

twelvebaskets

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PENTECOST

31st May 2020

A short act of worship for use in peoples homes
while churches are closed.

A free resource funded by **twelvebaskets**.

For more information <https://theworshipcloud.com/terms/free-weekly-resource>

Opening Prayer / Call to Worship

God calls you here:

Part of a community of disciples,

Part of a church family.

God calls you here and asks you to be ready to be in the presence of the Creator.

Are you ready to worship?

Are you ready to listen?

Are you ready to think?

Are you ready to notice?

For it is God who calls us here – let's be ready to meet our Saviour.

The living God calls you.

Our God that was in every place and space before it was even built;

Our God that dwelt within you before you even noticed:

A God full of grace and forgiveness;

A God bringing challenge and choice;

God who has as much to share with you now as at the dawn of time.

So – are you ready?

Are you ready to notice?

Are you ready to pay attention?

Are you ready to offer thanks and praise?

And today are you ready to encounter the God that waits for you?

For this is the day that the Lord has made.

Amen.¹

We say the Lord's Prayer.

Hymn - 167 STF – Colours of day dawn into the mind - [YouTube](#)

Colours of day dawn into the mind,

The sun has come up, the night is behind.

Go down in the city, into the street,

And let's give the message to the people we meet.

So light up the fire and let the flame burn,

Open the door, let Jesus return.

Take seeds of His Spirit, let the fruit grow,

Tell the people of Jesus, let His love show.

¹ Prayers written by Jane Bingham

Go through the park, on into the town;
The sun still shines on, it never goes down.
The light of the world is risen again;
The people of darkness are needing a friend.

Open your eyes, look into the sky,
The darkness has come, the Son came to die.
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,
But Jesus is living, His Spirit is near.

Readings: Acts 2:1-21 - [Click for Reading](#)

John 20:19-23 - [Click for Reading](#)

Reflections on the Readings

Not long ago, I flicked on the television as *Pointless* was coming to an end. The final opportunity to win a prize in this daily quiz came when the contestants were asked to name a film in which Robert Redford had been nominated for an Oscar. One of the films - that no-one had named, making it a 'pointless answer' - was *Ordinary People*. A powerful family drama that I remember from my youth! The film tells of how a family is overwhelmed when one of them dies in a boating accident and the other three try and fail to rebuild their lives. They are not particularly special, creative, high-flying or super-intelligent people - they are ordinary people trying to cope in an extraordinary situation.

And isn't that us today? Ordinary people trying to cope in an extraordinary situation? Particularly as we continue to live with the uncertainty of Coronavirus and the ongoing effects of the lockdown on our daily living. We are living through extraordinary times and we need God's help as we face an uncertain future.

The first Pentecost was also about ordinary people. The one very special person had ascended into heaven and the ordinary people were left. Yet, what happened that day was extraordinary.

When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, they were far from ordinary. They became very special, for they were filled with gifts from God. They were used to fulfil God's purposes and to help people hear the Gospel message. The Church was born at their hands and we are the Church today because of them and because of the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives - and in the lives of ordinary people since that first day of Pentecost. They were ordinary people made special by the Spirit of God within them. And so are we! Each one of us! Ordinary people made special by the Spirit of God.

Is anyone more special than anyone else or anyone more deserving than all others? We have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. We have all acknowledged

our need of the saving grace of Jesus. We are ordinary children, women and men and we are equal in the eyes of God. Therefore, God will pour out the Spirit on us! We are the disciples of today, anointed in the Spirit.

So much of what the Church and our faith is about has nothing to do with age or rank or qualification and yet we seem to want to put tags on people and declare who is worthy and who's fit and who is unworthy and who is unfit. We also seem to be saying that to be fit or worthy you have to have done certain things, behave in a particular way and be a certain age - but that's not how it is and that's not how it should be. For, God's love and the saving grace of the Gospel are freely available to all.

Instead, 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.

All of which brings us nicely back to the beginning - with the disciples waiting in an upper room in Jerusalem, keeping themselves to themselves. They were in lockdown. Nearly two thousand years later, we have our own special places - and we are in lockdown too. Are we keeping ourselves to ourselves - despite the fact that the Spirit is ready to fill us, in the same way that the first disciples were filled by God?

What we need - what we should pray for - is a fresh outpouring of God's Spirit into our lives that drives us - as it drove the first disciples - that drives us out into the world to tell others about Jesus and to live lives that change the world. And I believe that God is ready to do that for us when we make ourselves available. For, we are those who are called to remain faithful to the Gospel - even in the midst of a pandemic - and we are those who are called to be open to God because God has extraordinary things in store for us, ordinary though we are.²

Prayers

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.

² Adapted from a reflection written by Graham Thompson

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.³

Hymn: 662 STF – Have you heard God's voice? [YouTube](#)

Have you heard God's voice; has your heart been stirred?
Are you still prepared to follow?
Have you made a choice to remain and serve,
though the way be rough and narrow?

***Will you walk the path that will cost you much
and embrace the pain and sorrow?
Will you trust in One who entrusts to you
the disciples of tomorrow?***

Will you use your voice; will you not sit down
when the multitudes are silent?
Will you make a choice to stand your ground
when the crowds are turning violent?

In your city streets will you be God's heart?
Will you listen to the voiceless?
Will you stop and eat, and when friendships start,
will you share your faith with the faithless?

Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith
and believe it could be different?
Will you share your views using words of grace?
Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

³ Additional prayers by Tim Baker and Wayne Grewcock

Closing prayer

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.⁴

⁴ Additional prayers by Tim Baker and Wayne Grewcock