

North Kent Methodist Church

Live stream circuit service

23rd May 2021 10:30 am

The Pentecost Sunday and Remembering our call - An Annual Service for Local Preachers

Welcome and prayer

Good morning to all in this time of worship. We come together joining via internet or using this printed sheets. Let this be the time when the Word of God comes into our homes and lives and brings healing, understanding and joy.

Today we remember as the Pentecost Sunday and we also want to remember and pray for our local preachers throughout the circuit.

On the Day of Pentecost the prophecy about the Holy Spirit was fulfilled. Since then the Good News is carried on in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This gave birth to the church of which we are part of. Today we worship God in the very same Spirit which was poured out on the first disciples and enabled them to preach the Good news. Let's give thanks to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Enter his sanctuary, enter into the presence of the Holy One. Come just as you are and praise the Lord.

Hymn: StF 333 Majesty worship his majesty

Prayer:

Living God
whose Word became flesh in Jesus
and whose Spirit of Truth speaks into our hearts
all honour and glory and worship belong to you.
As our praises pronounce your wonder
may our lives overflow with love,
that our words and deeds
might tell of your goodness
and declare your infinite grace.
Amen.

Holy God, hear us as we confess our sins.
If we have taken too lightly
the call to proclaim your gospel:
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have been complacent in our preparation
and forgetful of your people's needs:
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have put our own ideas and concerns
before the good news of your love.
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have failed to listen
to the promptings of your Spirit.
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

If we have not lived
the message we have voiced.
Gracious God, forgive us.
Help us to live your Word.

Silence

May the living God
forgive and renew us,
give us victory over sin
and set us free in Christ.
Amen.

Readings

Jeremiah 1: 1-10

Acts 2:1-18

Sermon

Pentecost is originally a Jewish festival for harvest. Its tradition goes back to the time of Exodus and the Law of Moses. We work with the greek version "*pentekonta hemeras*" in hebr. "*Ha-missim yom*", which both mean fifty days from Passover (Easter). For all Jewish males this was the day they had to visit the temple and bring sacrifice offerings. So we see that Jerusalem was packed with visitors from every corner of the known world.

I googled some estimates and it says there could have been over two million people there! 263 000 sacrifices Josephus records. Each sacrifice was brought to the temple with a company of 10 up to 20 people since it was not lawful to eat the sacrifice alone. Interesting when we imagine that the regular population of the city at the time was about 100 000 people which is really a theory based on much wider research. Tacitus, roman historian writes about 600 000 and Josephus over a million.

On the day of Pentecost, **they were all together**. This is a lovely picture of the disciples. Staying together. How good it is when brothers stay together are the words from the Psalm 133. We are not entirely sure of the numbers, as the text does not specifies only 12 apostles. It is more likely to be a wider circle of disciples. We know that the Gift of the HS is given to every believer of Jesus. This day it was just the beginning. An initial start, the fulfilment of the ancient prophecy to which Peter refers to when he speaks to the crowd.

As Luke records in Acts 2, coming of the Holy Spirit was sudden, there was a howling wind and individual flames of fire alighting on each of them. They were all filled with the HS and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

These signs clearly indicate the way forward. The disciples became apostles. From learning they got the courage to teach *others*. And on their teaching the church is built. The church is the body of the resurrected Christ. The one who died and rose from the dead. As the officials were searching for the body of the crucified Christ they did not know that the church will be his body against which they will have to stand against in the near future.

The courage Holy Spirit gave to the disciples is not a precise expression. There is a deeper sense of what happens when the Holy Spirit fills the heart of the disciple. It could be described as joy, passion, gifts of the Spirit, peace, and perhaps more.

But definitely pouring out the Holy Spirit is a clear directive that not by our own strength but by his Spirit alone the mission will be carried out. The way forward. If that small group was staying together and thinking about some strategy or mission plan how to continue with the teaching of their master it all got a new potential.

But what is beautiful about this, is that what we couldn't do ourselves God doesn't want to do without us. That is amazing! A special bond is given to the message and the messenger. We cannot exist in a relationship with the Father without the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and we cannot expect people to come to faith without the work of the HS. He is the counsellor and the one who convince the world of its true nature.

Something else is important to share amongst us about the Holy Spirit. It is the assurance of his presence in our lives. Paul in his letter to the Romans 8:16 got it right when he writes:

"the Spirit himself testifies with our spirit, that we are God's children"

We need this internal assurance in our hearts that in Christ we are children of our father in heaven. The Holy Spirit is the spirit of adoption, he enables us to cry Abba Father Rom 8:15. The spirit of down payment of our salvation as we read in 2Cor 1:22 *"He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.."*

We do not own the Holy Spirit but he takes over us. He carries us from darkness into the light. I like the story from Philips ministry in early chapters of Acts. He did not carry the Holy Spirit but he was carried by the Holy Spirit. There is a clear hierarchy which we have to respect otherwise it will just be an illusion. He has the lead. He interprets the scriptures, he tells us and we speak out. Jesus himself said: "I only say what I hear from my Father".

The reading from Jeremiah reflects on the difficulty of carrying the message and being filled with the Holy Spirit. At some point Jeremiah said it would have been better if he did not know! In our journey we often feel tension and it is the gentle voice of the Holy Spirit carrying us through these seasons. He help us to count the blessings and see beyond. Those

are precious revelations when we see that even if we have no riches we can enrich others, even we have no power we can empower others. Look into 2Corinthians 6:4-10

If it is our intelligence and confidence the church would have been long gone. But this is done by the power of the Holy Spirit who inspires us to be saints and apostles. This work is not hard but serious.

Amen

Hymn StF 395 Spirit of the living God fall afresh
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYfzcYohWZg>

ACT OF RECOLLECTION

1. **The Minister addresses the accredited Local Preachers, who are invited to stand:**

Sisters and brothers, at the services in which you were admitted as Local Preachers you undertook solemn responsibilities. I invite you now to remember and reaffirm that undertaking.

Do you continue to believe yourself called by God to the office and ministry of a Local Preacher?

Answer: I do so believe.

Will you continue to be faithful in prayer, in the reading and study of the Scriptures, and will you continue to preach nothing contrary to the doctrines of the Methodist Church?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

Will you continue to accept our discipline and work together with your sisters and brothers in the Church?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

Will you continue to make yourself available to lead worship, attend the Local Preachers' Meeting and be committed to ongoing learning and development?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

The Minister addresses all those present:

Will you continue to follow the way of Christ, and in all things seek to promote, not your own glory, but the glory of the Lord?

Answer: With God's help, I will.

May the God of all grace continue to uphold you in the service to which you are called.

Amen

Prayers of intercession

In faith we pray to God,
who is more ready to hear than we are to ask.

We pray for the people of God
and for the churches we serve.
Rejoicing in our richness and variety,
may we build each other up in love
and be constantly renewed for mission and service.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for the Local Preachers of this Circuit,
Inspired by the Spirit,
may all who preach and lead worship be bold in proclaiming your truth
and faithful in living out their calling.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

We pray for those who are exploring a vocation
to lead worship and to preach ...
Guided by the Spirit,
may they respond with confidence and faith.

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

**We pray for the sick, the sorrowful and those in particular need ...
Knowing God's healing presence and peace
may they find life in all its fullness.**

The Lord hears our prayer.

Thanks be to God.

**We remember before God those Local Preachers who have faithfully lived
and who have died in Christian hope, especially ...**

**Strengthened by their faithful example,
may we follow the way of Christ
and live to God's praise and glory.**

Amen.

2. **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who
sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.

3. **Hymn** O thou who camest from above (*Hereford tune*)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qZSvW-6XXnw>

4. **Blessing**

The Blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be upon us and remain in us for ever AMEN