

“Worldwide Hope”

We are very used to the idea of transmission - with appropriate ‘physical distancing’ to stop or limit the spread of Covid-19. We are also aware of the cost of that, of the affect it has on our lifestyles and communities. We want to connect, to engage with one another, to relate to one another. We yearn for a national and international, a worldwide ceasing of the spread of this virus. What a joy that will be when that time comes. We look forward with hope and longing.

This weekend we look back and we remember an event that happened about 2000 years ago. Jesus has returned back to His Father in heaven and the church has been promised by Jesus that there will come a time very soon where there will be a worldwide going out and a spreading of the love of Jesus.

Jesus said this: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”* (Acts 1:8)

And then it happened, ten days later. At an occasion we call Pentecost – which was at the time of a festival, when many nations of the church gathered: a real cosmopolitan gathering. It represented the world coming together. And God came on that gathering in a particular and unique way. Read about it in the Bible in Acts Chapter 2.

God is Trinity. God is a family of three persons - Father Son and Holy Spirit- who have always been together and always will be. At Pentecost God the Father and Son sent the Holy Spirit to come in a particular way upon the church. It was unique, a one off but it started a momentum that has never stopped.

And so we remember Pentecost, but Pentecost also means *we look forward* – not simply to the ceasing of Covid 19 but of what God is doing with and in our world. We live *now* in the light of Pentecost- every day!

The Holy Spirit came upon people from all over the world at Pentecost as a way of demonstrating all nations are to be united in Jesus, and also that the message of Jesus is to go to all nations.

Remember what Jesus had promised: Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

So many centuries ago some Christians spread the love of Jesus to Britain. The good news didn’t start in Britain but was spread here as followers of Jesus took on His command to go locally, regionally, internationally, worldwide - the ends of the Earth - and the gospel came to Britain.

Pentecost is about the church empowered by God the Spirit being united in love- and spreading the good news of Jesus. We want the spread of the virus to stop - but the spread of the gospel to do what it always does - to move out and change and improve lives.

God's love brings people together. And people and God together.

The Holy Spirit helps us to do this. He empowers us. He gives us the heart and strength to do it. The Holy Spirit is a kind faithful friend who travels with us - we can literally say 'God is with us'

So, remember the ministry of the Holy Spirit. He is God the Spirit with us to bless us, encourage us and enable us to reach out and love.

We don't need another Pentecost - *we need to live in the light of it* as a Spirit empowered people; as a Jesus focused people who help people from our own area and across the world to know about the good news of Jesus.

This virus will stop one day. It will not spread like it is indefinitely. But nothing can stop the spread of the gospel. Nothing can stop the spread of the good news of Jesus. And for that we should be very grateful.

AMEN