

19th May, 2024

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's

Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

When peace like a river attendeth
my way,
when sorrows like sea billows roll;
whatever my lot, thou hast taught
me to say,
"It is well, it is well with my soul."

Though Satan should buffet, though
trials should come,
let this blest assurance control:
that Christ has regarded my
helpless estate,
and has shed his own blood for my
soul.

It is well with my soul;
it is well, it is well with my soul.

My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious
thought!
my sin, not in part, but the whole,
is nailed to the cross, and I bear it
no more;
praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O
my soul!
It is well with my soul;
it is well, it is well with my soul.

O Lord, haste the day when my faith
shall be sight,
the clouds be rolled back as a scroll;
the trump shall resound and the
Lord shall descend;
even so, it is well with my soul.
It is well with my soul;
it is well, it is well with my soul.

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Context:

The disciples knew about the Holy Spirit, but in the past there were restrictions. The Holy Spirit, as Alpha reminds us, was for particular people, at a particular time, and in a particular place. The Holy Spirit is there at creation, and empowers particular people such as Bezalel with artistic skill, Samson with strength, Elijah with healing power, and Ezekiel with prophetic wisdom.

And this continues at the beginning of the New Testament. Here we see the Holy Spirit, bringing about the miraculously arrival of Jesus in Mary, and inspiring Elizabeth, mother of John the Baptist, who himself declared about Jesus, 'he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit!'

So the disciples knew about the Holy Spirit, but things were going to change.

The Holy Spirit is Powerful

The Holy Spirit is God! God is one. Indivisible and complete. And yet God is known to us in the three persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is somehow able to be wholly one, and yet also three – the Trinity. For me it's reassuring that this is impossible to grasp. Because, if I could grasp and comprehend God with my finite mind he would surely be too small to be God!

God's oneness and unity means that there is certainty with him, there's no committee meeting for decisions, God decides and is – there 'is' and there 'is not'. This certain, black and white, understanding of God is found in Islam. But God as just one can be impersonal and uncompassionate, an 'other' and distant. God as three, means God is not isolated, but a community. And this allows for love! God has opportunity for love within himself, without needing us, but he chooses to love us, and this is truly wonderful.

The Holy Spirit is central to creation, and central to life, as the breath of God (see Genesis 1:1-2, and Ezekiel 37:1-14). As we shall see the Holy Spirit empowers, equips and enables us.

The Holy Spirit is Personal

As Christians the Holy Spirit is God lives within us and a guarantee his presence – read Ephesians 1:13-14.

The Holy Spirit enables our transformation into the likeness of Jesus – read 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The Holy Spirit produces fruit in us – individually and as a church family – read Galatians 5:22-23. This fruit we cannot produce our own, we are not able to be good enough – but God can!

The Holy Spirit gives gifts of grace (charismatic means grace-gifts) to equip us individually and for the benefit of the whole people of God – read 1 Corinthians 12:4-11.

And the Holy Spirit is for us all – read Acts 2:38-39.

The Holy Spirit is Purposeful

Read again John 15:26-27. Jesus tells us the Holy Spirit will testify and enable us to testify to Jesus. The Holy Spirit is given to us, not for our own benefit but the benefit of the church, and the whole world.

Jesus tells us the in receiving the Holy Spirit that streams of living water will flow out from us (John 7:38-40). He is picking up on two Old Testament stories. The first from Exodus when God produced water from a rock to enable the thirsty Israelites to drink and live (Exodus 17:3-7). And the second from Ezekiel's prophecy about the coming of God's new age, when life-giving and healing water which will flow from the temple (Ezekiel 37:1-14).

The Holy Spirit is given to us to bring good news, blessing, and healing to the world.

And the Holy Spirit is Present now!

The Holy Spirit is for all, God is for all – we have to choose to connect or reject, and all we have to do is ask! Read Luke 11:13. And ask God for more of his Holy Spirit.

Pentecost Sunday: God, who as at this time taught the hearts of your faithful people by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit: grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort; through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer: *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: June 19th at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: June 19th at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: May 22nd & June 26th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday, TBA
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.pariahofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>