

Prayers by Hannah Fowles

Gracious God, we pray for those who are struggling emotionally and spiritually, those finding it hard to experience your presence, those who can't see through the tears and the anguish.

Thank you that, even when we are struggling to have a vision of you, you are with us. You have promised to never leave us, and you have said when we seek you, we will find you.

Thank you that you enter our sorrow and pain, you journey with us in our questions and our doubts. Bring comfort, strength and hope, we pray.

Lord we pray for those who wrestle with mental health issues. Grant them support, care, understanding and love.

Lord, we are so grateful for all the people who continue to work each day so that people may eat and have the medical care they need. We ask that You bless and protect them as they serve.

We pray for families trying to give support. Lord supply energy, rest, patience and others to help them. We pray for the wider support network, medical professionals, support staff and volunteers. Protect them from being overwhelmed and encourage them and give them wisdom. Amen.

See www.astwellparishes.org.uk
for daily Morning Prayer readings from Vine Cottage,
Syresham with Alice Palmer.

For services with Revd. Rich Duncan at
St Peter's Church, Brackley see:
<https://www.stpetersbrackley.org.uk/video-service>
For news & prayers from Revd. Paula Challen at
St Lawrence Church, Towcester, see:
<http://www.stlawrencechurch.org.uk>

CONTACT US:

Wiggy Smith, Reader (wiggysmith44@gmail.com):
Worship & pastoral care, funerals & burials, schools.
Bill Elkington (bill.h.elkington@gmail.com):
Benefice PCC & website updating
Judith Elkington (judith.elkington@gmail.com):
BPCC, BRICC, Deanery & Benefice Communications
Alice Palmer (alice.palmer16@btinternet.com):
All financial matters
Sarah Rudkin (rectorastwellbenefice@aol.com):
Service cover, Pews News, Benefice Calendar, baptisms,
weddings & general enquiries.
Churchwardens (for individual church matters):
Helmdon: Bill Elkington (bill.h.elkington@gmail.com)
Lois Weedon & Weston: Frank Hunter
(frank.hunter@btinternet.com)
Radstone: Penny Bonner (penny.bonner@btconnect.com)
Syresham: Malcolm Orr-Ewing
(info@thepriorybandbsyresham.co.uk)
Wappenham: Edwin King (astwell01@aol.com)
& Sheena Warren (sheena.warren@hotmail.co.uk)
Whitfield: Claire Bonner (cbonner00@gmail.com)



PEWS NEWS

The Astwell Benefice

St Mary Magdalene Helmdon with Stuchbury and St
Lawrence Radstone, St James the Great Syresham
with St John the Evangelist Whitfield,
St Mary & St Peter Lois Weedon with Weston and
Plumpton, and St Mary the Virgin Wappenham.

www.astwellparishes.org.uk

Sunday 31st May 2020

Pentecost

Collects & Readings

God, who as at this time
taught the hearts of your faithful people
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:
grant us by the same Spirit
to have a right judgement in all things
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Faithful God,
who fulfilled the promises of Easter
by sending us your Holy Spirit
and opening to every race and nation
the way of life eternal:
open our lips by your Spirit,
that every tongue may tell of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

New Testament Reading - Acts 2:1-21

¹When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ²And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. ³Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?' ⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? ⁹Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.'

The Readings for Pentecost (continued)

¹²All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' ¹³But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

¹⁴ 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. ¹⁵Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. ¹⁶No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ "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.

¹⁸ Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.

¹⁹ And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

²⁰ The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

²¹ Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Gospel Reading - John 7:37-39

³⁷ On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, 'Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, ³⁸and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, "Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water." ' ³⁹Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Wiggy's Words Thoughts on John 7:37-39

Only two weeks ago we read about Jesus promising the disciples that, although he was leaving them, he would ask his Father to send an Advocate – the Holy Spirit – to be with them forever, and today in our reading from Acts we read about the fulfilment of that promise.

What an amazing event! Imagine sitting in church and, suddenly there is the sound of a violent wind filling it with noise. And then, to top that, tongues of flames appear, separating and settling down upon each one of us! Even more amazing, we all start speaking in a multitude of languages! We really would know that we had received the Holy Spirit in all his power and might!

Well, and here is a question - how many of you believe that the Holy Spirit is alive and kicking and lives in you? Not sure? I will ask you another question, how many of you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, sent by his Father to give us life through the forgiveness of sins? Hopefully *all* of you! Then all of you have

received the Holy Spirit. All of you have been given this amazing gift from God. Because Jesus is no longer here on earth and with us, God sent the Holy Spirit, in his place, to be with us and to be a part of us.

Jesus said, "And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another counsellor to be with you forever." Forever – now, today, tomorrow and all our tomorrows. Forever. We are so blessed. What is the role of the Holy Spirit? As Jesus said, he is our counsellor. Just as if Jesus was right here now, the Holy Spirit comes alongside us and is our comfort, strength, guide and teacher.

We might not have heard the sound of a violent wind, or felt tongues of flame settle upon us; we might not speak in tongues, but, rest assured, we have all received the gift of the Holy Spirit. The moment we acknowledged Christ as the Son of God, the moment we declared our faith and accepted that we are not perfect, the very Nano second of the start of our belief, that is when we received this wonderful blessing of the Holy Spirit. In fact, He was there all the time encouraging us and leading us to faith.

Look back over your life and see the Holy Spirit at work. Remember that small voice that said, "I shouldn't do this." Remember the times when you have cried out in anguish to God for help and you have been given unbelievable strength and peace, which has carried you through the most terrible of times. That was the Holy Spirit.

Look back and see how much you have changed, for the fruits of the Spirit are many: love, joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. I bet you will find a significant difference in your attitude, general outlook and your way of life. All due to the guidance, help and prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus's disciples were not perfect, and neither are we, but all of us, without exception, are changing. Changing when the help of the Holy Spirit comes alongside us, encouraging and cajoling us. When we ask for help, when we cry out in distress, the Holy Spirit is God with us, he will sustain us in all our needs. Jesus might not be with us in the physical sense, but we have his Holy Spirit, the very essence, of God the Father and God the Son, dwelling in us and with us.

So, remember it does not matter who we are, where we are, what we are or what we are doing, he is always with us. Jesus said that the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, would be with us forever. Take that thought, take that knowledge and treasure it in your heart, and allow that incredible knowledge to uplift you, give you peace and fill you with love and joy.

He is here, he is with us. Alleluia!