

St Martin of Tours  
Epsom

St Stephen on the Downs  
Langley Vale

The parish of  
St Martin of Tours  
with St Stephen-on-the-Downs

Weekly Newsletter  
Registered Charity Number: 1134149

## Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021 – Pentecost

Dear Friends,

Some refer to Pentecost as the birthday of the Church. The empowering of the disciples by the Holy Spirit for their mission as the new body of Christ on earth. It's an extraordinary growth story – starting on that day in Jerusalem, and currently including you and me. Against many odds the Church has survived and thrived where it has allowed the Spirit to be in it's heart. Without that 'breath', the body is just dry bones.

*Nick Parish*

### **THIS WEEK**

#### **Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May – Pentecost**

- 9.30am – Holy Communion at St Stephen's – led by David Candlin
- 10.00am – Holy Communion at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish
- 11.00am – APCM in Church details below
- 6.30pm – Choral Evensong in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish

#### **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May**

- 10.00am – Holy Communion, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish

### **FUTURE SERVICES**

#### **Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> – Trinity Sunday**

- 9.30am – Morning Prayer – led by Howard Bluett
- 10.00am – Holy Communion at St Martin's, in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish
- 6.30pm – Evening Prayer in Church and live streamed – led by Nick Parish

### **APCM TODAY AT 11.00AM**

The Annual meeting will be today at 11am, following the 10am service. We will livestream this so you can watch at home and participate in the meeting via zoom using the following link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85885706226?pwd=czdhdQ3J5bUYrUkxmVi9rRlZzSlVZZz09>

The APCM report is available to view on the website in the News section.

*Nick Parish*

## **DISCIPLESHIP /STUDY/ WORSHIP MEETINGS**

### **Retreats from the House of Prayer, June 2021.**

House of Prayer

35 Seymour Road

East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 0PB

**Tel: 020 8941 2313** Charitable Incorporated Organisation 1174120

### **Time Aside: Weekend Individually Guided Retreat.**

Fri, 11 Jun 2021, 7:00 pm - Sun, 13 Jun 2021, 4:00 pm

The House of Prayer

Led by the House of Prayer Team

This retreat provides an opportunity to step aside from the busyness of everyday life and spend time in quiet prayer and reflection. A retreat guide will be available for daily individual meetings to accompany you through the retreat. Above all, this retreat is a time of listening to God who is present in the experiences of prayer and daily living. There are two ways of participating in this retreat, from your own home or residentially at the House of Prayer. In both cases, all communal prayer meetings and spiritual direction will be online using the Zoom platform. If you wish to attend this retreat from the House of Prayer you will need to bring a laptop or device with you.

Arrive in time for supper at 7pm on Friday and leave at 4pm on Sunday.

Residential retreat cost: £180

Retreat from home cost: £60

### **St. Columba's Retreat House**

The Revd. Haydon Wilcox is running quiet days and evenings at St. Columba's Retreat House, Maybury Hill, Woking.

These events will support people as they return into the world from lockdown and will offer the opportunity to share, reflect, to be spiritually fed and gain encouragement. All Covid protocols will be practised to ensure a safe environment and are restricted to 16 people.

Remaining places: day events (10 am) 12th July; evening events (7 pm) 16th June and 28th September. Many events are now full and additional dates will be offered.

To receive details and make a booking please contact St. Columba's House on Tel. 01483 766 498 or email: [admin@stcolumbashouse.org.uk](mailto:admin@stcolumbashouse.org.uk)

## **STEWARDSHIP**

### **Giving to St Martin's and St Stephen on the Downs**

For general and stewardship giving you can give online giving via the Charities Aid Foundation.

Donations can be either a one-off donation or a regular donation using direct debit.

To make a donation either:

1. Click on the following link:

<https://cafdonate.cafonline.org/13377>

OR

2. Use your Smart Phone and Scan the QR Code below



There is also a "Donate" button on our website.

**Thank you for your continued giving directly and via online giving.**

## **OTHER NOTICES**

### **Audrey Simmons**

We were very sorry to hear of the death of Audrey Simmonds this week. She and her husband were regular members of the congregation until illness overtook them. Audrey was a very skilled calligraphist and did a memorable presentation in the 'Second Thoughts' series demonstrating her artistic skills. Francis had been the oldest person to abseil down the tower in a fund-raising effort for the bells when he was 87 years old. Our sympathy goes to Sue and Nigel at this time in their bereavement.

May Audrey and Francis together rest in peace and rise in glory. ***Adrian Esdaile***

### **Mission For May**

#### **HOME**

#### **Young Carers in Epsom and Ewell**

Young Carers, are often the forgotten people as they are not obvious in society. They can be anyone, from a very young age who supports someone in their own family in multiple roles. In their isolated situations they need support in order to cope.

**My Time for Young Carers** is a charity relying on enough volunteers to provide activities outside of the home, to mix with others and take part in fun activities. It is for young Carers between the ages of 7—16, who live locally. Their needs have increased especially in the Covid time.

***Jill Chapman***

#### **ABROAD**

The Barnabus fund works to provide hope and aid for the persecuted church from Christians, to Christians, through Christians. The main ministry of the Barnabus Fund is to send financial support to projects which help Christians who, as a consequence of their faith, suffer discrimination, oppression and persecution. In 2021 we as a church have contributed financially to the Christians in Tigray, Ethiopia.

***Meg Topley***

**Can you please hold these Mission areas in your Prayers – Thank you**

### **Adrian Esdaile**

On Trinity Sunday, 30<sup>th</sup> May, I am celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of my Ordination in Southwark Cathedral as a Deacon. After Curacies at St Peter's, St Helier and St Mary's Wimbledon, I was Vicar of Hackbridge before 21 years as Rector of Chipping Barnet. This year, I celebrate 20 years of ministry here at St Martin's and St Stephen's. Jean and I have thoroughly enjoyed our shared ministry in all these varied places.

At the 10am Parish Communion on Trinity Sunday Nick Parish is going to commission me for the next stage of my ministry. My legs do not give me the opportunity to process in Church or stand to take services, so what I will be doing is rather different. The commissioning will be for a ministry of Contemplative Prayer, of offering counsel and Spiritual Direction and of developing the Healing Ministry. All are welcome, of course, to the service in Church on Trinity Sunday, but it will also be livestreamed and recorded for those who cannot be present on the day or time – all that, as usual, through the St Martin's website. The restrictions will mean that all will be restrained this year – but perhaps next year we can make more of it at a Choral Evensong

## Save the date

From 13 - 27 June we plan to use our Church and Churchyard to provide a space for adults and children from the local area to find quiet, peace, new hope and maybe new faith too?

The event will be conducted in a COVID safe way, according to the guidelines in place at that time.

Information about the event will be shared with residents students and people who work in the Parish. More information about the event and opportunities for you to get involved will be shared in the coming weeks.

## Remember: Reflect: Restore

The past year has been immensely challenging for all of us and maybe it would be good to take some time out to think about what we have lost and gained, what we have learned and what we long for as we enter a time of recovery.

If you work, live or study in the local area or are just passing through. You are most welcome to come and enjoy the peace and quiet that our church building and church yard offer.

For two weeks from Sunday 13 June until Sunday 27 June 2021 our church building will be open and our church yard set out with opportunities for you to remember, reflect and restore.  
On Friday 18 & 25 June there will be a piano recital at 12:30.

All are welcome.

We wish you well as you recover and rediscover a sense of wellbeing.

Nick Parish

Vicar of St Martins.

<https://www.stmartinsepsom.org/> for more information

## Remember: Reflect: Restore Fortnight Help needed to promote this special event!

We are inviting people who live or work in Epsom to visit our church in the fortnight between 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June. Here they will find peace and calm – and space to reflect on their experiences during the pandemic. Can you help us let local people know? There are two tasks you can volunteer for:

1. To visit local shops, businesses and organisations to tell them about the event and drop off leaflets;
2. To carry out research online to find names and email addresses for those organisations we don't manage to reach in person

A lot of effort is going in to make this a really special event – so do please play your part and tell Epsom all about it! Can you let me know by Friday 21<sup>st</sup> May if you are able to help.

David Candlin

07723 849 477

[revcandlin@gmail.com](mailto:revcandlin@gmail.com)

## Remember - Reflect - Restore

As part of the fortnight (13th - 27th June) when church will be focusing on offering a space for reflection and restoration, I will be playing the church's beautiful grand piano for half an hour on both Friday 18th and Friday 25th June, at 12.30pm. I'd like to play music that reflects people's experiences and hopes. Please let me know if there is any (easy!) piece you would like me to play, or a picture you would like me to consider through improvisation. These musical times will be streamed/online, so do be aware of that when choosing pictures. If there are plenty of requests I may have to take a selection, but I'll include as many as I can. Best wishes.

**Helen Williams**

## Remember; Reflect; Restore 13 – 27 June 2021

The event is an opportunity to participate in various activities both in the church and churchyard. These activities are self-directed and are designed to be self-explanatory. However, if possible, it would be good to have members of the congregation available to welcome people to the church and engage them in conversation, maybe even invite them to leave a prayer request or to put them in touch with a member of the ministry team.

Ideally we need at least two people to cover each of the two hour slots on the rota below. If you are able to help then please contact Howard Bluett on 077 888 25319 or via email [howard.bluett@gmail.com](mailto:howard.bluett@gmail.com).

Visitors to the event will not be able to engage in the activities in the church whilst there are services or during the recital.

Date	9am -11am	11am – 1pm	1pm – 3pm	3pm-5pm
Sun. 13	Patronal Festival First Communions			
Mon 14				
Tue 15				
Wed 16				
Thu 17	9.00-10 : 10am : HC			
Fri 18		12.30 Recital		
Sat 19				
Sun 20	10am -11.15 Holy Communion	1130-1pm		
Mon 21				
Tue 22				
Wed 23				
Thu 24				
Fri 25		11 -12.30 12.30 Recital		
Sat 26				
Sun 27	10am -11.15 Holy Communion	1130-1pm		

## Historic Safeguarding Incidents

The Diocese of Guildford is holding a serious case review of historic safeguarding incidents regarding any office holders (ministers/ wardens/ staff) at St Martin's.

Should you have any information that you have not previously reported please contact me by email so that I can discuss with you and report as necessary.

Thank you. [vicar@stmartinsepsom.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmartinsepsom.org.uk)

## GARDEN PARTY

Now that restrictions are lifting a little the Events Team have managed to hold a couple of outdoor, socially distanced meetings. We are busy planning a few events for the rest of the year, all subject to whatever restrictions are in place at the time.

We would like you all to "Save the Date" – **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July** – for a **Garden Party** to be held at 12 Worple Road, Epsom. Watch this space for more details nearer the time.



*Events Team*

## Missing Tambourine & Percussion Box

A tambourine and percussion box can not be located in the Church. If you know where these are items have been placed, please contact the Parish Office.

## Epsom Medical Equipment Fund are organising:

1. Fund Raising Dinner at Topo Gigio, 196 Kingston Rd, Ewell, Epsom KT19 0SF on Wednesday, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 7pm.

Tickets are £25 each for a three course meal excluding drinks. Drinks are available at extra cost. There is an extensive menu which is available upon request as we need to order in advance of our visit. If you would like to join us, please let me know on 020 8337 8181 as soon as possible. We look forward to seeing you.

2. Antique Valuation Day in aid of Epsom Medical Equipment Fund on Thursday. 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 from 10am. to 3pm. at The Station Pub, Stoneleigh Broadway, Ewell, Surrey, KT17 2JA (next to Stoneleigh Railway Station)

We are in the process of organising this event. Start looking out those possibly valuable items. Sign up to our website [www.emef.org.uk](http://www.emef.org.uk) to keep in touch with what is going on.

## Latest message from Chris Short at Food Bank

Can you please help us this week, with any of the following?

- Rice pudding
- Long life sponge puddings
- Powdered milk
- UHT milk (Full Fat and Semi Skimmed only please)
- Microwave rice
- Sugar (500g packs please)
- Shaving foam
- Bars of soap
- Pasta or beans with meat
- Treats for children (chocolates, sweets, crisps etc)



You can donate at the usual supermarket points, or bring donations to our car park (please wear a mask);

Epsom & Ewell Foodbank

Generation Resource Centre

(Behind West Ewell Primary School)

Ruxley Lane, Ewell, KT19 0JG

Donation Drop Off Times: Monday to Friday 9am – 2pm

\* PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL DONATIONS ARE SEALED, IN DATE AND DO NOT CONTAIN ALCOHOL\*

Can't get to the shops? You could text to make a small donation, send us a supermarket delivery to the address above, or contact us about sponsoring some fresh fruit & veg!

You can help by texting 70450 to donate:

Text **FOODBANKGIFT2** to donate £2

Text **FOODBANKGIFT5** to donate £5

Text **FOODBANKGIFT15** to donate £15

Text **FOODBANKGIFT3** to donate £3

Text **FOODBANKGIFT10** to donate £10

Text **FOODBANKGIFT20** to donate £20

Kind regards, Chris Shortt

## CONTACT US

### *Parish Office:*

**Church House, Church Street, Epsom,**

**KT17 4PX Phone: 01372 722567**

**E-mail: [smartinsepsom@btconnect.com](mailto:smartinsepsom@btconnect.com)**

**Website: [www.stmartinsepsom.org](http://www.stmartinsepsom.org)**

**The Revd Nick Parish, Vicar – 01372 743336**

**Email: [vicar@stmartinsepsom.org](mailto:vicar@stmartinsepsom.org)**

**The Revd David Candlin – Curate - 07723 849 477**

**Email: [revcandlin@gmail.com](mailto:revcandlin@gmail.com)**

## COLLECT

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.

## FIRST READING

(Alternative readings)

*The reading from Acts must be read as either the First or Second Reading.*

Either **Acts 2:1-21**

*A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.*

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 their native language. 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.'"

Or **Ezekiel 37:1-14**

## PSALM Psalm 104:25-35. 37

**R** Send forth your Spirit, O Lord,  
and renew the face of the earth.

O Lord, how manifold are your works!  
in wisdom you have made them all;  
the earth is full of your creatures. **R**

Yonder is the great and wide sea  
with its living things too many to number,  
creatures both small and great.  
There move the ships,  
and there is that Leviathan,  
which you have made for the sport of it. **R**

All of them look to you  
to give them their food in due season.  
You give it to them, they gather it;  
you open your hand and they are filled  
with good things.  
You hide your face and they are terrified;  
you take away their breath  
and they die and return to their dust. **R**

You send forth your Spirit and they are  
created;  
and so you renew the face of the earth.  
May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;  
may the Lord rejoice in all his works.  
He looks at the earth and it trembles;  
he touches the mountains and they smoke. **R**

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live;  
I will praise my God while I have my being.  
May these words of mine please him;  
I will rejoice in the Lord.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
Alleluia! **R**

## SECOND READING

(Alternative readings)

Either **Romans 8:22-27**

*A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.*

We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen?

But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience. Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

Or **Acts 2:1-21**

## GOSPEL John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

*Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.*

Jesus spoke to his disciples: "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. I have said these things to you so that when their hour comes you may remember that I told you about them. I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

## POST COMMUNION

Faithful God,  
who fulfilled the promises of Easter  
by sending us your Holy Spirit  
and opening to every race and nation  
the way of life eternal:  
open our lips by your Spirit,  
that every tongue may tell of your glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

# Sunday Homily

## PENTECOST

23 MAY 2021

YEAR B

“When the Spirit of truth comes, he will  
guide you into all the truth.”

John 16:13

### Illustration

They say that football is almost a religion these days. It certainly has its dedicated followers, vast numbers of them. And there is an almost cathedral-like atmosphere in a huge stadium on the day of a big match. The impression becomes clearer still when the crowd sings “Abide with me”. Supporters identify strongly with “their” team, willing them on to glory with a fervour that puts some church congregations to shame.

On the pitch, the eleven players work as a team, putting into practice all the moves their coach has taught them. They have learned the rules of the game and, on the whole, they follow them; if only because they know the game will descend into chaos otherwise! And one person has the responsibility of ensuring that the rules are indeed followed, interpreted correctly in any given situation on the pitch, so that gifted players can produce a game worthy of them. That person is the referee.

### Gospel Teaching

In today’s Gospel reading, Jesus is preparing his team, his first eleven and the rest of the squad, for the game of their lives. The scene is the Last Supper, after Jesus has washed his disciples’ feet. Judas has already set off to betray him, so Jesus is left with eleven of “the Twelve”, and with those others whom John calls “the disciples”, the wider group of Jesus’ followers, men and women.

Although Jesus has trained his squad, coached them for the important fixture that lies ahead, although he has encouraged their talents and their dedication, he will not be with them on the pitch. His job is almost done. But he promises to send them a referee. He promises to send someone who will help them interpret what he has been teaching them, in any situation in which they might find themselves. Jesus is returning to the Father, but he will send the Spirit of truth to guide his followers.

At Pentecost, the Spirit descended upon all the disciples, just as Jesus had promised. In the vivid scene from Acts, Peter uses Joel’s prophecy to make sense of what he has seen: men and women, suddenly inspired to communicate with

people of all nations, to tell the world about God's mighty intervention in the destiny of human beings, through Jesus Christ. "Your sons and daughters shall prophesy," God had promised through Joel. Prophecy is not the foretelling of the future, but the interpretation of God's word in the present, for the present.

Referees are not always popular. Players do not always agree with their decisions. And in the world today, people still resist the Spirit. For the Spirit is not always a comfortable companion. He comes to jolt us out of our complacency, to challenge the world, to search our hearts. Most of all, he comes to point us once more to Jesus, to glorify him and remind us of his teaching.

## **Application**

The Spirit is still moving in the Church today as the Gospel is interpreted for a third millennium. We are faced with many new situations, undreamed of in first-century Palestine: economic, social and ethical. There are dilemmas today for which no easy answers can be found in our study of scripture. We all know of arguments in which the Bible is cited by both sides, with equal conviction. We need continually to ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in our worship, in church meetings and in our daily lives. We need to cast aside our prejudices and presuppositions and listen to the Spirit of truth, who reminds us of the teachings of Jesus and encourages us to apply them.

Like the referee interpreting the rules of the game in specific situations, the Spirit will show us how those commandments of Jesus can be applied: love God with all your heart, and love your neighbour as yourself. A good referee allows a game to flow, stepping in only when there is conflict, and reminding players of the rules. In that way, he encourages them to use to the full the skills their coach has taught them, which in turn brings credit to the coach. If we listen to the Spirit, we can bring credit to our Teacher. We can testify on Jesus' behalf, and play the game he would want us to play.

**MONDAY 24 MAY****Ecclesiasticus 17:24-29***or James 3:13-end***Psalm 32:1-8***or 19:7-end***Mark 10:17-27****TUESDAY 25 MAY****Ecclesiasticus 35:1-12***or James 4:1-10***Psalm 50:1-6***or 55:7-9. 24***Mark 10:28-31****WEDNESDAY 26 MAY****Ecclesiasticus 36:1-2.****4-5. 10-17** *or***James 4:13-end****Psalm 79:8-9. 12. 14***or 49:1-2. 5-10***Mark 10:32-45****THURSDAY 27 MAY****Ecclesiasticus 42:15-****end** *or James 5:1-6***Psalm 33:1-9***or 49:12-20***Mark 10:46-end****FRIDAY 28 MAY****Ecclesiasticus 44:1.****9-13** *or James 5:9-12***Psalm 149:1-5***or 103:1-4. 8-13***Mark 11:11-26****SATURDAY 29 MAY****Ecclesiasticus****51:12b-20a***or James 5:13-end***Psalm 19:7-end***or 141:1-4***Mark 11:27-end**

# REFLECTION

**T**here are important lessons to be learned from this week's Gospel readings.

To belong in God's eternal life we have to be prepared to leave behind us all the things

we cling on to. It might be wealth: a big house and an expensive car, a well-filled bank account and high-earning investments. Or perhaps some people and relationships are holding us back from a whole-hearted commitment to following Jesus.

Perhaps we long for grateful recognition for all we do for God and the Church and for a high status among the powerful and influential ecclesiastical leaders.

If these things matter to us we probably won't want to court danger by causing chaos in the Temple and enraging the religious authorities. We'd probably prefer not to stand up to those authorities when they challenge us.

But if we do genuinely want to enter into God's kingdom we will, with humility, serve our brothers and sisters, putting them before ourselves. We will kneel before Jesus and ask him to help us see clearly the way ahead. We will forgive even the person who has wronged us the most but we will stand up to bullies and tricksters and believe that God can move mountains.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, in your compassion and mercy, reveal to us whatever holds us back from a deeper understanding of what it means to be your disciple and how to live in your eternal kingdom, where perfect love reigns.



## PART IV – MUSIC IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Love plainchant. For me, its greatest virtue is its malleability. It drapes over the words and moulds to their shape, free from a metrical framework, and it has a character which, perhaps because of its association with the early Church, seems appropriate and dignified for liturgy.

But the way we communicate the Gospel has always got to be relevant for its cultural context. In Isaiah 55:11, God says, “so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it”. This will surely happen only if the people hear it in the first place. The Gospel has to be inculturated – brought within the culture – in order to take root there. If we speak a language that nobody understands, or use references and images nobody has heard of or can relate to, what we are saying can become swallowed up in cultural differences. The Incarnation itself was God becoming inculturated, you might say. Coming to earth to live as one of us was the only way in which we were going to hear the good news.

In *The Message*, Eugene Peterson’s paraphrase of the Bible, he renders John 1:14 as: “The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood.” The same is true for our liturgy and our music. It needs to be of our neighbourhood. Is this style of music natural for people of this demographic – this age, this nationality, this region – to sing or play? How do we source most of our music? Are we using only one hymn book, perhaps the same one we were using twenty years ago? If so, are we avoiding a conversation between our faith and the world today? Being connected and anchored in our past is important culturally, spiritually and theologically. But if we only ever sing music which was written in a different time or culture, we risk becoming a liturgical and musical museum rather than a living, breathing Church.

# LIVE the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU  
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by  
Caroline Hodgson  
and  
Heather Smith



Pentecost

Monday 24 May to  
Saturday 29 May  
2021

WEEK



# The flowering of new life

Jeni Parsons *reflects on* Ezekiel 37:1-14

**H**ow strange to have a reading about a valley of people so long dead that nothing remains but their dried-up bones, on a day like this, when the celebration is of the life-giving Spirit of God. This vision comes from six hundred years before Easter Day. In these dry bones all hope is gone. There is no life and there is no future. This was the situation for the exiles, in captivity and away from their home and land, their food and their language, their customs and their God, so they thought. But Ezekiel prophesies otherwise to them in their despair. The word of the Lord is not to be denied, the word of the Lord is powerful and God calls this

lost community “my people” and will not let them go.

So at Pentecost there is a renewed expectation from God that, though the Church can seem dried up, though we as individuals of faith can seem dried up and lost, God will not let us go. God is in the resurrection business!

This re-creation, not so much as individuals but as a people, encompasses everyone wherever they’re from, whatever language they speak and whether or not they expect the blessing. Resurrection isn’t the end point but a new start. Resurrection doesn’t ask politely and wait till we’re ready, so look out! 🌸

**God of resurrection life, take our old dry bones and breathe new life into us, our institutions, our expectations, our hopes and plans. Take and remake us so that others can know that you will not let them fall. Amen.**

## Fruits of the Spirit

– a meditation on Galatians 5:22-23

*The almond represents patience*

by Caroline Hodgson

*“The word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Jeremiah, what do you see?’ And I said, ‘I see a branch of an almond tree.’ Then the Lord said to me, ‘You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it’” (Jeremiah 1:11-12).*

The almond was known as the watchful tree, because it was the first tree to flower – the earliest sign of spring.

Patience is not a very fashionable quality in our fast-paced world of goals and deadlines. “Most

men pursue pleasure with such breathless haste that they hurry past it,” wrote Søren Kierkegaard. And it’s well worth rediscovering the art of slowing down. Growing flowers, plants or herbs from seed is a good way to learn patience, because you can’t hurry the seasons but must wait for nature to do its work.

The lesson is that the key to patience is faith. “Strengthen your patience with understanding,” wrote St Peter Damian, “and look forward serenely to the joy that comes after sadness.” And indeed, after the long winter, the almond blossoms. 🌸

“When you strip it of everything else, Pentecost stands for power and life. That’s what came into the Church when the Holy Spirit came down on the day of Pentecost.”

David Wilkerson (1931-2011), *The Cross and the Switchblade*

## Walking with Poppy What’s best

by Gillian Cooper

Poppy has recently been diagnosed with diabetes. She is coping well with the treatment regime, but there is one aspect of it that particularly displeases her – she is no longer allowed treats between meals. Our walks have taken on a new ritual: Poppy trots along, or greets

another dog, and then comes for her reward. When it doesn’t materialise, because clearly I have forgotten the rules, she nudges my leg hard with her nose. Eventually she settles for a pat on the head, with the kind of sigh that expresses how she feels about my inadequacy.

We too do not always understand what is best for us. We are inclined to think God is not giving us our due reward. It is natural to think that, because in some respects our understanding is as limited as Poppy’s. But it is good also to remind ourselves from time to time that God really does know best. 🌸



Sunday 23 May 2021  
John 15:26-27; 16:12-15  
Pentecost

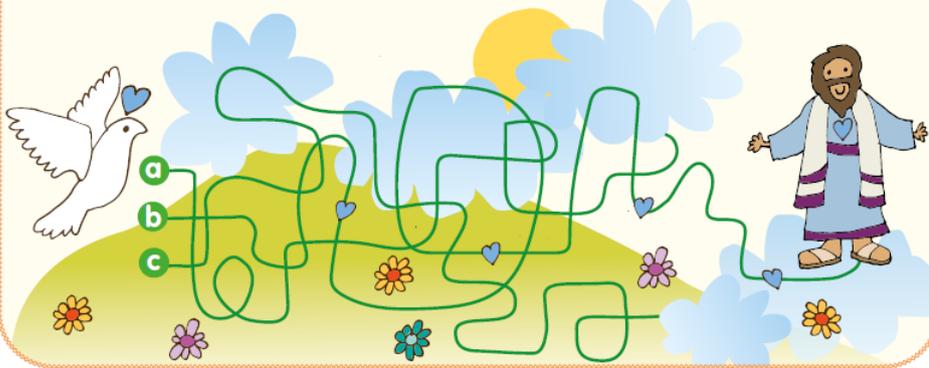
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# IN THE GOSPEL TODAY

Jesus tells his friends that a special helper will come, called the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will be their teacher and will speak to them just as Jesus did when he was alive and with them. The Holy Spirit will show the disciples what they must do and what they must say in Jesus' name.

## YOU ARE NOT ALONE

The Holy Spirit helps us every day.  
Let the Holy Spirit guide you to Jesus on the correct path.



### ★ God's love

The Holy Spirit shows us how much God the Father loves us. God loves you more than you could ever imagine.

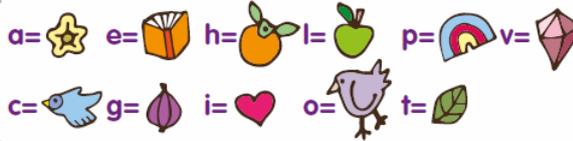


Draw a picture under the umbrella of God's love, all the people who love you.

### Spirit of truth

Jesus says the Holy Spirit is the **Spirit of Truth**.

Can you crack the code to discover the truth about Jesus?



### Pass it on!

God the Father sent us the Holy Spirit to teach the world about Jesus. Can you spot the disciples in the crowds sharing the message of Jesus by speaking or helping? What are some of the different things they are doing?



The Holy Spirit inspired the disciples to learn more and teach others.

### A PRAYER TO SAY

Dear Jesus, send us your Spirit to teach, guide and help us. Amen.