



“Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them.

O Lord, open our lips  
**and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Send your Holy Spirit upon us,  
**and clothe us with power from on high. Alleluia.**

Blessed are you, creator God,  
to you be praise and glory for ever.  
As your Spirit moved over the face of the waters bringing light and life to your creation,  
pour out your Spirit on us today  
that we may walk as children of light  
and by your grace reveal your presence.

Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**Blessed be God for ever.**

### **Acts 2:1-21** **The Coming of the Holy Spirit**

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. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

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

language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, “Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

‘In the last days it will be, God declares,  
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,  
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,  
and your young men shall see visions,  
and your old men shall dream dreams.  
Even upon my slaves, both men and women,  
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;  
and they shall prophesy.  
And I will show portents in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.  
The sun shall be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood,  
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.  
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

## **Pentecost**

At Pentecost, the birthday of the Church, the Holy Spirit is sent upon the Apostles and friends of Jesus. They are given the ability to speak in many different languages in order that they could tell everyone the Good News

### **Reflection**

It never ceases to amaze me how often my thinking is shaped by God’s presence. When Nikki asked me to give the address for Pentecost, it was well before Covid-19 impacted on our lives and worship. I was excited as this was a Benefice Service and, as Pentecost is known as the birthday of the church, I asked if we could have a Pentecost Party with a bring and share lunch. This was the plan.

Once the virus took hold and our churches were closed, I had to think again. As I began my research and looked into my plan, I realised that the Pentecost Party had been influenced by the pandemic and that here were potentially a great many words beginning with the letter ‘p’ to explore. Pentecost Party is itself an example of Alliteration and a plan is productive thinking!

I started to think of words beginning with ‘p’ that express Pentecost – I wonder how many you can think of? But, before I share those, do you know that there are ‘The 7 Ps in

Business/Marketing' (I didn't) – Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process and Physical. This "Seven P Formula" should be used to continually evaluate and re-evaluate business activities.

On further research, I found that there were many other 'Seven P Formulae' including some for the Coronavirus Pandemic – Plan, Prepare, Precaution, Publicise, Persist, Purify, Prudent.

So what would be your 'Seven P Formula' for Pentecost? Would you take examples from the formulae above or perhaps add others, Prayer, Presence (of God), Praise, Pressure, Peace, Profit, Power, Pay Back, Prophet, Peril, Perseverance, Pathway, Patience, Permission, Perfect, Passion, Promise, Personality, Purpose, Proclaim, Partners, Participate – I believe there are over 14,943 words beginning with p in word finder!

Mine would be Praise, Prayer, Peace, Perseverance, Power, Purpose and Promise and, of these, the Power of Pentecost would be the greatest.

Pentecost marks the end of the liturgical observance of Easter. It reminds us that the crucified and risen Lord has fulfilled His promise to send His Holy Spirit to be with His Church to the end of time. It is a time of joy, for the Spirit of Jesus fills the very ends of the earth with His power and the strength of His loving and guiding presence.

In real terms, Pentecost renews the people of God with a passion that enables them to witness to their faith and to the transformational power of God working in them. The spirit of fear and indifference, the dulling of the senses to the presence and majesty of the Father who sent His Son, are replaced by a new awareness of the love, peace and joy which reflect the Saviour Himself.

As people of God, we need to examine what this means for us. Overwhelmed at times by the current problems and pressures we are experiencing, the relaxation of lockdown, the return to school and work whilst, for some, the loss of employment and of a steady income haunts every economic sector. Yet, still we witness on a daily basis the devastation of Covid-19.

Pentecost opens us to a confidence that if we allow ourselves to be filled with the hope that the disciples felt when the Spirit descended on them, if we allow ourselves as individuals and as Church to be opened to the power and wonder of the love of God, no problem is insurmountable.

The problems will not disappear overnight but we cooperate with God working in and through us, so that solutions become clearer. The will to conquer the darkness is fuelled by the sure knowledge that God's love for us is life-changing and absolute.

We do not always see ourselves as having the power to 'purify God's people' and 'ignite cold hearts with a renewed passion for knowing God', but the necessary power for fulfilling God's plan is His Holy Spirit. The gospel must be verbally proclaimed for the power to come through.

"If our churches today want the *power* of Pentecost they must be faithful to the *proclamation* of Pentecost" (Daniel R. Mitchell, in 'Peter and the Power of Pentecost' - see further reading below)

So, will your 'Seven P Formula' for Pentecost be used to continually evaluate and re-evaluate your activities and like Peter, learn the Power of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit is poured upon you?

May you be blessed with the power of the Holy Spirit and go forward in the presence of God. Amen.

## **Worship Songs**

Spirit of the Living God

<https://youtu.be/GK-O5nfL1Mo>

Come Down O Love Divine

<https://youtu.be/6HPKL1wOVXk>

Welcome Holy Spirit

<https://youtu.be/ch-b1VktqQ>

## **Prayers**

The Spirit came and your Church was born,  
in wind and fire and words of power.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the energy and vision of your Spirit  
for those who are tiring in the current restraints of isolation and loneliness  
for those exhausted by the struggle with poverty and hunger.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the hope and comfort of your Spirit  
for those whose lives are overshadowed by illness or pain;  
for those whose lives are darkened by sorrow or bereavement.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the peace and joy of your Spirit  
for those living in the shadow of war and violence;  
for those eaten up by guilt and anxiety  
and whose Christian life has become distant and difficult.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the guidance and strength of your Spirit  
for those uncertain how to use their time, talents and gifts;  
for those tempted to do what is wrong.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

We ask for the love and courage of your Spirit  
for those reaching out to comfort the distressed;  
for those reaching out to others and for communities as our schools reopen this week.

Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

Loving God,  
We ask for the assurance of your Spirit  
to know your presence with us in our daily lives:  
in our relationships;  
in our work and service;  
in our worship;  
in our times of joy and pain.  
Holy Spirit: **Help Us.**

The Spirit came blowing fear aside,  
and in its place weak hearts were stronger.  
In Jesus' name: **AMEN**

*We take a moment to lift the prayers of our own hearts before God...*

*Joining all our prayers together we say the prayer our saviour taught us:*

**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 them that 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.**

**As we close our worship we pray**

Spirit of life  
**Fill our emptiness with your fullness**  
Spirit of power  
**Stir our hearts afresh**  
Spirit of love  
**Touch us, and through us, our neighbour**  
Spirit of Creativity  
**Enable and empower the gifts you have given**  
Spirit of Eternity  
**Draw us ever deeper into your Kingdom**



## Further Reading and activities

Mitchell, Daniel R., "Peter and the Power of Pentecost" (1985). Faculty Publications and Presentations. Paper 119. [http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lts\\_fac\\_pubs/119](http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lts_fac_pubs/119)

Listen to the story of Pentecost at [http:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfJfX-F06f4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfJfX-F06f4)

## Popcorn



Above are pictures of popcorn, a few small corn kernels: they are closed, tight, hard. You can fit them in a small space.

They may remind you of the first disciples: although they had witnessed the resurrection, encountered the risen Christ and seen first-hand the power of God, they remained small, frightened, unsure and (literally) dis-spirited.

If you have some popping corn, try this:

We place them in a small place, a small upper room (put them in the microwave) a room where they might re-enact a meal, a ritual of when Jesus was there.

To these small items, we add something powerful: the word of the Holy Spirit: a mighty wind (turn on the microwave) and we begin to see a transformation: we cannot see the Holy Spirit itself, but we can see the action it has on the disciples. (The corn begins to pop) An explosion of energy! A rapid expansion! Beyond the confines of the upper room and into the world, the disciples are no longer tight, hard, withdrawn, but open, fluffy, delightful!

Some are spread far and wide into the world (making a mess on the floor). It is a simple re-enactment – as the Holy Spirit brings Christ present in our midst, a living world of faith.

### **Bubbles**



A simple and fun way to help young children celebrate Pentecost is to give each child a small bottle of party bubbles and show them how to blow gently to create bubbles. Bubble prayers are 'breath' prayers you say when you are blowing bubbles and can illustrate the way our prayers make a beautiful offering to God. Or you could pass a pot of bubbles around the family. As each individual blows a bubble, they say a prayer, either silently or aloud.