Wrenbury & Nantwich Mission Area **Methodist** Churches

**Sunday 31st May 2020**

**This short act of worship has been prepared for us to use as we are not able to gather for worship. We can remain connected in fellowship by following this simple act of worship around the time you would normally be gathered for worship in your chapel/church.**

**Opening Prayer**

Christ appears to His disciples saying, “peace be with you.”

Holy Spirit, prepare my heart to know your peace afresh and to celebrate the Good News of God’s Kingdom.

**Hymn: Breathe on me breath of God (StF 370)**

Sing / read /pray / proclaim the words :

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.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,

until my heart is pure;

until with thee I will one will,

to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God,

till I am wholly thine;

until this earthly part of me

glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God:

so shall I never die,

but live with thee the perfect life

of thine eternity.

**Let us pray together**

Gracious God, in all places and at all times you are loving, generous, kind and compassionate. From the beginning of time, your Spirit has hovered on the surface of the deep and in that Spirit you have formed us, cherished and valued us. Let this be my song of praise; I love because you first loved me.

Generous God, give me a heart of gratitude for all those things that speak of your love. For friends and family, for the gifts of your creation, and for all the places I have witnessed something of heaven. *(We call to mind those*

*things for which we are grateful this week)* Amen.

Living and loving Lord, have mercy on me. Pardon and deliver me from all my sins, strengthen and renew me for your service, that I might live and work to your praise and glory, and the coming of your Kingdom on earth. Amen.

Christ tells us that we are saved, not condemned, by God. God is love; we are forgiven, and forgiven to the full. Amen.

**Acts 2:1-21**

 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, ‘Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.’ All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ But others sneered and said, ‘They are filled with new wine.’

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: ‘Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

“In the last days it will be”, God declares,

“that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,

and your young men shall see visions,

and your old men shall dream dreams.

Even upon my slaves, both men and women,

in those days I will pour out my Spirit;

and they shall prophesy.

And I will show portents in the heaven above

and signs on the earth below,

blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

The sun shall be turned to darkness

and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

**Today’s Gospel Reading: John 20:19-23**

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.’ When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’

**Time to Reflect**

Both our Pentecost reading from Acts and our Gospel are stories from the life of the early Church.

The reading from John reminds us that this was a time of fear and uncertainty for the disciples, who had to lock their doors in fright. In the midst of this, Christ appears to them and gives them the gift of the Holy Spirit, offering them His peace. In our own time of being shut away, and of living in fear and uncertainty, we are invited to know that Christ appears in the midst of us as well, saying “peace be with you.”

Our Acts reading is full of celebration and excitement and perhaps those are alien emotions for us at this time. Pentecost is considered to be the birth of the Church. It might feel like a cruel celebration when we can’t be in our church buildings. But at its core, the reading reminds us that God’s Kingdom is radically inclusive; those from all nations are able to hear the Good News, and all who call on the name of Lord will be saved. Let us remind ourselves that the Church is alive and blossoming in our hearts, even when we can’t meet; the message of Pentecost is still as true as it ever was. Our lives may look different from their normal pattern but we are still part of God’s people, welcomed into God’s love.

God’s peace and Good News are still with us. Wherever we are, we are included. Take a time to sit quietly and receive God’s gifts.

**A time of Prayer**

On all those who are sick, in body, mind and spirit, O Living God have mercy.

On those who are lonely or afraid, those who suffer from anxiety or whose souls are discomforted, O Living God have mercy.

On all those whose lives are dedicated to service: our NHS staff, the hospitality industry, our farmers and many others, O Living God have mercy.

On those who are never able to attend their place of worship, who suffer persecution and oppression and live in deprivation, O Living God have mercy.

On those who fear they are unworthy and unwelcome in church. Who do not feel included in your Kingdom, O Living God have mercy.

On those who do not know your peace, for whatever reason, O Living God have mercy.

*Time to add our own prayers of the heart, either spoken or unspoken.*

Everlasting God, whose very nature is love that has no end, hear our prayers. Help us never to make you in our own image but remain in awe of your mystery, the God who was, who is and who will always be. In the name of Christ, who shows us how to love, amen.

**The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father ……

**The Spirit lives to set us free (StF 397)**

1 The Spirit lives to set us free,

walk, walk in the light;

he binds us all in unity,

walk, walk in the light.

*Chorus* ***:***

***Walk in the light, walk in the light,***

***walk in the light, walk in the light of the Lord***

2 Jesus promised life to all,

walk, walk in the light;

the dead were wakened by his call,

walk, walk in the light.

*Ch:* ***Walk in the light****…….*

3 He died in pain on Calvary,

walk, walk in the light,

to save the lost like you and me,

walk, walk in the light.

*Ch:* ***Walk in the light……….***

4 We know his death was not the end,

walk, walk in the light;

he gave his Spirit to be our friend,

walk, walk in the light.

*Ch:* ***Walk in the light****……….*

5 By Jesus' love our wounds are healed,

walk, walk in the light;

the Father's kindness is revealed,

walk, walk in the light.

***Ch: Walk in the light****………*

6 The Spirit lives in you and me,

walk, walk in the light;

his light will shine for all to see,

walk, walk in the light.

*Ch:* ***Walk in the light****……..*

**A prayer of blessing**

Holy God, guard me and guide me and hide me in your heart. Bless me and all those made in your image, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Original Materials by Jessica Dalton

**Spirit of God, unseen as the wind**

**(StF 394)**

Chorus:

***Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,***

***gentle as is the dove,***

***teach us the truth and help us believe,***

***show us the Saviour's love.***

1 You spoke to us, long, long ago,

gave us the written word;

we read it still, needing its truth

through it God's voice is heard.

Chorus :***Spirit of God, unseen as the wind****….*

2 Without your help, we fail our Lord,

we cannot live his way,

we need your power, we need your strength,

following Christ each day.

Chorus *:****Spirit of God, unseen as the wind…***

 **Aston Lent Lunches**

It seems a very long time ago, since a number of us gathered at Aston Chapel to share soup lunches together and Lenten reflections based on the film “The Kings Speech”. We weren’t able to finish the course but had collected £128 for “All We Can”. The money has been used to buy *“extraordinary gifts” :*-

\* Provide 15 chicks to kick-start a business for a family in Zimbabwe

\* Build a toilet for a vulnerable family in Zimbabwe

\* Enable a teenage mother in Malawi to return to school

\* Provide tools for 2 women in Zimbabwe to start growing vegetables for their families

\* Provide a tap for clean water to a rural family in Zimbabwe

\* Support a Syrian child in Jordan aiding recovery from trauma from fleeing war

***Thank you everyone for your donations!***

**Becky Hodkinson** (Coppenhall Church and NMC Drop’n’Shop) usually participates in the Midnight Walk in aid of St. Luke’s. This year it will be a virtual walk of at least 10 miles on 27th June. Anyone wishing to sponsor her can email her at beckster100@hotmail.co.uk or see her Just Giving page.

**A Priest, a Minister and a Rabbi** are discussing how they get paid out of the weekly contributions made by their congregants. The Priest says, "I draw a line on the ground and throw the funds in the air. What falls to one side of the line is God's. What falls to the other is mine." The Minister says, "I do sort of the same. I draw a circle. What falls inside the circle is God's, outside is mine." The Rabbi says, "I throw the money in the air, too. What God wants, he takes. What falls to the ground is mine."

**In a Catholic school cafeteria**, a nun places a note in front of a pile of apples, "Only take one. God is watching." Further down the line is a pile of cookies. A little boy makes his own note, "Take all you want. God is watching the apples."

**How well do you know your Bible?**

**Q**: Who was the smallest man in the Bible? **A**: King David: he was only 12 inches tall because he was a ruler.

**Q**: Where in the Bible is the first tennis match mentioned? **A**: When Joseph served in the Pharaoh's court.

**Q**: How does Moses make coffee?
**A**: He brews it!

**Q:** What kind of man was Boaz before he married?
**A:** Ruthless.

**Q:** Who was the greatest financier in the Bible? **A:** Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

**Q:** Who was the greatest female financier in the Bible?
**A:**  Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

**Q:** Who was the greatest comedian in the Bible?
**A:** Samson. He brought the house down.

**Q**: Which Bible character had no parents?
**A:**  Joshua, son of Nun.

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**Q**: What do you call a sleep-walking nun?
**A**: A roamin-Catholic

**Q**: How do you make holy water?
**A**: Boil the hell out of it.

x x x x x x x x x x x x x

**A sneak peek inside locked-down homes ...**

I had to tell my suitcases they would not be going on holiday this year. Now I have so much more emotional baggage to deal with!

**Heard from various appliances** …

Fridge: “Every 10 minutes you people are opening my door. Every 10 minutes!”

Dishwasher: “You’re running me *again*? Could you not stop eating?”

Washing machine: “Is it just me, or is 80% of laundry just pyjamas now?”

Electronic gadgets: “You saw the screen time report. Just put me down and pick up a book?”

Shower: “Um, hello? Anyone there?”

Car: “Did I do something to offend someone?”