

Pews News

United Benefice of Shenstone & Stonnall



Sunday 23rd May 2021 Pentecost

The Lord be with you

Today we are celebrating Pentecost and all that means to us as a Church.

It is in effect the Church's birthday so Happy Birthday to you all.

It's a good time of the year on the church's birthday to welcome our new PCCs and Church Wardens who were nominated and elected at our recently held APCMs.

We have a vacancy for a Church Warden at St John the Baptist Church, if you feel called to fulfil this role, please do give me a call.

Rev Liz

01543 480286

Collect for Sunday 23rd May

Holy Spirit, sent by the Father,
ignite in us your holy fire;
strengthen your children with the gift of faith,
revive your Church with the breath of love,
and renew the face of the earth,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

May Services

St John the Baptist, Shenstone

Sunday 23 rd May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Liz
Sunday 30 th May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Liz and Ray Chamberlain

St Peter's Church Stonnall

Sunday 23 rd May	10.45 am	Morning Worship led by Patsy Toulouse
Sunday 30 th May	10.45 am	Communion service led by Rev Graham and Rev John A

These dates and times are subject to change at short notice should government guidance change. If that should be the case every effort will be made to communicate changes to you as quickly as possible.

PCC, Deanery Synod Members and Church Warden – St John the Baptist

The PCC is the group that manages the day to day running of the church. There are three posts that are coming vacant.

The Deanery Synod is the group that is involved in the running of the Lichfield Deanery, there is one vacant post.

A Church Warden is appointed by the PCC to be the Bishops' Officer and assists the Incumbent in the day to day running of the church. Bill Whitney's term of office has ended and so we need to appoint a new warden. Miranda Bonnielauri has been re-elected as Church Warden, leaving a vacancy for a Church Warden

If any of these roles are something you would like to know more about, then please speak with Rev Liz.

Communion in church

We are really happy to be able to celebrate Communion once more. Communion will be in 'one kind' only, so that means only wafers will be distributed. This is to comply with Church of England instructions still in place. Masks must be worn inside church, singing of hymns is not yet permitted and social distancing restrictions should be complied with. Please be aware that Stage 2 restrictions are still in place until 21st June.

Our Prayers

- We pray for all our Government, our Bishops and Clergy.
- We thank you for the Queen and the Royal Family.
- We pray for safety for all as we prepare to enter the next stage of the roadmap out of lockdown.
- We thank you Lord for all those who are assisting with recording and distributing of recorded services.
- We hold in prayer countries and areas where there is turmoil; we think of India Mexico, Myanmar and Jerusalem.
- We pray for the roll out of the vaccine and all who are involved in the administration of this. Thank you for large venues such as the cathedral being made available for this.
- We pray for all those mourning. We think of the family of Joan Norton and the family of George Cooper, give them peace and comfort as they arrange the upcoming funeral services.
- We pray for all those known to us in need of the Lord's comfort and strength; we particularly pray for Linda Jenkins's nephew and his family, Jill and Paul Harris, Carol and Ian law, Graham and Margaret Birt and their family.
- We have some weddings taking place this year that were postponed from last year. Please pray for Stephen and Susan as they prepare for their wedding in June, at St Johns Church.

Rev Graham Priesting Service

Rev Graham will be Priested 23rd June 2021 at St Matthews Church, Walsall. Rev Graham has not been told yet if guests can attend this service, but as soon as this is known it will be announced.

There will be a joint Communion Service 27th June, at St John the Baptist Church starting at 10.45 am (there won't be a service at St Peter's on that day). After the service you are welcome to bring a picnic lunch and we will gather together on the Glebe land or in the church hall if the weather is inclement. Rev Graham will be presiding over Communion for the first time so please do join us if you are able. More details to follow.

Songs for Sunday – There must be more than this, Spirit of the Living God.

Bible Readings for Sunday:

Acts 2:1-21

The Coming of the Holy Spirit

2 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 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. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. 6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? 9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia,

Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from

Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” 13 But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Peter Addresses the Crowd

14 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. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o’clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 ‘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.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord’s great and glorious day.

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.’

John 15:26-27, 16.4b-15.

26 “When the Advocate[a] 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. 27 You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

The Work of the Spirit

“I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. 5 But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 But because I have said these things to

you, sorrow has filled your hearts. 7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate[a] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about[b] sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because they do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; 11 about judgment, because the ruler of this world has been condemned.

12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13 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. 14 He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15 All that the Father has is mine. For this reason, I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

Thoughts for today by Rev Liz Chamberlain

Have you got a favourite TV program? I'm really enjoying a highly intellectual, thought provoking series at the moment called 'I can see your voice'. That's the catch phrase that is shouted out. If anyone isn't familiar it works on the premise that 'you never can tell'. It's where contestants try to identify the 'good' singer from a group of 6, on looks alone, if they do they win £10 000, if they don't the artist wins £10 000, not all are good, but you can never tell just by looking at someone can you. Those contestants and the artist must all be feeling the same, challenged, perhaps scared, hopeful, nervous. There's so much riding on it.

Let's wind back 2000 years, another bunch of people who were judged by what they looked like they might be. These people, the followers of Jesus, were in a challenging and scary situation, even though they'd experienced the power of God in the resurrection and witnessed Jesus' ascension. On the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after the Passover and Jesus' resurrection they were once more gathered waiting for something to happen, would it be good or would it be bad. Whichever, much like the TV show, it would be surprising and dramatic.

The power of God the Holy Spirit, as fire and hurricane touches everyone present and releases in them a talent to speak the languages of the world as it was then. These amateurs, who were usually mocked for local accents were now gifted enough to communicate with people from every part of the Roman Empire so that God's love could be broadened to include all people. Their newfound talent, their voice now had a purpose, to reach out to everyone everywhere.

Jesus promised his disciples that he would send this power, his advocate, who would witness to the truth, his counsellor who would go before and work alongside them, a special helper to lead people to the truth. Look at Peter on the day of Pentecost, Peter who always got things wrong, who denied Christ and ran away, look at him confident, courageous standing there and addressing the crowds, quoting scripture and the gospel so powerfully that 3000 people were converted on that day. Peter is a true witness but not in his own strength he is using the power of the Holy Spirit to help him do things he didn't realise he could.

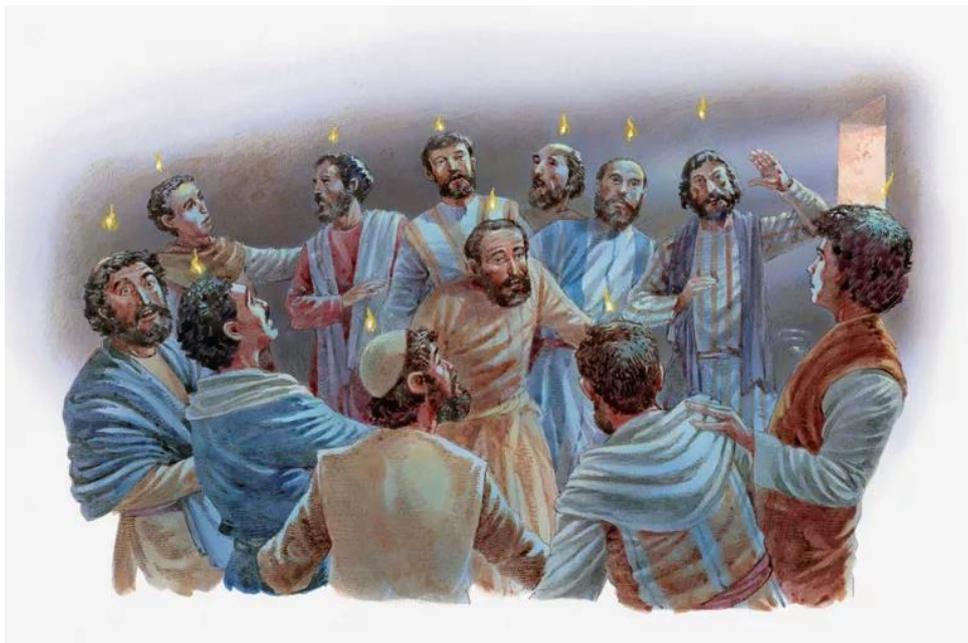
How are we going to celebrate Pentecost then? Us a motley crew of amateurs who might not look like we would amount to anything. The good news is God works through amateurs. I was given a tea mug as a gift some time ago, while I was trying to work out if God was calling me to ordination. The mug has printed on it 'Never be afraid to try something new. Remember amateurs built the ark, professionals built

the Titanic'. We all sometimes feel a little shaky about our ability don't we, perhaps that doesn't apply to the singers in that TV program. The Holy Spirit can come to each and everyone of us in a different way. We may have a dramatic experience of God to share with others, because the Holy Spirit feels like a rushing wind and flames of fire. The Holy Spirit though is also a comforter and counsellor so can bring peace, reconciliation, wholeness, and healing. The Holy Spirit may be quiet and deep-down nourishing us and turning us to a place of truth.

We all receive the gift of Holy Spirit at our baptism and this gift grows as we grow deeper with God, it enhances us, enables us to be all that God intended us to be and often takes us to new places within ourselves, our

church and our lives. We may need to take on new tasks that stretch us, we may need to change our behaviour or give more time to our relationships. Where and when the spirit is at work, we will see barriers broken down, prejudices challenged, fears and anxieties relived. When we are Spirit filled people, we are fully committed to being with God and becoming who God is calling us to be, the church isn't content with being cosy, but takes risks and is outward looking. The Holy Spirit is given to each of us so that we can be sent out, into our communities, workplaces, families. We are to speak the truth of Jesus in a language that everyone can understand. The bunch of amateurs in Jerusalem two thousand years ago took the world by storm and built a Christian Church. We are their descendants, today's bunch of amateurs, let's be the ones who make a difference. Let's see your voices.

Amen.



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