

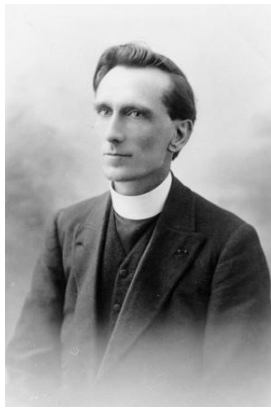
Good Morning  
Everyone,

What glorious weather we are enjoying and what a frustration to not be able to get out and about as we would love to. While the good news on the horizon is that restrictions are beginning to ease, I want to just reaffirm

how important it is that we follow the guidelines. We have been so fortunate thus far that only a few of our congregation have been impacted by Covid19 directly and I pray that's a story that continues. The Loss of life already has been tragic enough. Today is a significant day in the calendar of the Church's year, its Pentecost Sunday which could otherwise be referred to as the Birthday of the Christian Church. It's a time where we remind ourselves of how Jesus' disciples having been given the Great Commission of Matthew 28:20, "to go into the world and make disciples", were then told to "wait for Power from on High - the promised gift of the Holy Spirit and we read of how the Spirit came down in such a spectacular way recorded for us by Luke's account of the birth of the Church recorded in Acts 2. Our Reflection this morning will I hope help us see what bearing that great event then has for us today and I hope that in looking at these things we are able to be encouraged to know that God may not be finished with the National Church just yet, that He may be just prepping us and putting us through our training for the challenges and blessings that lie ahead, such challenges and blessings that may impact us individually as men and women of faith but also corporately as a congregation, and even dare we believe to impact our nation itself with a reawakening of an awareness of God's eternal presence and the opportunity for humanity to enjoy His eternal Presence. I hope this reflection is something that will be an encouragement to you and a reassurance for you for these days to come which may not be the normal we knew of old but be a whole new normal that we have to get used to as the nation of the UK begins to see its industry, its shops and restaurant and yes its churches be place where people can once again be together work together and enjoy the of each one together, As always, you remain in my prayers and hopefully I remain in yours.

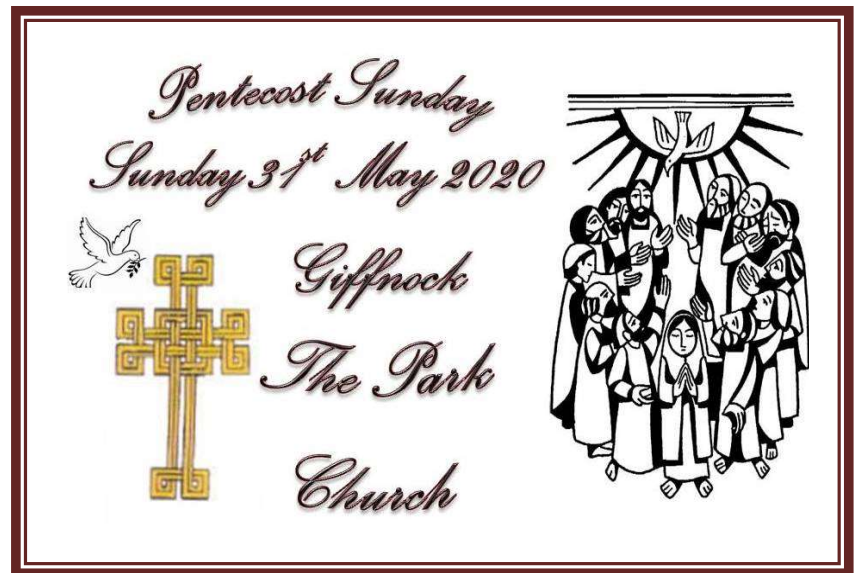
May you stay as the hymn writer writes "safe and free from all alarms"

*Calum D. Macdonald*



*“We tend to use prayer as a last resort, but God wants it to be our first line of defence. We pray when there's nothing else we can do, but God wants us to pray before we do anything at all.*

*Most of us would prefer, however, to spend our time doing something that will get immediate results. We don't want to wait for God to resolve matters in His good time because His idea of 'good time' is seldom in sync with ours.” — Oswald Chambers*



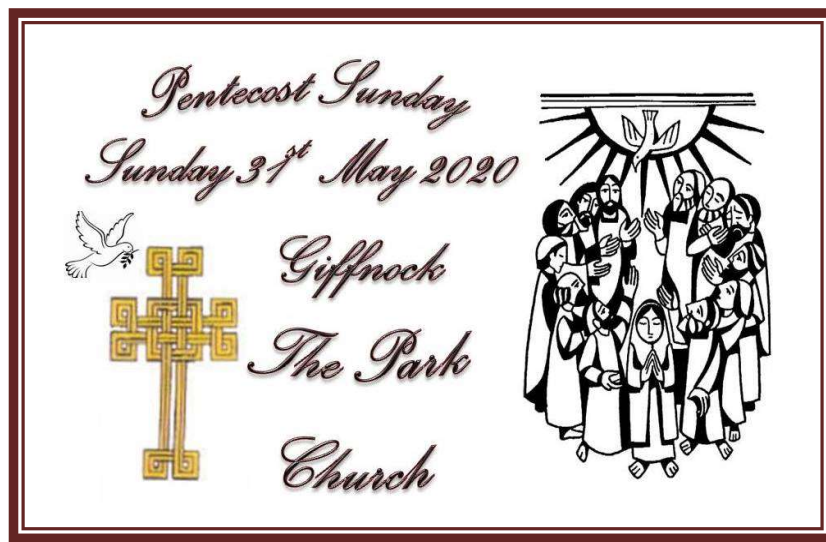
***Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.  
(Colossians 4: 2)***

Our Loving Father in Heaven you have bestowed upon your Church a precious gift, your very presence in the form of your Holy Spirit that you might breathe new life into us, bring new direction into our lives and power to effect and assist the work of your Church across the world. We thank you for the diversity of your church for the difference of theology, for the variety in style and context of worship. We thank you that there is more that unites us than keeps us apart and that it is your Holy Spirit that holds all things together.

Lord Jesus your victory of the Cross of Calvary and the empty tomb assures us that we no longer need to be a captive to fear of what the future may hold. Instead you call us to be messengers of your saving Love and Grace through Repentance and faith in Christ alone, so that we may be reconciled in you; through You our Saviour, the one who is our peace, our hope our joy, our strength.

Holy Spirit, you dwell within us, you inspire us, you lead us, you challenge us to be better in the service of the Kingdom, to be faithful to our Lord who was the ransom for a broken world. May we all with your help be able to live a life worthy of your calling, may we speak of our Saviour's love so affectionately and effectively that others see the relevance of trusting in Jesus. May we know your forgiveness for the moments of our failures and strength to push through the doubts we may have and a sense of assurance that is ours through Jesus. Most of all Gracious God, may we bring honour and glory to your name this day for Jesus Sake and in his name.

Amen



***Bible Reading: Acts 2:1-21***  
***(New International Version (NIV))***

***The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost***

***2 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues<sup>[a]</sup> as the Spirit enabled them.***

***<sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"***

***<sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."***

***Peter Addresses the Crowd***

***<sup>14</sup> Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose. **It's only nine in the morning!*****

***<sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:***

***<sup>17</sup> "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams.***

***<sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.***

***<sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke.***

***<sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood***



*before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.*

*<sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'*

## Sunday Reflection

It's only 9 o'clock  
in the morning

Many years ago as a young man when the story of my

Christian journey was relatively new, I read a book called 'Nine O'clock in the morning' by Benny Hinn who today is a well known Tele-evangelist in the United States today who you will often see on the various cable and satellite television channels. I found his book to be easy to read and the writer was very excited about telling everyone how God had moved the disciples then by this moment of Acts Chapter 2 and the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples. In his book he was saying that as with the disciples then we could simply be like them and have things happen to us in the same way it did for them. I have since learned of course that the way the Holy Spirit works is a bit more sophisticated and when you examine Benny Hinn's book, some of the things he said, you realise are somewhat overly simplistic at times. That being said the title of the book sums up the occasion of Acts 2 where we are able to see this remarkable event unfold.

There are a number of things I want to take from our reading of Acts 2: 1 - 21 today. Firstly we should note in relation to the disciples, what it was that people heard and saw and they then were able to do. Secondly there was the reaction of those to what they heard, say and did and thirdly there was the opportunity that Peter took for proclamation.

Let's reflect then on the each of these things. Pentecost is another one of these occasions, where God does the unexplainable. With Christmas it was the unexplainable of event of the arrival of God's son Jesus into the world. How could anyone be born of a virgin? Today we know that artificial insemination is a standard medical procedure to help couples conceive who for various medical reasons this may be a significant struggle or even an impossibility without what is now referred to as IVF. Way back then this was unheard of, yet God did the impossible. With Easter we know that this Jesus who we believe to be God's son was executed by Crucifixion and having died was buried. Yet the impossible then again happened, the tomb is empty and

Jesus has risen and the mystery of how this was accomplished remains other than to say that God again was able to see the impossible achieved.

In this third moment of God's direct intervention in the world, the moment of Pentecost which we traditionally celebrate some 6 weeks on from Jesus' death and resurrection sees remarkable things happening again. Firstly, those gathered there heard something that they could only describe as a rushing wind, (Acts 12: 2) something unseen which you will only hear blowing. When the wind and the rain is driving across the west of Scotland in a gale force, you will often see the direction the rain is being pushed but you don't actually see the wind that is doing it. That day of Pentecost Sunday they heard something they couldn't explain it except to say it was like a rushing wind.

The second thing people saw happening to the disciples was that there appeared to be something like tongues of fire resting on each of the disciples gathered. ( Acts 2: 3) An unsettling vision to be sure but what was the result of all this - those who were touched by fire and pushed by the rushing wind could do something completely unexpected, they could speak in the different languages of all those gathered round about. There were those from Parthia & Mede, Elamites were there as were Mesopotamians, Judeans and Cappadocians, many from Pontus and Asia, from Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and Libya, there were visitors from Rome; Cretans and Arabs, pretty much most of the known world then. Thirdly What was remarkable was not so much that they could speak in these different languages but what they were saying, - they were declaring "the wonders of God." (Acts 2:12). That's the observation of what is going on.

The second thing to note is how people reacted. (Acts 2: 12-13) Some were amazed and perplexed asking the question what does all this mean? Meanwhile others simply derided them and made fool of them as being drunk at best. I cannot help but think that people have made similar responses through the generations and centuries of the church's life and witness. Some have asked, what this means while others simply "take the mickey" as we would say today. People are no different today than they were then really.

The third thing to perhaps note is the opportunity it presented for Peter who would have by then been perceived to be a significant leader of this new group of people that were simply called the People of the Way before later in time they would become referred to as Christians in Antioch during the apostle Paul's early days of mission with Barnabas. Peter takes the opportunity of this remarkable moment of Pentecost to do that which the Church is Commissioned to do, to do what Jesus said they should, proclaim the glory and wonder of God in the love of our Father in Heaven, in the accomplishments of his Son Jesus and in the indwelling presence of his Spirit

to empower his disciples, to encourage them and to enable them to do far more than they ever could in their own strength even the impossible at times. His Word does tell us now that

"with God nothing is impossible" (Matt 19:26)

"That we can do all things through Christ who strengthens us"

(Philippians 4:13)

"It's not by might nor by power but by my Spirit', says the Lord"

(Zechariah 4:6)

We love the *Miracle of Christmas* and the *Glory of Easter* but let us also celebrate ***the Marvel of Pentecost*** as the Church celebrates that moment of its coming into being.

Stay safe this week and enjoy the glory of our summer - while it lasts at least.

*Calum D. Macdonald*



*Breathe into  
each one of us,  
Holy Spirit,  
That our  
thoughts may all  
be holy.*

*Move in us, Holy  
Spirit,  
That our words  
too, may be holy.*

*Attract in our  
hearts, Holy  
Spirit,  
That we may  
love only what is  
holy.*

*Strengthen us,  
Holy Spirit,  
That we may  
defend all that is*