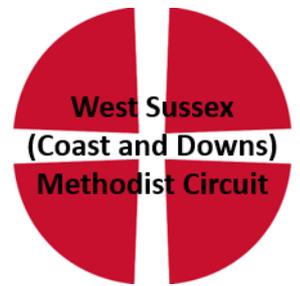


# Worshipping Together

West Sussex Coast and Downs Circuit

May 2021



**Worshipping Together** is an offering from the circuit to you, and has been collated by local preachers, ministers and worship leaders from across the circuit.

If you are well enough, we invite you use this resource each week, at a time to suit you, and spend a few moments with God, knowing that you are **Worshipping Together** with other people who are also sharing in this act of worship with you.

Share these resources with others to use in their own way as we worship and grow together despite the pandemic.

Also available at: [www.westsussexcoastanddownscircuit.co.uk](http://www.westsussexcoastanddownscircuit.co.uk)

*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. Acts 2:1-2*



**Pentecost**

Dennis Hawkins © TMCP

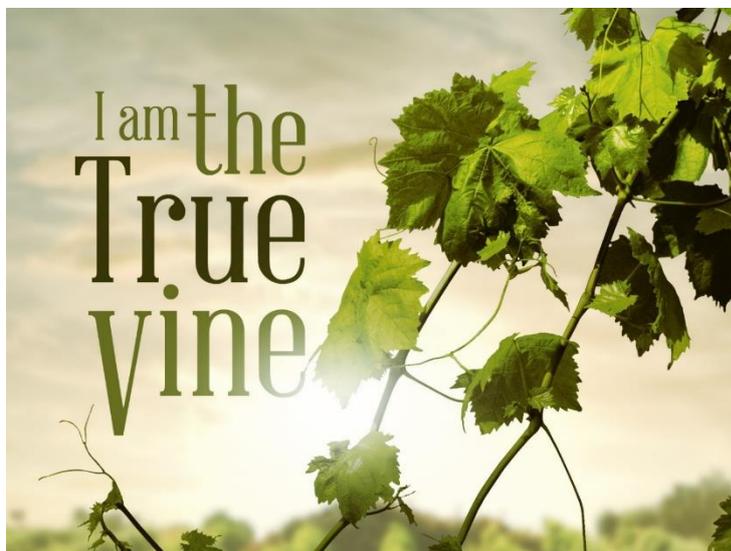
**Methodist Modern**  
Art Collection

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2021<sup>1</sup>

## GATHERING

*As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.*

**As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you: abide in my love.** *John 15:9*



### Prayers of thanks and praise

Great God of all, creator of the universe, we give you thanks and praise for the love you show to us. Help us to find ways to spread the good news of that love to all, throughout the whole world and beginning here in our own community.

We give thanks for the many ways people have come forward to help during the difficult times of this past year and the way in which our community has pulled together to continue worship. Help us not to lose those links as we emerge at last from social lockdown.

Our grateful thanks for those who have worked so hard to keep us well and have produced the vaccines which will allow us to live on, no matter what the future brings with this virus. Help us to share those vaccines with less fortunate nations and to send help to them as needed.

We thank you for all those who risk their health and their lives to work with the poor and disadvantaged where ever they are and especially for those who stand by their faith in the face of persecution or apathy. Help us all to do our small part in sharing your love and may we never lose our hope in you. Amen.

We bring all the praise of our hearts with the Lord's Prayer: ***Our Father...***

### Song, Pray and Praise: Come let us sing of a wonderful love<sup>2</sup>

Come, let us sing of a wonderful love, tender and true;

Out of the heart of the Father above,

Streaming to me and to you:

Wonderful love, swells in the heart of the Father above.

<sup>1</sup> Worship for Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May by Lynne James

<sup>2</sup> Come let us sing of a wonderful love by Robert Walmsley, StF No. 443

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell, joyfully came;  
Came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,  
Sharing their sorrow and shame;  
Seeking the lost, saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet; why do they roam?  
Love only waits to forgive and forget;  
Home, weary wanderer, home!  
Wonderful love, dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O Thou wonderful love, come and abide,  
Lifting my life, till it rises above  
Envy and falsehood and pride,  
Seeking to be, lowly and humble, a learner of Thee.

## RECEIVING

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### Reading: John 15:1-8

At first glance this passage is about punishing those Christian's who fail to obey God's commandments and lose touch with the life of the Holy Spirit. But, in order to understand better what Jesus is saying, we need to know more about how to encourage a vine to produce fruit. Palestine was and still is a wine producer. Those listening to Jesus would be fairly familiar with viticulture. Vines do not produce the same amount of fruit every year. The grower doesn't cut down a vine if it's had a bad year. He encourages it to grow better the following year. Grapevines, if left unattended, will grow along the ground, and if left lying on the ground, will send little roots down into the soil rather than produce any fruit. They may produce a few tiny clusters of bitter grapes this way, but since they are trying to draw nutrients from the soil where their own roots cannot get deep enough, they will not produce grapes.

Before throwing away these unproductive branches, the grower will lift them off the ground. He knows that what they need is not to draw their own nutrients from the soil, but to get their nutrients from the vine. Similarly, God the vintner, rather than cut us off when we don't produce fruit, lifts us up where we can bask in the sun, and get nutrients from the vine. This is the process that Jesus is referring to when he talks of 'abiding' in him. True believers are lifted to the sun so that they

can grow in faith as promised in verse 7: *'if you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish and it will be done for you'*.

These words seem to stress the importance of prayer as part of our daily Christian life. We need to pray to discover in which direction God wants our little branch to grow. Just as new vine branches take a while to settle and bear fruit, so new Christians, and sometimes, comfortable settled Christians, find it hard to know where to go to next. They move in various directions until they find the way God wants them to follow if they are to bear fruit for Christ. No Christian is good at everything: preaching, music, counselling, visiting, evangelising.... The list is long and we have to work out what we're good at, what God wants of us and then concentrate on that. God would rather have a few clusters of large, juicy grapes than lots of clusters of small, bitter grapes.

The one thing we are not allowed to do is 'nothing'. We also must understand that abiding in Christ is more than just believing in Him. 1 John points out that to abide, you must also love one another (1 John 2:10; 3:15; 4:12), walk as Jesus walked (2:6), be strong in the faith (2:14, 24), and do the will of God (2:17; 3:24). Here is what Jesus is saying in verse 4-5. Fruit is not automatic. However, you cannot produce fruit on your own effort either. Only the vine produces fruit. Only Jesus produces fruit in our lives.

So what is our responsibility? How can we allow Jesus to do this? Abide in Him. Trust him to produce fruit in us as we love other Christians and live as Jesus lived. Continue to trust that as we allow the Word of God to dwell in us richly, Jesus will follow through on his promise to us and we will produce much fruit.

If we do not 'abide', what happens? We are not burnt at the stake! Notice the pronoun switch in verse 6. 'They' throw the unproductive branches in the fire. Who are 'they'? One good theory is that 'they' represents the world of non-believers or seekers of belief. The world is looking for fruit among Christians. They are looking to see if we really act like we say we will. And sadly, what they most often see is far removed from what we claim to be. Many of them have read the Scriptures, and they know what Christ stood for. So, when the world looks at us, do they see Christ? If not, if they say: 'the Christians are no different to us, so why should we believe?', then this is like throwing the unproductive branches of the vine onto a fire. It is, like much of Christ's teaching, a metaphor. If we do not reveal changed lives, if we do

not show love for others or even for our fellow Christians, the world doesn't care a whit about what we have to say. They just put us in the discard pile for burning. Churches would be much more effective at evangelism if they were much more effective at loving one another. That is what the world hungers for. That is the what the world wants to see. That is when they will give us a hearing. That is also when we will fully abide in the love of God.

## RESPONDING

### We use Fred Kaan's hymn as our prayer of intercession : StF 696<sup>3</sup>

1. For the healing of the nations,  
Lord, we pray with one accord;  
For a just and equal sharing  
Of the things that earth affords.  
To a life of love in action  
Help us rise and pledge our word.

2. Lead us forward into freedom;  
From despair Your world release,  
That, redeemed from war and hatred,  
All may come and go in peace.  
Show us how through care and goodness  
Fear will die and hope increase.

3. All that kills abundant living,  
Let it from the earth be banned;  
Pride of status, race or schooling,  
Dogmas that obscure Your plan.  
In our common quest for justice  
May we hallow life's brief span.

4. You, Creator-God, have written  
Your great name on humankind;  
For our growing in Your likeness  
Bring the life of Christ to mind;  
That by our response and service  
Earth its destiny may find.

In a moment of silence we pray for those known to us who are in special need today. ....May they feel the love of God surrounding them and know that they are always in God's arms. Amen.

### The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all forever more. **Amen**



<sup>3</sup> For the healing of the Nations, by Fred Kaan © Stainer & Bell, StF No.696

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*As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.*

**Gathering Words: Psalm 98: 1, 4-6**

O sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvellous things

**His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory**

Make a joyful noise to the Lord all the earth

**Break forth into joyous song and sing praises**

Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody, with trumpets and the sound of the horn

**Make a joyful noise before the King, the Lord.**

**Prayer of Approach**

Creator God, you have called us to worship you,

Chosen us to be your friends and invited us to extend that friendship to your people in all the world. May we live as Jesus lived, serve as he served and love as he loved. To the glory of your name. Amen

**Sing/Read/Proclaim: Be still for the presence of the Lord<sup>5</sup> - [LINK](#)**

Be still for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here,  
Come bow before Him now with reverence and fear,  
In Him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground,  
Be still for the presence of the Lord the Holy One is here.

Be still for the glory of the Lord is shining all around,  
He burns with holy fire with splendour He is crowned,  
How awesome is the sight our radiant King of light,  
Be still for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place,  
He comes to cleanse and heal to minister His grace,  
No work too hard for Him in faith receive from Him,  
Be still for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

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<sup>4</sup> Worship material for 9<sup>th</sup> May prepared by Joyce Stroud. Prayers from Roots for Churches Ltd.

<sup>5</sup> Be still, by David J Evans © 1986 Thank you music, StF No.20

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**Reading: John 15:9-17**

In this passage Jesus commands us to love one other because he has done the greatest thing that love can do. He has come to give us freedom and joy, not slavery. We are chosen by the one who has loved us more than we can begin to imagine. Jesus says I have called you friends not servants.

Friendship is a choice and involves communication between those involved as the friends get to know each other better. Similarly, following Jesus is a continuous process where we get to know him better and learn more of his ways of love and compassion.

Where daily life is busy and we are surrounded by technology it is easy to be distracted and not give our full attention to our family and friends or to new people we meet. How often do we see people walking along a road or sitting on a bench engrossed in their phones and ignoring each other? The same can happen with our time with God. Do we lose our time for prayer or Bible study as other things crowd in? One of the silver linings of lockdown has been the number of resources that have been made available by different churches and worship leaders whether online, on paper or TV and radio. These provide opportunities for us to take a bit more quiet time for reflection and learning. Also during the times when the only opportunity to get out of the house was for exercise, it gave scope for prayer for ourselves or the community and listening to God while walking.

Some human friendships can be high maintenance where one person seems to have to work harder than the other to keep things going. The good news is that the terms for following Jesus are straightforward, although not easy, we are called to 'love one another as I have loved you'. Love is less about feelings and more about action. Jesus chooses us to bear fruit that will last. This might be a life changed because we loved them as Jesus loved us or a seemingly small task we did that made a difference to someone's life. At this time it is more important than ever to be aware of those people, who are feeling lonely and excluded and in need of friendship, and to take the opportunities to be good fruit that will last.

## Reflect

*Who are the people that we can be showing love and friendship towards?*

*How can we ensure that we give those we meet our full attention, as Jesus did with those people he encountered?*



*What are the changes we can make to develop our friendship with Jesus?*

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## RESPONDING

### Prayer of Confession

Lord, your love is so precious, but we have turned away from you when our lives have been easy – forgive us and help us to turn back to you.

You have commanded us to love others, but we have turned away from them when their lives have been difficult – forgive us and help us to be there for them.

You have shared with us your ministry of welcome, but we have turned people away – forgive us and help us always to be open to them.

For the sake of Jesus, whose life and death, deeds and words have saved us, Amen

### Sing & Pray: A new commandment<sup>6</sup> [LINK](#)

A new commandment I give unto you:  
that you love one another as I have loved you,  
that you love one another as I have loved you.  
By this shall all know that you are my disciples:  
if you have love one for another.  
By this shall all know that you are my disciples:  
if you have love one for another.

### Prayers for ourselves and others

All powerful God, who understands our needs before we think and speak, we unload our pains and joys, our sorrows and our celebrations and bring our prayers before you:

For the hurting and the hurt  
For the loved and the loveless  
For the young and the old

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<sup>6</sup> A New Commandment, © Paul Ledington Wright, StF242

For believers and non-believers

For those certain of their faith and those who are not sure

For those who are ill, in pain or distress

For the dying and those who are grieving.

Caring God, surround each one with your love and protection in Jesus' name.

We bring our prayers together as we share in the prayer that Jesus taught us.

***Our Father .....***

**Sing, Pray, proclaim: Put peace into each other's hands<sup>7</sup> [LINK](#)**

Put peace into each other's hands and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle flame, with tenderness enfold it.

Put peace into each other's hands with loving expectation;  
be gentle in your words and ways, in touch with God's creation.

Put peace into each other's hands like bread we break for sharing;  
look people warmly in the eye: our life is meant for caring.

Give thanks for strong yet tender hands, held out in trust and blessing.  
Where words fall short, let hands speak out, the heights of love expressing.

Reach out in friendship, stay with faith in touch with those around you.  
Put peace into each other's hands: the Peace that sought and found you.

### **Blessing**

Jesus stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit.' Go and do the Father's work, in the name of the Son and in the strength of the Spirit. Amen.

### **The Grace**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and evermore.

Amen



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<sup>7</sup> Put peace into each other's hands by Fred Kaan,

*As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.*



**Gathering:**

As we gather together, let us also welcome our God to this time of worship. Lord God, we know that your welcoming arms are always ready to embrace us, so we come today praising your name and giving thanks for everything you have done for us. Be with us, Lord, as we gather, be with us as we worship your name.

**Sing, Pray or Reflect: Lord, I lift your name on high<sup>9</sup>**

Lord I lift Your name on high. Lord I love to sing Your praises.  
I'm so glad You're in my life. I'm so glad You came to save us.  
*You came from heaven to earth to show the way.  
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay.  
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky  
Lord I lift Your name on high.*

**We Pray**

Lord God, who understands our every need, we praise your name for always being there, stilling our turmoil, being our anchor and refuge in troubled times. This year has been difficult for us, so we thank you for watching over us, and all whom we love. We thank you for all those people who have reached out to us. For those who have helped us, comforted us and simply been there for us.

Lord, thank you for this wonderful world. We marvel at the beauty of flowers, the sight and sounds of Summer and the chatter of the community around us. But Lord, we admit that we have struggled at times. It seems that we have forgotten all we have learned, and all we know of Your Love. Our minds have been in disarray, so we have failed to listen for your voice telling us *“do not be afraid for I am here”*. We have forgotten how to turn to you in prayer.... Forgive us Lord.

Lord, we thank you that you sent your Son, Jesus, to live amongst us and die for us on the Cross. So, this morning, we pray *“Come, Risen Lord, help us reach out to you and feel that you are there.”* Amen.

<sup>8</sup> Worship for 16<sup>th</sup> May prepared by Malcolm Lindo

<sup>9</sup> Lord I lift your name by Rick Rounds, © 1989 Maranatha! Music, StF332

Just a few days ago, we remembered and celebrated the day when Jesus ascended into heaven. We are reminded in Luke's Gospel that Jesus led the disciples out as far as Bethany and it was from there, after blessing them, that he was carried up to Heaven. The image that I, and perhaps you have, is that they were standing on a hillside. There were no crowds, no noise, no fanfare, or no singing choirs of angels, there was just silence. But then, when I reflect on those events, I hear two voices.

The first is Jesus's, who according to St Matthew said to the disciples *"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

And the second was one of the two men in white robes who had suddenly stood by them, and said *"Men of Galilee, why do you stand here looking into the sky?"*.

That question seems to have a critical tone. It sounds as if the speaker disapproved that the disciples were doing nothing. But perhaps my view is influenced by an incident that happened when I was studying for my A Levels. My form, called 6G, had been assigned a very new, inexperienced teacher. We were giving him a hard time, everyone was misbehaving, the class was in bedlam, no-one was working. Suddenly everything went quiet as we all noticed the Headmaster standing in the doorway. Into the quiet, his voice echoed *"6G, why are you standing there looking at me? Sit down and get on with your work or else there will be no half term for you! Mr. Philips, my study at lunchtime!"* We quickly sat down and got on with our work.

But let us hear now how the disciples reacted to the question they were asked.

**Reading ACTS Ch. 1 v 12-15 (ending before "and said"), and v23- 26".**

I cannot help but be amused that, after praying, the first thing the disciples did, was not to go out to the Temple, or the streets of Jerusalem to tell the world about the love of God as Jesus had charged them to do, instead they had a Church Council Meeting!

But when I think more about the disciples in those days after Jesus' ascension, I cannot help but make a comparison of how they emerged from the Upper Room where they have been hiding and sheltering since Good Friday, with the way we are also slowly emerging from sheltering from the effects of the Pandemic.

The disciples knew because Jesus had said, *"I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* that this was a new world in which they could and should proclaim the love of God. I wonder how we will face the challenges ahead of us.

Will we be transfixed, unsure what and how to worship and to spread the love of God? Will we be challenged like the disciples *"why do you stand looking into the sky?"*. Or will we, with the knowledge that Jesus is also with us, *"go and proclaim the gospel"*, perhaps in new and exciting ways.

***Today, I wonder which voice will we hear?***

**RESPONDING**

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### **Song, Read, Proclaim: Go to the World<sup>10</sup>**

Go to the world! Go into all the earth.

Go preach the cross where Christ renews life's worth,  
Baptizing as the sign of our rebirth. Alleluia.

Go to the world! Go into every place.

Go live the word of God's redeeming grace.

Go seek God's presence in each time and space. Alleluia.

Go to the world! Go struggle, bless, and pray.

The nights of tears give way to joyful day.

As servant Church, you follow Christ's own way. Alleluia.

Go to the World! Go as the ones I send,

For I am with you till the age shall end,

When all the host of glory cry, "Amen." Alleluia

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Let us pray first for those places in the world where people are suffering,

- places where there are natural disasters
- places where there are famines and drought
- and places where there are conflicts and disputes

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<sup>10</sup> Go to the World by Sylvia Dunstan, © GIA Productions Inc, StF No.402

Lord, there are so many places where people are in need, so we pray this morning that you will be in those places giving comfort, feeding, and teaching us to live well with one another. We simply pray that the people in those places will feel your love in their lives. Today, we also pray for all who work in those places, bring aid and comfort to those who suffer. Give them the strength and resources to provide care and comfort for those who are in need.

We pray for people. People who are suffering, the poor and hungry, the oppressed and exploited, the lonely and unloved, the aged and the infirm, all who are suffering from Covid 19, or continue to suffer because of delays due to the lockdown.

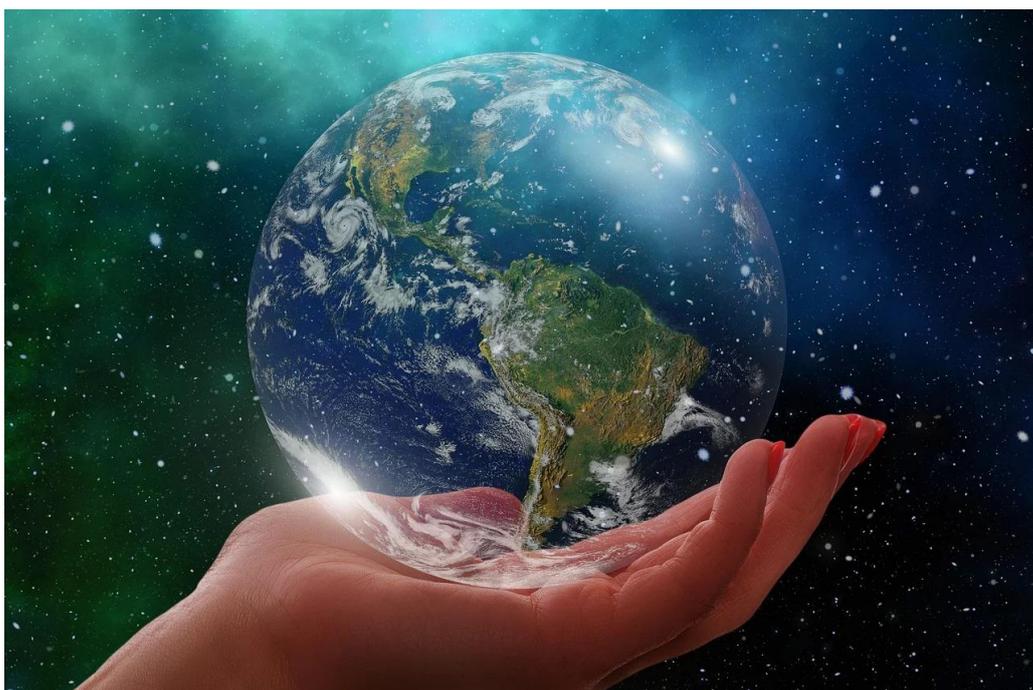
We pray for them wherever they are, but especially we pray for those in our own communities. There are too many people to list here, but each of us now bring to you those who we especially hold dear in our hearts, whether they are family, friends, members of our churches or simply strangers.

Lord, you have given us so many gifts, so many talents, and so many opportunities. So, we pray, that you will help us, individually and as your people together, to use what we have been given to be your witnesses in the world. Amen

We pray together... ***Our Father...***

### **Blessing**

Go out into the world rejoicing, for God is waiting to meet you.  
Go and walk with him in the light of his love. Amen.



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*As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.*

**In the beginning when God began to create the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters.** *Genesis 1:1-2*

**Sing, pray & proclaim: In The beginning<sup>12</sup>**

1. In the beginning was darkness and nothing;  
your Spirit was moving over the deep.  
You spoke a whisper and creation existed,  
birthed by the mighty words that you speak.  
Just say the word and my weary soul will be renewed.

*Breathe on me O breath of God and fill me with life anew.*

*Breathe on me O breath of God and set this heart on fire for you.*

2. Bones in a valley were changed into an army,  
raised by your Spirit's powerful touch.  
Here in your presence I'm needing your refreshing;  
Lord please revive my heart with your love.  
Just say the word and my weary soul will be renewed.

Revival fire, fall down like the rain. Revival fire, set my soul ablaze.  
Revival fire, fall down like the rain. Revival fire, set my soul ablaze.

**Prayers of Praise<sup>13</sup>**

To gather as your people brings a moment of joy,  
As we bring our praises, we find ourselves at the gateway to heaven.

To sing of our love for you lifts our hearts to the mountain top,  
And as we celebrate your glory,  
your grace binds us ever closer together as the body of Christ.

It is in your presence that your Holy Spirit

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<sup>11</sup> Worship for 23<sup>rd</sup> May prepared by Dan Balsdon

<sup>12</sup> In the beginning by Vicky Beeching, © Thank you Music & Integrity Music, Stf386

<sup>13</sup> Prayer © David Clowes, 500 prayers for the Christian Year, p250.

Bursts the floodgates of the resources of our praises  
And releases the pent-up wonder of your glory that is lying deep within us.

With the psalmist, the cry of worship burst from our lips, overwhelms our hearts, and transforms our whole being. The joy surges forth as we to sing with joy, bless the Lord oh my soul and all within me praise his holy name. Amen.

**RECEIVING**

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**Reading: Acts 2:1-4**

On the front page of this month's Worshipping Together booklet is a painting from the Methodist Modern Art Collection entitled 'Pentecost' by Dennis Hawkins, painted in 1962. The following commentary explains why Hawkins calls the painting 'Pentecost', and how this work of art is part of a much larger series.

*The descent of the Holy Spirit, on the Jewish feast of Pentecost, marked the birth of the Church, and is represented by an intense circle of white light, painted on the top of an old school desk. In this way Hawkins represents the success of the Church penetrating unlikely nooks and crannies and dark corners throughout the world and illuminating them with the light of the Holy Ghost. In the 1960s Hawkins produced dozens of "Pentecosts". The traditional iconography of Pentecost was tongues of fire, but instead he chose to use the circle or sphere. He saw it as a numinous object, mysterious without beginning or end and all-embracing, an ideal symbol for the coming of the Holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup>*

I love way Hawkins demonstrates the coming of God's Spirit in this endless and timeless way, echoing the truth that while we have the Acts 2 Pentecost, God's spirit is at the beginning in Genesis, and through many different images and metaphors threads its way throughout scripture, throughout time, And throughout our very lives.

I also love the way this sphere of light appears as graffiti on 'normal' objects to the 1960s world. From being an ordinary day to day object, this old school desk is now marked and becomes something unique and special, carrying a hallmark of the life-giving, all-embracing spirit of God.

This image, this art, this metaphor, reminds us that today, Pentecost, is not merely a day where we may read Acts 2 and be reminded of the story we sometimes call

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<sup>14</sup> Commentary based on 'A Guide to the Methodist Art Collection'. from [Pentecost - Dennis Hawkins \(methodist.org.uk\)](https://www.methodist.org.uk)

the birth of the early church. Today is a day where we remember and celebrate the timeless, endless, all-embracing and life-giving presence of God – which we know as God’s Spirit, that rests on and within each of us – ordinary people, who become marked, special and unique, carrying the hallmark of the all-embracing presence and power of God everywhere we go.

## RESPONDING

### Prayers for ourselves and others<sup>15</sup>

In the power of God’s timeless, all-embracing Spirit, we bring our prayers.

We pray that we may bear witness to the power of God in the world, seeing always beyond its superficiality.

**Breathe on us, Lord, and deepen us in the life of your kingdom.**

We pray that we may bear witness to the presence of God in the world, seeing always beneath its pain.

**Breathe on us, Lord, and deepen us in the life of your kingdom.**

We pray that we may bear witness to the unique creativity of God in the world, seeing always beyond its beauty.

**Breathe on us, Lord, and deepen us in the life of your kingdom.**

We pray that we may bear witness to the ever-present love of God in the world, pointing always to the love of Christ present in all things.

**Breathe on us, Lord, and deepen us in the life of your kingdom.**

For the world, our communities, our loved one’s we pray...

*...we raise the prayers of your heart before our God who hears...*

We pray your kingdom come, your will be done...

*...The Lord’s Prayer... Amen*

### Sing, Pray & Praise: O breath of life come sweeping through us<sup>16</sup>

1. O breath of life, come sweeping through us,  
revive your Church with life and power ;  
O breath of life, come, cleanse, renew us,  
and fit your Church to meet this hour.

<sup>15</sup> Prayers for others adapted from Encircling the Year, Barbara Mosse, p.135

<sup>16</sup> O breath of life by Elizabeth Ann Head, StF391

2. O wind of God, come, bend us, break us,  
till humbly we confess our need ;  
then in your tenderness remake us,  
revive, restore ; for this we plead.

3. O breath of love, come, breathe within us,  
renewing thought and will and heart ;  
come, love of Christ, afresh to win us,  
revive your Church in every part.



### Blessing

Spirit of God,  
Come as gentle wind,  
Blowing upon us your encouragement,  
Be a gust that points us to love,  
Be a breeze that shows us peace.

Spirit of God,  
Come as fire,  
Igniting us with your truth,  
Be a spark that awakens and inspires us,  
Be a flame that will never go out.

Spirit of God,  
Come as life,  
Breathing abundant life into our very  
existence,  
Be the life-source of our living,  
Be overflowing of our loving.

Spirit of God,  
Wind, fire, life.  
Come.  
**Amen.**

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*As we come to worship, you may like to prepare with a period of quiet, or light a candle. Let us remember that wherever we are, God is with us.*

**Holy, Holy, Holy is our wonderful God, Creator, Sustainer, Saviour.  
Let us Worship our God, Who is closer to us than our own breath.**

Today is Trinity Sunday, a week after Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came, and is often referred to as the Birth of the early church. It can be tempting to think of Trinity Sunday as a theological Rubik's Cube, difficult to solve!! With our benefit of hindsight we have grown up with the knowledge of God, as three in one:-

**Father – Son – Holy Spirit.**

**Sing, pray & proclaim: Holy Spirit we welcome you<sup>18</sup>**

1. Holy Spirit, we welcome you, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

Move among us with holy fire, as we lay aside all earthly desire,  
hands reach out and our hearts aspire.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

2. Holy Spirit, we welcome you, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

Let the breeze of your presence blow that your children here might truly know  
how to move in the Spirit's flow.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

3. Holy Spirit, we welcome you, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

Please accomplish in us today some new work of loving grace, we pray —  
unreservedly — have your way.

Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

### **Prayer**

We can enter your presence because through Jesus life, death and resurrection  
He opened the door to the Kingdom of Grace.

We thank you, that no matter who we are, whatever mistakes we have made,  
Your Grace makes it possible, for us to begin again.

So we come today bringing thanks and praise, for you call us by name, and we are  
members of your family. Amen

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<sup>17</sup> Worship for 30<sup>th</sup> May prepared by Margaret Thompson

<sup>18</sup> Holy Spirit we welcome you by Christopher Alan Bowater, © 1986 Sovereign Music, StF No. 385

**Reading: John 2:1-17**

Tomorrow is Spring Bank Holiday, I wonder what you will do? Before things were changed, and dates changed, it would have been Whit Monday, the day after Pentecost. In the North where I grew up there would have been big processions of Witness when churches carried banners and young children wore new clothes, to celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. That tradition has mostly gone now.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night, perhaps because he is a leader of Pharisees and didn't want others to know he was seeing Jesus, he could have been put out of the Synagogue (see John 9:22). Nicodemus has recognised that Jesus has come from God and wants to know more. Jesus tells him he must be "Born again" a phrase that is now often used when someone has a conversion experience.

How can one be born again asks Nicodemus if one is old"? The statement baffles him. Jesus tells him he must be born of Water and Spirit. If he wants to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

So does age have something which might prevent us from entering the kingdom of heaven?? Do we see a life of Faith as maturing expertise and knowledge, does it preclude a "New Beginning"? It is in knowing God for ourselves, not just from the Bible or our Worship, that we can be drawn into a relationship. How can we meet with God in the here and now??

God is everywhere, hidden in plain sight, daily we see his handiwork, and in others that we meet. We can build a relationship with him. What might it feel like to have the "new beginning" that being born again suggests?? Vulnerable??. You will be in Good Company! There are no experts on God!! We are all beginners, but we are urged to continue searching.

Jesus said: 'Ask and it will be given you - Seek and you will find – Knock and the door will be opened'. What better advice on building a relationship. Jesus is insistent that it is the process of being born of the spirit, that makes God's plan for the world possible. We have the opportunity to be part of that process. Amen

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**RESPONDING****Prayers**

Holy are you, our wonderful God, Creator, Sustainer, Saviour.

We pray for the world which you create, sustain and save.

We pray for ourselves, who you invite to partner with you,  
and to participate in your redeeming and transforming work.  
And so we pray for the places where your transforming work is needed.

For places of conflict and struggle,  
For people who suffer and mourn,  
For communities who are in need,

May all be blessed and strengthened by your redeeming love. Amen.

### **Sing, Pray & Praise: The Spirit lives to set us free<sup>19</sup>**

1. The Spirit lives to set us free, walk, walk in the light;  
he binds us all in unity, walk, walk in the light.

*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.

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.

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.

5. By Jesus' love our wounds are healed, walk, walk in the light;  
the Father's kindness is revealed, walk, 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.

### **The Grace**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and evermore. Amen

### **Acknowledgements**

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<sup>19</sup> The Spirit lives to set us free by Damian Lundy, © Kevin Mayhew 1978, StF397