamford Chapel and Norden URC.

Pentecost is a complicated word, but basically it is a day where we celebrate the Christian Church starting its life – the Christian Church being born through the gift of the Holy Spirit.

And when the Church was created on this day, its members were given power through the Holy Spirit. Power so that the Church could follow Jesus’ commands, not in their own abilities, but in God’s power.

**Let us pray and celebrate the power that the Holy Spirit gives us:**

Living God,

thank you for the transformation of Pentecost,

for the promises fulfilled,

for the lives changed,

for the hearts touched,

for the power unleashed,

for the overflowing of your Spirit into our world.

In Jesus’ name.

Amen.

**Family Time:**

Are you into your superhero films – are you an avid fan of the Marvel Universe or are you more of a DC person? Do you know your Wolverine from your Cyclops?– hopefully Jean Grey does. Or am I talking a foreign language to you?

Was the last time you showed an interest in Superhero films when they used to write Kapow on the screen when Batman hit the Joker?

Well Superhero films are the biggest selling type of films today and have been for probably for the last 10 years. People are looking for their heroes to have extra abilities, to do superhuman things.

So how well do you know your superheroes?

Pictures

Now if we could make you a superhero, what special power would you have?

The ability to fly, the power to be invisible, maybe super strength or to overcome any injury.

Well today we celebrate the start of the Christian Church and it was started by the Holy Spirit giving special abilities to the disciples and those special abilities included:

To speak in lots of different languages and everyone hearing them in their own language

The ability to persuade people of the truth

The ability to heal people and do other miracles

So if you want to be a superhero, be a superhero for God.

**Leo’s song (video)**

A hero is somebody who stops things being bad, A villain is the opposite and that is really sad

So listen to me now and I will show you how, You don’t need a cape to be a hero

You don’t need a cape to be a hero. Or wear your underpants over your tights

Just keep on doing good, like Jesus says we should, No, you don’t need a cape to be a hero.

You don’t need to fly to be a hero, Your feet they can stay firmly on the ground

You can’t fly like a bird, cos that would be absurd. You don’t need to fly to be a hero

You don’t need a cape to be a hero. Or wear your underpants over your tights

Just keep on doing good, like Jesus says we should, No, you don’t need a cape to be a hero.

You don’t need a mask to be a hero. It doesn’t matter folk know who you are

To undertake the task you don’t need to wear a mask. You don’t need a mask to be a hero

You don’t need a cape to be a hero. Or wear your underpants over your tights

Just keep on doing good, like Jesus says we should, No, you don’t need a cape to be a hero.

You don’t need special clothes to be a hero. just wear the clothes that you wear every day

I’m telling you the truth, you don’t need to be bulletproof, You don’t need special clothes to be a hero

You don’t need a cape to be a hero. Or wear your underpants over your tights

Just keep on doing good, like Jesus says we should, No, you don’t need a cape to be a hero.

You don’t need superpowers to be a hero. For God has made you perfect as you are

I don’t think you oughta try to breathe while underwater

You don’t need superpowers to be a hero

You don’t need a cape to be a hero. Or wear your underpants over your tights

Just keep on doing good, like Jesus says we should, No, you don’t need a cape to be a hero.

words and music: © Leo Roberts 2021

**Children Leave:**

**And our first hymn is: Spirit of the Living God – 613**

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| Spirit of the Living God,  fall afresh on me;  Spirit of the Living God,  fall afresh on me;  break me, melt me,  mould me, fill me;  Spirit of the Living God,  fall afresh on me. | David Iverson  ©1963 Birdwing Music/ EMI/CopyCare  ccli 169737  Streaming Licence 595811 |

**Prayer of Intercession and on each line think of an example – a person or an image**

For those around us, Lord, we pray.

For the lost and the lonely…

For the ill and the dying….

For the bewildered and confused…

For the tortured and trafficked…

For the abused and neglected…

For the grieving and broken…

For those causing us concern in our Church family.

Breath of God:

Breathe on them now.

Amen.

**Hymn: Breathe on me, Breath of God – 67**

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| 1.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  fill me with life anew,  that I may love what Thou dost love,  and do what Thou wouldst do. | 2.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  until my heart is pure,  until with Thee I will one will,  to do and to endure. |
| 3.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  till I am wholly Thine,  until this earthly part of me  glows with Thy fire divine. | 4.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  so shall I never die,  but live with Thee the perfect life  of Thine eternity. |
| Edwin Hatch ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811 | |

**Bible Reading Acts 2.1-21 - The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost**

2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2.1-21&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-26954a)] as the Spirit enabled them.

5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7Utterly amazed, they asked: ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2.1-21&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-26959b)] 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!’ 12Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, ‘What does this mean?’

13Some, however, made fun of them and said, ‘They have had too much wine.’

Peter addresses the crowd

14Then 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. 15These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! 16No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17‘“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.  
18Even on my servants, both men and women,  
    I will pour out my Spirit in those days,  
    and they will prophesy.  
19I will show wonders in the heavens above  
    and signs on the earth below,  
    blood and fire and billows of smoke.  
20The sun will be turned to darkness  
    and the moon to blood  
    before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.  
21And everyone who calls  
    on the name of the Lord will be saved.”[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2.1-21&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-26971c)]

**Talk**

A few facts for you – biggest selling films of 2019 – a Superhero film – Avengers Endgame. Biggest selling film of 2017 – another superhero film – another Avengers film. In fact the biggest selling genre of film for the last 10 years at least, has been superhero films. Avengers, X-men, Batman, Spiderman, Superman, Justice League, Deadpool etc etc etc. These superheroes get their super powers from a variety of sources. Spiderman because of the bite of a radioactive spider, The x-men get their powers from genetic mutations.

What made the Christian church? Why do we have a church today? It was the power of the Holy Spirit. It transformed the disciples. The breath of God was upon them. They were transformed from a group of scared, worried individuals, hiding in a room to an inspired group going out and preaching to the gathered masses. They were given super powers – bravery, the ability to communicate in different languages, they were given the words to say to persuade the crowds about Jesus. This story of the church inspired is repeated throughout the history of the Church. Think of the early Christians being persecuted by the Romans. They were not put off by the threat of death and torture. They kept true to the mission of the church. These people truly were and are superheroes - inspired by the Holy Spirit. Heroes because they aren’t stopped by the perils and dangers that they face - they continued in their God given mission despite the dangers. Super because they were inspired by the breath of God – His Holy Spirit.

Today our world is searching for its current heroes. In these days of coronavirus, of global climate change the church needs the Holy Spirit – it needs the gifts of the Spirit. When we can’t meet in our buildings, are we out there carrying out God’s mission for His church or are we hiding like the disciples before the Spirit came. What gifts has the Spirit given us to enable us to help our communities – how are we showing the power of the Holy Spirit in action. It is so easy to make excuses for inaction. As the world starts to make small steps towards some sense of normality, we need the Spirit to show us what it wants us to be and give us the power to be successful in this new mission. We need to move away from seeing things we can’t do, from finding excuses for inaction and see what we can do.

What will we use our buildings for? What will we use our grounds for? How do we take Jesus’ message out to the world? What gifts do we need to help us? To help us be His church.

**Let us pray**

Dear Lord

The world has changed

We haven’t been the Church as we know it for the last year

We are facing new questions

Guide us Holy Spirit

Give us the power to be Your Church

Give us the power to serve the world and our communities.

Amen

**Our next Hymn is: Shine, Jesus Shine - 445**

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| 1.. Lord, the light of your love is shining,  in the midst of the darkness, shining:  Jesus, Light of the world, shine upon us;  set us free by the truth You now bring us -  shine on me, shine on me. | 2.. Lord, I come to Your awesome presence,  from the shadows into Your radiance;  by Your blood I may enter Your brightness:  search me, try me, consume all my darkness -  shine on me, shine on me. |
| 3.. As we gaze on Your kingly brightness  so our faces display Your likeness,  ever changing from glory to glory:  mirrored here may our lives tell Your story -  shine on me, shine on me. | Chorus: *Shine, Jesus, shine,*  *fill this land with the Father's glory;*  *blaze, Spirit blaze,*  *set our hearts on fire.*  *Flow, river, flow*  *flood the nations with grace and mercy;*  *send forth Your word, Lord, and let there be light!* |
| Graham Kendrick MakeWay Music ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811 | |

**Bible Reading Ezekiel 37.1-14 - The valley of dry bones**

The hand of the Lord was on me, and he brought me out by the Spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. 2He led me to and fro among them, and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. 3He asked me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’

I said, ‘Sovereign Lord, you alone know.’

4Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to these bones and say to them, “Dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! 5This is what the Sovereign Lord says to these bones: I will make breath[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exekiel+37.1-14&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-21403a)] enter you, and you will come to life. 6I will attach tendons to you and make flesh come upon you and cover you with skin; I will put breath in you, and you will come to life. Then you will know that I am the Lord.”’

7So I prophesied as I was commanded. And as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rattling sound, and the bones came together, bone to bone. 8I looked, and tendons and flesh appeared on them and skin covered them, but there was no breath in them.

9Then he said to me, ‘Prophesy to the breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it, “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: come, breath, from the four winds and breathe into these slain, that they may live.”’ 10So I prophesied as he commanded me, and breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet – a vast army.

11Then he said to me: ‘Son of man, these bones are the people of Israel. They say, “Our bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we are cut off.” 12Therefore prophesy and say to them: “This is what the Sovereign Lord says: my people, I am going to open your graves and bring you up from them; I will bring you back to the land of Israel. 13Then you, my people, will know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the Lord have spoken, and I have done it, declares the Lord.”’

**Talk**

The reason I like this reading is it shows the power of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing that is impossible for the Holy Spirit. A field of bones, but God can use the Holy Spirit to bring the bones back to life. Often we hear voices in our church saying the church is declining, the Church is dying. In some places Churches seem to be focussed on a managed decline. During Covid some churches have been more worried about insurance, than the mission of the Church. But in the Holy Spirit there is nothing the Church cannot do. The Holy Spirit can give life to anything. Across the world churches driven by the spirit are growing. The Christian church worldwide is growing. Every day thousands are brought into the Church – by the power of the Holy Spirit. And it is by the Holy Spirit that we too can be inspired, can be transformed like the disciples, that we too can brought back to life.

**Hymn – I Want To Walk With Jesus Christ – 302**

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| 1. I want to walk with Jesus Christ,  all the days I live of this life on earth;  to give to Him complete control  of body and of soul. | 2. I want to learn to speak to Him,  to pray to Him, confess my sin,  to open my life and let Him in,  for joy will then be mine. |
| 3. I want to learn to speak of Him -  my life must show that He lives in me;  my deeds, my thoughts, my words  must speak of all His love for me. | 4. I want to learn to read His word,  for this is how I know the way,  to live my life as pleases Him,  in holiness and joy. |
| 5. O Holy Spirit of the Lord,  enter now into this heart of mine;  take full control of my selfish will and make me wholly Thine! | Chorus: *Follow Him, follow Him,*  *yield Your life to Him -*  *He has conquered death,*  *He is King of kings;*  *accept the joy which He gives to those who yield their lives to Him.* |
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**Let us confess before God – Let us pray**

Dear Lord

We know that You can do all things through your Holy Spirit

Forgive us when we doubt Your power and try and succeed in our own power

Forgive us when we focus on earthly matter rather than Your mission

Forgive us when we lose trust in Your power

Gracious God, ignite our prayers

with the life-giving fire of Pentecost,

that we may not fear our weakness,

our hesitancy or our doubt,

but bring before you all that we are,

all that we have been, and all that we can be.

May we know that we can never aim high enough,

and never imagine anything complete enough,

to prepare us for all you would bless us with –

individually and as your Church.

Help us to meet together as Your church and serve you afresh,

trusting your power, love, mercy and forgiveness.

Amen

**And let us say together the prayer you taught us**

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: Colours of Day - 1039**

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| 1.. Colours of day dawn into the mind,  the sun has come up, the night is behind.  go down in the city, into the street,  and let's give the message to the people we meet. | 2.. Go through the park, on into the town;  the sun still shines on, it never goes down.  The light of the world is risen again;  the people of darkness are needing a friend. |
| 3.. Open your eyes, look into the sky,  the darkness has come, the sun came to die,  the evening draws on, the sun disappears,  but Jesus is living, His Spirit is near. | Chorus: *So light up the fire and let the flame burn,*  *open the door, let Jesus return,*  *take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,*  *tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.* |
| Sue McClellen ©1974 Thankyou Music ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811 | |

**A sending out prayer**

Holy Spirit, send us out into the world.

Gentle Spirit, calm our fears.

Spirit of truth, help us understand Your vision for us.

Spirit of strength, in our weaknesses, make us strong.

Spirit of power, give us the ability to act for you.

Holy Spirit, send us out.

Amen