



Good Morning,

As I write this letter I am also listening to our National Church's General Assembly as it seeks to carry out its annual meeting online this year. The Covid crisis is obviously still impacting how we operate and do things in and across the Church. Like so many of you who live in and around the local authority of East Renfrewshire, I was watching with interest to see how the latest Covid updates would impact and I was fully expecting to see our area return to Tier Three. I was delighted therefore with the news that we retain our Tier Two status despite the situation being one that shows a wee bit of concern.

It needs to be said that our concerns about whether we can visit a pub or not pales in comparison with the dilemmas of those living in some of the poorest nations, those living in the most troubled and violent lands and those of course that are struggling with a pandemic disaster in their nation that is out of control with their health care systems collapsing, costing the lives of Thousands.

In contrast our news footage is full of the debate of whether or not we get to go and enjoy a holiday in the Sun - truly a first world problem. Over and above all this we saw the distress caused by Lord Dyson's report on the BBC with a sense of righteous outrage from those directly impacted by it all as well as the outright hypocrisy of those in the news media condemning the BBC where many of these institutions have also behaved in underhand ways to bring about their glossy headlines. Perhaps we should be asking the question - How Would Jesus deals with these moments? I suspect his answer would be a twofold one. In dealing with the Media perhaps the wisdom of Jesus applies, *'I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore, be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. (Matt 10:16)*. That being said, when it comes to the distressing situations of others, the wise counsel of Jesus is also there for us to Follow, *"Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 2: 40)*

I hope as we look at these things we are reminded of the Blessing that is ours even in these Covid riddled days and that we be mindful of the needs of others both near and far and try where we can to minister to those whose needs are greater than ours.

Have a great Week
Calum D Macdonald



Church Flowers

The Flowers in Church this morning were kindly donated by Miss Jan Sneddon in fond memory of her Brother Jimmy



The Funeral of Mrs Chrissie Waddell

As an update of last week's announcement of the death of Chrissie Waddell, I can now inform you of the arrangements now in place for Chrissie's funeral service.

Friday 28th May 2021
12.45pm

Please continue to remember those in the family at this time in Prayer.

If you are intending to go to the service, please let the Minister know so that he can record your name and phone number for track and trace purposes for the crematorium.

Meeting of the Kirk Session By Zoom

(Wed 26th May @ 7.30pm)

If possible please, could all elders be available for a time together on the date above by zoom. As usual I will send an agenda along with invitation to join the video conference with the requisite codes

Many thanks
Calm D. Macdonald



To prevent congestion at the Door and thus maintain Social Distance Please give advanced notice of your intention to attend Church that Sunday. This is very important and easy to do. Simply contact Bert or Sandra Dickov on either 01413168143 or

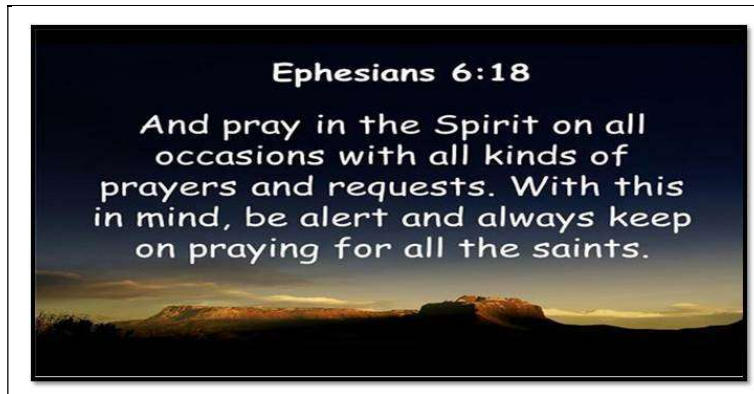
KNOCK KNOCK

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Wat



Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.

- MATTHEW 7:7



A Prayer for Pentecost

Our Loving Heavenly Father it is our privilege to be able to come before You and thank You for the surpassing greatness of Your power at work in us who believe. The Consequence of Pentecost means that you have come and now you dwell within us, we have Your mighty strength with which You raised Christ from the dead. You can strengthen us in our inner being, so that we can know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge and be filled with the very fullness of your Spirit. You have endowed us with such presence that you can make our weakness your strength that others may see that With You - nothing is impossible.

We thank You for our Saviour's Love and sacrifice. We thank you for the example He set and we thank you that in his departure for heaven was the promise of your Holy Spirit, to be our lead and our guide, to inspire us and to drive our motivation. Forgive us gracious God when we let other things get in the way, things or people that distract us from your call upon our lives. Forgive us when we no longer follow the Lord's Example and go our own way instead. Forgive us not because we deserve it but because Jesus asks for Grace and our faith rests in Him alone. As you forgive us may your Spirit be our guide always from this day forward. May we seek your face when unsure, may we learn from your Word when unclear, may we always follow the Sprit of God, unseen as the wind, knowing you always know better than we do. Hear us in Jesus' name we pray....

As we have thought about our own needs we would also think of the needs of others. We pray for all who are unreached people near and far today, tribes and nations, those who live in countries closed to the gospel or in places where there are no Christians. We pray that the Gospel is proclaimed and ask your blessing on all mission workers ready and willing to share the Gospel of Jesus. We pray for refugees and displaced people, for those who are listening to Christian radio stations secretly, for all those seeking to meet the living God wherever they are.

Appear to them in dreams and visions, we pray. Grant them your strength in listening to your Word, confront them in the testimonies of others who bear witness to Your love. Father, may this Pentecost see your Holy Spirit find entrance to many minds that are darkened by prejudice and closed by fear of others. Bring them clarity of vision and peace of mind as we pray for all who need you and all who serve you in Jesus' name ... Amen.



Acts 2:1-21

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

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

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. ⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. ⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? ⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? ⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” ¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?” ¹³ Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Peter Addresses the Crowd

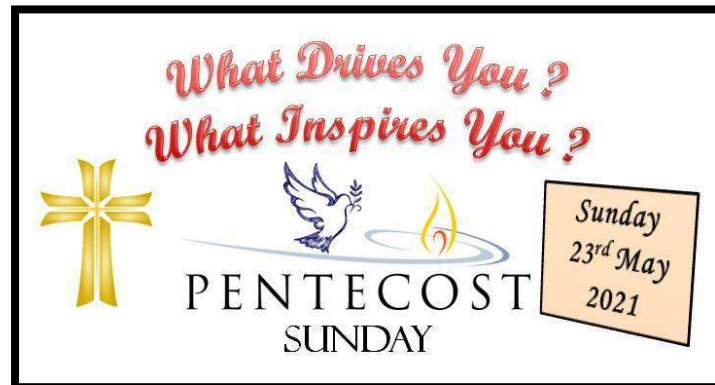
¹⁴ Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. ¹⁵ These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! ¹⁶ No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

¹⁷ “‘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.

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

¹⁹ I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. ²⁰ The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. ²¹ And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.



Here we are offering another Sunday Devotional. This Sunday is not just any Sunday though. It is Pentecost Sunday where we celebrate the promise of the Holy Spirit coming to pass as Jesus said it would. The Book of Acts is the second of two Volumes written by Luke, the first being his account of the early life and Ministry of Jesus culminating of course with the remarkable story of his Death and Resurrection. Luke's Gospel finishes unclear as to what happens next, Jesus has risen but what now? Wisely, Luke adds to his Gospel account this new account that we now know as 'the Acts of the Apostles'. Some have also defined this book in the New Testament as 'the Acts of the Holy Spirit'. However, we might seek to define it, we can certainly say this account of events that followed from Jesus' return to heaven highlights the birth of the Church and some of the Challenges these fledgling congregations faced and how they overcame them. We see some of the Key characters in the early Church rising to prominence and standing. Over and above that we begin to get a flavour of some of the problems facing the early church - some of which we see still today.

Luke 24: 49 concludes the story so far with Jesus telling the disciples to stay in Jerusalem, "I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." As Acts chapter one opens up, it leads with how the disciples do just that gathering in an upper room somewhere spending time in fellowship with one another and praying. They come to a decision that they need find someone to be a successor to Judas Iscariot and so the hunt is now on for who that person will be till after some soul searching and a shortlist of two, they cast lots to choose Matthias.

Chapter two sees them all gathered in one place when something remarkable happens and the disciples and all who were there (120 people in all) are confronted by what was described as the sound of a rushing wind and before they knew it they were all speaking in a whole variety of

languages from across the empire - 14 different lands and regions in all. In the Story of Acts Chapter 2 we can see 4 things happening here.



1, God's Spirit came in a way that No-one expected.

2, God's Spirit left folk Amazed, Bewildered, and Perplexed.

3, God's Spirit brought about signs and wonders, courage and conviction.

4, God's Spirit brought about a need for his disciples to spend more time devoted to Teaching, Fellowship & Communion, Prayer.

One of the things stands out for me in this moment is how the disciples were irrevocably changed. They would never be the same again, such was the magnitude of what took place that day.

The story of this shifts through a day that is part of a celebration familiar to most of the Jewish Faith. They had gathered for what had originally been the Pentecost celebration otherwise known as the Feast of Weeks.

(Pentecost being the Greek term for a celebration 50 days after the Passover) Many people would have been gathering in the temple celebrating the Feast of Weeks when the Apostle Peter and all those in the upper room where the Spirit fell from which they would find themselves able to converse in all these different languages. What made this even more unusual was that these were ordinarily uneducated folk by and large.

There are always folk who will see things from a cynical perspective. We often think that this is something peculiar to the 20th and 21st Century, but in reality, as with our times now, way back then there were those who were very cynical in their response to this outpouring of God's Spirit. They claimed, these men were just drunk and from this came one of the greatest proofs of Jesus' Resurrection in what follows in the second half of chapter 2 where Peter speaks to the cynics and all publicly in the Temple in what has been described as the First Great Sermon of the Disciples where he shows how this event changed this follower of Jesus, who ran away when his Master was arrested in Gethsemane, who denied knowing Jesus when accused of being one of his followers, who like the others disciples huddled in an upper room for fear of being discovered in the aftermath of Jesus' death but is now one

standing boldly in the very temple square where Jesus was tried and he declares, ³⁶ “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” (Acts 2: 36) This was controversial for two reasons, firstly those in the temple would have been appalled that Jesus was declared to be the promised Messiah, while secondly those who represented the authority of Rome would have been appalled that someone declared that “Jesus is Lord” when everyone would have been careful of using such a term because across the Roman Empire everyone knew that ‘Caesar was Lord’.

In this unusual event where a strange rushing wind has made people speak in all these various dialects and tongues of the Empire. The more remarkable thing is the conviction and courage of the disciples to stand up and speak out and face the consequences of their actions. At a time where it is less popular to be in church here in the UK will we allow the Spirit of God to fill us with that sense of conviction and courage and preparedness to declare like his disciples of old that, “We are His Witnesses!” ?

Have you ever been to something where you are left wondering what was going on? My first ever experience of Pentecostal Worship as a young man of 14yrs of age going to my cousin’s church left me very bewildered and perplexed. I did not know what was going on in that moment with all round about me speaking in tongues and offering Words of knowledge or Prophecy and shouting Hallelujah every now and then - I had no sense of amazement and perhaps a smidgeon of discomfort. It was not until years later while in a draughty Circus Tent that could seat 5000 people at a Spring Harvest Conference week in the Prestatyn Pontins Camp that I would stand not just amazed but in awe of God in that moment of worship where there seemed to be a tangible physical presence of God’s Spirit moving through the crowd. The cynics will say it was nothing of the sort save mass hypnosis. All these years later, I reject the cynical claim and stand by what I saw and what I felt. When God’s Spirit moves he does so in ways we don’t expect or at times understand and will leave us with that jumble of thoughts and emotions summed up being bewildered, perplexed but then amazed.

We know from the history of the church, from the New Testament and from individual testimony accounts that God can do great wonders. The only thing that seems to hold things back is ourselves with an unpreparedness on our part to act in faith at times. We might speak of how we have faith but sometimes it becomes a huge leap for us to act in faith. Now more than ever

before in 21st Century Scotland, we need to learn again to act in faith and trust the Spirit of God more. Someone once described the national church as an office where someone has opened the window and a "Rushing Wind" comes in blowing all the papers in neat files and stacks all over the room with the person behind the desk trying to prevent the wind from disrupting our neat piles. Maybe we need a wee bit of Chaos and dare I say that the silver lining of the Covid Pandemic might very well be that form the chaos and distress of such times God might move in the hearts and minds of the people of Scotland again as well as elsewhere across the world.

Finally let me say that every movement of God's Spirit has resulted in a sharpened focus on a life of Devotion and worship, where the fellowship and encouragement of our fellow believers enhances our lives as we enhance the lives of those round about us, where the role of Prayer becomes more central to the life of the believer and that of their brothers and sisters in the Lord. Our celebration of the moment of Pentecost so long ago is a timely reminder. The song writers of the 70's Jimmy and Carol Owens sums this up nicely,

He is here He is here,
He is moving among us,
He is here He is here,
As we gather in His name
He is here He is here,
And he wants to do a Wonder
He is here as we gather in his name

Have an enjoyable week

Calum

A Benediction for Pentecost

*As we enter a new week,
may we experience God's presence.
By an outpouring of His Holy Spirit
Across our minds, our thoughts
and the words of our lips,
Over our hearts our feelings and emotions
Impacting our compassion for others,
Through the work of our hands and our feet
as we fulfill God Call Upon us.
During this week,
May the Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ,
the Love of God, the Father
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with each one now and always;
Amen.*

(Sourced from the Presbyterian Church of Canada)