



## Prestwood Methodist Church

A worshipping and friendly community following Jesus

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### Sunday 31 May 2020 Pentecost

If you receive this by email, you should also have received Open Door by the same route. Check your spam folder or get in touch if you haven't. Paper copies are being distributed for those without email.

'Rules' seem to be changing week-by-week, but without certainty as to the risks, it's difficult to take full advantage. I'm just getting used to the idea of meeting with one person from outside my household at a time, without trying to think how I'd arrange to see five people safely! I do hope the changes will be positive for readers.

As the changes evolve, perhaps you could share your thoughts about how they have impacted your day for the next Open Door? From experience this time, pieces of under 200 words worked best, and it's useful for the editor to have some very short pieces to make the page layout fit!



Bridget

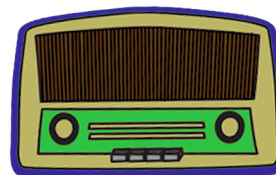
### Virtual Church

See daily reflections and prayers and Sunday services with music on the Amersham Methodist Circuit YouTube channel at [tinyurl.com/vz9y45q](https://tinyurl.com/vz9y45q).



See **Worship during the pandemic** from the Methodist Church homepage at [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) for more suggestions.

### TV and radio



Radio 4:

Sunday Worship at 8.10am from Elim Pentecostal City Church in Cardiff, reflecting on Pentecost hope during lockdown

Last week's topic was 'Living well while waiting.' One strong message I took away from this was to focus on what I am doing, rather than to spend time fretting about what I'm not doing.

BBC 1 have an extra-long programme of Sunday worship and reflections this week to celebrate Pentecost:

**10am:** Members of King's Church in Manchester mark the festival of Pentecost with a live, socially-distanced service from Gorton Monastery, a former Franciscan friary.

**11am:** Sunday worship from Hereford Cathedral.

**11:30am:** Rev Kate Bottley presents uplifting stories of **Hope**, of how ordinary people help others during challenging times.

**1.15pm:** Rev Kate Bottley is back to present Songs of Praise, 'exploring the themes of this special day.'

### Readings for this week:

Acts 2: 1- 21

Psalms 104: 24-34, 35b

1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13

John 20: 19-23

Much as we wait week by week for the end of lockdown and for signs of the end of, or at least the taming of, COVID-19, so since Easter it feels that we have been waiting for Pentecost.

The Acts reading is the very familiar and exciting account of the Holy Spirit coming to the disciples, and how they go from cowering 'locked down' people, to brave and bold evangelists. The Methodist Worship at home resource this week focus on this celebration and excitement, reminding us '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.'

The Gospel reading presents a quieter, more intimate view of the Holy Spirit. Nigel contrasts this view of the Holy Spirit with the Acts story in his reflections this week.

The first message that comes through from both these sources is a familiar and comforting one: that the Holy Spirit will be with us, to comfort and to guide.

However, the second message is more unsettling, and more challenging. The gift of the Holy Spirit is a two-way deal. We have to listen, as Nigel explains in his reflection. And we have to respond, by sharing the Good News with others and by making it mean something in our daily lives. Nigel shares a prayer written by Nick Fawcett, which reminds us of our duty to be ready to make the word of God known 'through words & deeds.'

The reflection from the Vine at Home also emphasises this point.

## **Prayer from the Vine at Home for Pentecost by Tim Baker and Wayne Grewcock**

We bring our ordinary selves, just as we are, inviting you to do something extraordinary in and through us, gracious God.

We have listened, we have noticed, we have paid attention to your calling. We need your love. We need your grace. We need your Holy Spirit.

Help us to understand that through you we are forgiven, that through you our hearts are stirred, that through you our ordinary becomes your extraordinary.

So gracious God, we bring the whole world before you, this Pentecost Sunday.

We bring all the concerns and doubts we carry, and lay them at your feet.

We bring all the fears of our world – a world still uncertain about how we will emerge from this pandemic. A world where there is still much injustice and suffering. A world in need of you, of your love.

Come amongst us. Come Gracious God.  
Come Jesus Christ. Come Holy Spirit **AMEN**

### **A reflection in the Vine at Home calls us to action:**

“The only limits to God’s activity are the ones that we put in place. God pours out God’s Spirit into us, into open vessels. So, when did you last open yourself to God? Are you willing to give yourself to God afresh so that you might be broken, melted, moulded and filled? ‘Spirit of the living God fall afresh on me’ - for I am an ordinary person in need of your Spirit’s power.”

*(Vine at Home, from a reflection by Graham Thompson)*

## **Hymn for Pentecost**

Both Nigel and the Worship at Home resource refer to ‘Breath on me breath of God’ (StF 370, H&P 280). The words and [YouTube](#) suggestion are included in Worship at Home, which also provides a link to a [Taizé song](#), but without the words. Taizé is a meditative form of singing – simple words, repeated multiple times as prayer. I’ve included the full words here, so you can join in “Within our darkest night” or use them as a prayer.

Within our darkest night, you kindle the fire  
that never dies away, that never dies away.

Pentecost also deserves a traditional hymn (although remembering from one of Bill Stephen’s previous articles in Open Door, Isaac Watts was controversial in his own time).

### **This is the day the Lord has made (StF 151)**

This is the day the Lord has made,  
God calls the day his own;  
let heaven rejoice, let earth be glad,  
and praise surround the throne.

Today Christ rose and left the dead,  
the powers of darkness fell;  
today the Church Christ's triumphs spread,  
and gospel wonders tell.

Today the Spirit came in power  
in Pentecostal flame;  
today as in that promised hour,  
disciples praise God's name.

*Isaac Watts (1674-1748)*

Reproduced from Singing the Faith

Sing along at [youtu.be/zNWkKuj1Hq4](https://youtu.be/zNWkKuj1Hq4)

## **Prayers of intercession from Methodist Worship at Home by Jessica Dalton**

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 discomfited, *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 can’t attend a 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*

Everlasting God, whose very nature is love that has no end, hear our prayers. Help us to never 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...

### **Closing prayer from Vine at home by Tim Baker and Wayne Grewcock**

Go in peace, Pentecost people, and may the Spirit of God go with you.

Go in peace, act justly; show mercy; and walk humbly with our God.

Go in peace, and in the power of the Holy Spirit build a better world, in Jesus’ name. **AMEN**