

CIRCUIT SERVICE FOR 5 JUNE 2022-Pentecost Sunday and The Queen's Platinum Jubilee -Rev. David Jenkins

Call to Worship-On Pentecost Sunday let us remember how it all began.

Reading- When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² 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. ³ Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. ⁴ All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

⁵ Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. ⁶ And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. ⁷ Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?" ⁸ And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? (Acts 2:1-8)

Hymn 372 Singing the Faith (281 Hymns and Psalms) "Come down, O Love divine"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=flvKDgktutI>

Come down, O love divine, seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near, within my heart appear,
and kindle it, Thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn, till earthly passions turn
to dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light shine ever on my sight,
and clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity mine outward vesture be,
and lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart, which takes the humbler part,
and o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong, with which the soul will long,
shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace, till he become the place
wherein the Holy Spirit makes his dwelling.

Bianco da Siena (d.1434)

Prayer

We adore the amazing, awesome Creator of all life, known to us as personal like a parent, companionable like a friend, and energising like an electricity grid-Father, Son and Spirit we praise you.

We thank you for all the ways in which you lift our lives, inspiring, encouraging, empowering.

Continue to challenge our smallness of vision, our negative perceptions of what we could yet become, and our reluctance to allow you free rein to work your purposes in our lives.

Wake us up, galvanise us; so speak to us and move within us during this act of worship that we become fired with the vision of what you can do through us and others to fulfil the desire of your own prayer that your Kingdom may come and your will be done on earth as in heaven. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

All-Age Talk -Glenn Cunningham

Glenn Cunningham was 8 years old when his schoolhouse in America burst into flames. His older brother was killed in the fire and Glenn was so badly burned that the doctors recommended amputating his legs. He was so upset by that that his parents would not allow it. The doctors predicted that Glenn would never walk naturally again. But Glenn had great determination. It took hours and hours of patient practice, but moving his legs along behind the horse-driven plough on his father's farm eventually helped him to walk again two years after the accident. Glenn had a very positive attitude and a strong Christian faith. His favourite verse in the Bible was the last verse of Isaiah Chapter 40-"Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Not only did he learn to walk again. He learned to run again; and to run so well, so quickly and with so much determined stamina that he competed in the Olympics and broke world records for the 800 metres and the mile.

Later he studied at University becoming a Doctor of Philosophy and served as a director of physical education at a College. Later he opened the Glenn Cunningham Youth Ranch where he and his wife helped 10,000 abused and needy children.

Let people like Glenn Cunningham inspire us and challenge us through their example.

Prayer When we are next tempted to give up when we are finding something difficult, help us to keep going, to patiently persevere, inspired by the examples of all the people who have accomplished more than anyone thought possible. Amen.

Hymn 370 Singing the Faith (280 Hymns and Psalms) "Breathe on me, Breath of God"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TssHTATafi0>

1 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.

2 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until with thee I will one will,,
to do and to endure.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
till I am wholly thine,
until this earthly part of me
glows with thy fire divine

4 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with thee the perfect life
of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835-1889)

Reader-Romans 8: 14-17, 26-27

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. ¹⁵The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship.^[a] And by him we cry, "Abba,^[b] Father." ¹⁶The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. ¹⁷Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

²⁶In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. ²⁷And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

Hymn 398 Singing the Faith (326 Hymns and Psalms) "There's a Spirit in the air"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YsvUXGnPck4>

There's a spirit in the air,
telling Christians everywhere:
"Praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working in our world!"

Lose your shyness, find your tongue;
tell the world what God has done:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today.

Where believers break the bread,
when a hungry child is fed,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

Still the Spirit gives us light,
seeing wrong and setting right:
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today.

When a stranger's not alone,
where the homeless find a home,
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world.

May the Spirit fill our praise,
guide our thoughts and change our ways.
God in Christ has come to stay.
Live tomorrow's life today.

There's a Spirit in the air,
calling people everywhere:
praise the love that Christ revealed,
living, working, in our world

Brian Wren (b. 1936)

Sermon "Energising"

I was a young teacher in my first term as a probationary teacher in Leicester. The energy demands of teaching were such that often, when I'd had my tea, I felt quite exhausted. There was always work to do-marking and preparing for the next day.

There was a kind of prayer project at the time-I think it was called "Intercessors for Britain", and, although I didn't fully identify with everything about it, I did follow the outline of what it was about. It involved spending a concentrated hour in prayer once a week. What would amaze me was that, many times, when this form of praying was completed, I would have considerable reserves of energy-so much so that, not only would I go out running, but I would be pushing myself beyond previous levels of speed and stamina endurance. I don't think I can properly explain this phenomenon. The starkly contrasting levels of energy did not happen because of any expressed desire on my part. They were not what the kind of prayer was focusing on. Neither did they occur at other times when a period of concentrated prayer did not occur. It would be tempting to generalise from this experience and to say something nonsensical like "If you only give one hour to prayer you'll be able to run for England!" But I think that the experience can act as a kind of parable of the extraordinary energising power of the Spirit of God in human life.

It is a parable enacted in history.

Jesus' first disciples had been demoralised by his death and were in the waiting period after his final appearance to them. This was a time of concentrated, obedient and expectant prayer. At Pentecost they received a depth of power, confidence and communicative ability which enabled them to speak with such persuasive authority that on the first time of going out onto the streets of Jerusalem to preach, (an incredibly courageous thing to do when you remember what had happened to Jesus), 3,000 people responded to their message. The manifestations of the Spirit are described in terms of dynamic energy-tongues of fire and a powerful, rushing wind.

It is a parable re-enacted in our own lives.

There may be times when we are seriously dispirited, disillusioned and dejected. There may be times when we wonder if we have the capacity to carry on, to cope with all the challenges we are facing.

And it may be at some of the very lowest times of our lives that we receive the renewing physical, spiritual and mental energy that moves us from exhaustion to endurance.

You know what's it's like when you're ill with flu-like symptoms or a virus?

One of the first things to go is our energy. We desperately need to sleep, to rest.

With the loss of our energy there may also be a loss of enthusiasm, of interest. What might usually set us alight is on hold. We just can't be bothered with anything.

We know we've turned the corner when that energy begins to flood back again, and with it our enthusiasm and interest in life.

And the parable may be enacted in human experience in other ways too.

I have seen very shy people who have become able preachers, inspired and empowered beyond their own abilities.

I have seen apparently unremarkable people who have found skills of leadership, perhaps as a staff nurse, with a sense of inner authority.

The energising Spirit develops potential beyond what we might ever expect.

It is not always the obviously gifted people, the multi-talented ones who seem to have all the natural abilities going, who offer the most in human interaction. It can also be the least likely people, the late developers, the quiet people in the background with a plus-and the plus could be described as the transforming and energising activity of the Spirit of God in human life.

The Spirit of God gives to people now, as well as on the day of Pentecost, confidence, power and ability far beyond what we would ever have expected.

This is how Paul expressed this in writing to the church at Corinth:- (1 Corinthians 1:26-31)

"Consider your own call, brothers and sisters, not many of you were wise by human standards, not many of you were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God. He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus."

In other words, it is God who helps to make us what we can become and that may be far beyond expectations of our natural ability.

There are many ways in which we can describe God. You might like to hold onto this thought that "God is energy". God is much more than any description we could give, but this particular description reminds us of the phenomenal energy required to bring the entire universe into being, to sustain it all, to empower and enable all life.

The energising of individuals leads to the energising of communities.

It is not only individuals who can become disheartened and dejected. Such a mood can envelop a whole place, a village, a town, an entire region faced by lack of employment, lack of facilities, where social problems seem to outweigh any sense of community coherence. There can be entire neighbourhoods where hope and achievement and well being seem to be lacking.

In one of his articles, Sam Wells, Vicar of St Martins in the Fields in London says this-"On one housing estate was a large empty field fenced off by the county council. Local residents had often asked to be able to use it for sport and recreation, but there were always civic reasons why it was not possible-mostly referring to the debris on the park and fears of litigation.

One morning, two local parents arranged for a street of children to clear the park of cans, bottles and other litter. They made sure the newspapers were aware. They did not tear down the fences, but they carefully dismantled all the local authority's reasons for keeping the fences up. Soon soccer matches were being played on the field.

The council seemed able to find money for equipment after all. It became obvious that plans to sell the park to a large retail developer would be politically disastrous. Those two parents began with a bottle clear-up. within weeks they had a youth movement. It turned out that they were not as powerless as everyone initially thought."

Our nation and our world are at present beset by "an energy crisis".

The parable with which we began -of the energy to endure replacing the emptiness of exhaustion by encountering the Living God, if it is not too simplistic in its application, is saying "There are huge reserves of untapped energy and power available. way beyond merely human resources, human planning and human infrastructure. Such power resides in the Creator of all things, the giver of our life, who can renew, restore and reform individual and community life. This power is not something we can engineer. It lies beyond our ability to manufacture. It is a power that belongs within the being of God.

In the life of your community, your family, your church, and your own life, what might this parable of God's energising Spirit be saying to you?

Prayers-In the silence let us make our own response to what we have heard.....

This weekend we have been invited to celebrate a unique happening-Queen Elizabeth II as the longest reigning British monarch in history-the Platinum Jubilee. We have the opportunity now to voice our thankfulness for the stability, wisdom, responsibility and commitment she has shown, for her deep sense of vocation and destiny within the faith that guides her life.....

In our prayers let us remember those for whom we are deeply concerned-those who are profoundly ill.... those suffering the impact of bereavement.....people all around the world who feel powerless...those without adequate food, shelter, safety, or a home or country of their own.....

We pray for the energising vision of the Spirit of God to help us in transforming depressed communities..and to enable us to find qualities deep within ourselves that we never thought we had..

through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 705 Singing the Faith (404 Hymns and Psalms) "It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKi4UzyT7R8>

It is God who holds the nations in the hollow of his hand;
It is God whose light is shining in the darkness of the land;

It is God who builds the City on the Rock and not on sand:
may the living God be praised.

It is God whose purpose summons us to use the present hour;
who recalls us to our senses when a nation's life turns sour;
in the discipline of freedom we shall know God's saving power:
may the living God be praised.

When a thankful nation, looking back, has cause to celebrate
those who live our admiration by their service to the state;
when self-giving is a measure of the greatness of the great:
may the living God be praised.

God reminds us every sunrise that the world is ours on lease:
for the sake of life tomorrow may our love for it increase;
may all races live together, share its riches, be at peace:
may the living God be praised.

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

Benediction -The blessing of God who has created us and recreated us, who has reconciled us and called us to serve as your representatives; renew, re-energise and reinvigorate us, all peoples and all creation for all time, Amen.