

## Day of Pentecost – Year C

**Sunday 8 June 2025**

The Faith Action Programme would like to thank Rev Trish Archibald, Assistant Minister at Stirling North Parish Church, along with Faith Action staff members, Rev Ruth Kennedy, Digital Ministries Advisor, Dr Murdo Macdonald, Policy Officer, Society, Religion & Technology (SRT), Phill Mellstrom, Worship Development Worker and Rob Rawson, Mission Development Worker, for their thoughts on Pentecost Sunday.

Weekly Worship, based on the Revised Common Lectionary, is for everyone – in any capacity – who is involved in creating and leading worship.

It provides liturgical material that can be used for worship in all settings. Our writers are asked to share their approaches to creating and delivering this material to equip leaders with a greater confidence and ability to reflect on their own worship practice and experience and encourage them to consider how this material might be adapted for their own context.

We would encourage continual reflection on the changing patterns of worship and spiritual practice that are emerging from disruption and how this might help identify pathways towards development and worship renewal.

We may not all be gathered in the same building, but at this time, when we need each other so much, we are invited to worship together, from where we are – knowing that God can hear us all and can blend even distant voices into one song of worship.

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acts 2:1-21 .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Genesis 11:1-9.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Psalm 104:24-34, 35b .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Romans 8:14-17 .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>John 14:8-17, 25-27 .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Sermon ideas .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Prayers .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Musical suggestions .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Reflecting on our worship practice .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Useful links .....</b>	<b>18</b>

## Introduction

The Weekly Worship material for 8<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June top and tail what was traditionally, the SRT week of prayer. While this particular week of prayer has been moved to March it will, we hope in 2025, see an 'AI and Faith' conference exploring the influence of AI on faith and worship practice. The writers have used the lens of AI and Faith in reflecting on the passages of scripture, and exploring how this most contemporary of contexts is fertile ground for considering:

- how we understand and live out our faith in a world where AI dominates our online spaces,
- how the wider issues of digital culture impact our belief and our faith,
- how we understand concepts of truth and reality.

Sometimes, we might be concerned of preaching repetition at specific dates and themes in the Church's calendar. Like Christmas and Easter focus us on Jesus, Pentecost draws our attention to the Holy Spirit. But just as Jesus isn't just for Christmas or Easter, the Holy Spirit is for every day and week, too. I love Pentecost for the opportunity to indulge in and celebrate the ministry of the Holy Spirit, where there is permission to consider and explore the unusual, supernatural aspects of our faith, perhaps even an increased expectancy and receptivity in the Church. As we all seek to attain the whole measure of the fullness of Christ, it is good for us to consider the fullness of the Godhead and not just gloss over this person of the Trinity.

In our present season of church life, we seek out richer worship, areas of maturing faith in the Body, culturally relevant mission and discipleship, and new worshipping communities. Therefore, deepening our awareness and knowledge of the Holy Spirit can only bring blessing, help, and growth.

Key to my preparation is time with the Holy Spirit: listening, asking, responding to gain illumination and prophetic revelation to preach from, and to personally live out. Creating an atmosphere of worship is foundational for fellowship with the Holy Spirit, so often it is in this slowed-down space we hear and know the still, small voice, that gentle whisper, to guide our service.

On this Pentecost Sunday, we celebrate and focus on God the Holy Spirit. We give thanks for the presence, power and creativity of the Holy Spirit. The psalm (a wisdom psalm) is full to the brim with praise for God through creation and helps us focus on the creative power of God the Holy Spirit, through thinking of God as our creator and sustainer. The psalmist

takes intentional time to ponder. This is a timely challenge for us, as we live in a culture of haste. It's a challenge to slow down and smell the coffee and feel the rain on our faces! It's also a challenge to notice God, in and through what God has created. There is evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit all around us and the psalm reminds us that the Holy Spirit loves to create, to do new things and attend to details. It reflects the creation story of Genesis 1.

This power also links in with Romans 8: through the work of Gods power in adoption- not anything that we have done- we have been made children of God. And as Paul points out, that logically means that we are "heirs of God, co- heirs with Christ". So, the passages point to different examples of the works of Gods power- in creation, in spectacular miracles, and in our lives.

The passage from John 14 makes it even more personal: Jesus makes it clear that doing the works of God is something that is the responsibility of all who follow him (John 14: 12). But He also reminds us in the latter part of the passage that we don't do this in our own strength- but in the power of the Holy Spirit.

### [Acts 2:1-21](#)

It's very easy to be distracted by all the spectacular things that are going on all around – the wind, flame and the speaking in tongues, which are often the focus when looking at this passage – can be challenging to communicate.

In verse 2 we read, "there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind" and in verse 3, "tongues, as of fire". This is a place where wind meets fire. D. Peterson writes about wind being an emblem for the spirit or creative breath of God and is a sign that God is about to accomplish a mighty work of renewal. Peterson continues that fire is also a symbol of God's presence, power, and holiness. This house, a house of people of faith, becomes the receptacle of the holy power of God for mighty renewal.

All the people in Jerusalem were astounded that they were able to understand – in their own language – what the disciples were saying. The struggle to understand what the locals are trying to say to us is, after all, one of the main challenges of international travel! However, we need to be asking *what* it was that they were listening to. It wasn't just some random or incoherent phrase, as you might learn on 'Duolingo'. What they heard being proclaimed was the message of God's works of power.

I was curious about aspects of community and individuality: “all together in one place”, “entire house”, “all of them were filled . . .began to speak. . .”, “every nation under heaven”, “all were amazed and perplexed”, “standing with the eleven ... addressed them”, “all flesh”, “everyone who calls”. In this dramatic heavenly event, with an emphasis on unity, there is a glimpse of how God looks at the people of earth in this new covenant era. The Holy Spirit is for all who are saved, who call on the name of the Lord. The Holy Spirit brings the fire and wind of God to everyone – not just ministers or elders! In this communal experience, every individual is given ability that is beyond human reasoning.

We can dwell on the languages spoken; whether they be earthly languages, as here, or heavenly tongues (‘glossolalia’), as Paul refers to Romans 8:26 and 1 Corinthians 14. But what if we also dwell on the effects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit which point to Jesus? In verse 11 people heard about God’s deeds of power. F.F. Bruce suggests hearing, ‘the praises of God in all the tongues of the dispersion being uttered by Galileans of all people, was nothing less than a reversal of the curse of Babel.’

In verses 14-16, Peter explains what God is doing, so that in the excitement, amazement and sneering of the fulfilment of prophecy, there is understanding and teaching. It is good for us to teach about the work of the Holy Spirit and of the gifts and abilities the Spirit gives to us.

### [Genesis 11:1-9](#)

This story is one of the earliest uses of technology in scripture and it is concerning that it is seen to be dishonouring God. This is not a condemnation of technology and should not be used as a generalised snub of anything being developed, or anything scientific, being in any way at odds with faith, but rather we should note the culture and context it was created in and what it is created for. Indeed, God does not physically destroy the tower, instead scattering and diversifying the people and their language and culture – not a condemnation of the building, but a response to the motives behind it. Interestingly, we have the phrase ‘make a name for ourselves’ as the motive for building such a technological wonder, but as we see throughout many stories in Genesis, God is the ‘Namer’ as well as the Maker.

This is an intriguing story, which depending on how you look at it, can be seen as a blessing, or a curse. The people did not want to be scattered; they wanted uniformity, but God loves diversity, and this is a powerful demonstration of God’s beautiful use of dissonance and difference to bring richness and colour into being. We should not fear God when we create and innovate, but we should be ever-mindful of the purpose of what we make. We are

called by the Creator, to be creative, we are created and God-breathed, and our creations in turn, must bring life.

To try and prove power, or rival God, or to let anything we make become an idol, is moving to a rather extreme space, but it is good to note where we are on our journeys of creating and building. Are we building something that will bless and enrich, or are we building something that is problematic? Whether it is art, structures or systems, they must have a truth to their intent that matches God's desire for diversity, and an order/ethos that reflects the Kingdom of God, rather than any totalitarian nuance.

As we read this text, we cannot force it to fit into a simple narrative, merely condemning this story to an Old Testament problem that needs to be fixed in the New Testament. The story in Acts on this Day of Pentecost does not render the creating of diverse languages and cultures as a problem, but rather celebrates beauty in difference and unity in understanding and expression. The tongues of fire bring life and vibrancy in expressing God's desire to be at the heart of all we do, rather than have us speaking out in fear and looking to conform to anything that is built in haste and unjust thinking.

As we note God's decent to observe the people as they build, we should see God's desire to know us and wonder - what might God make of what we are building together?

### **[Psalm 104:24-34, 35b](#)**

In this passage, there is much to enjoy, as the greatness and majesty of what has been created is talked about: the beauty and majesty of creation is something that all can appreciate and enjoy.

This 'wisdom and hymn' psalm is a simple psalm of praise. It fits beautifully into our thinking about Pentecost, as it reminds us that the Spirit of God is the One who creates (v 31). The Holy Spirit breathes life into all things, and creates not only human beings, but all creatures, all of the earth and beyond. It also has a theme of dependence on God. We each need God and without God's oversight of nature we would have no crops, no water, no hope (v 27-29). This deep dependence on the Holy Spirit is an important theme, particularly at Pentecost, as we remember the Spirit birthing the church into existence.

A theme that emerges from this psalm is that of taking the time to ponder. To ponder what God has made, to ponder what God has done, to ponder His goodness in creation. To ponder the power of God the Holy Spirit. Do we ever take the time to ponder? Is this perhaps something we lose as we grow up? Sir David Attenborough famously said, "When

people ask me, 'How did you get interested in animals?' I reply, 'How on Earth did you lose your interest in animals?'

### Romans 8:14-17

*"The Spirit makes us children of God."* The presence of God's divine being, God's breath within us – this is what animates us, brings us life and allows us to be co-heirs with Christ. All will share in this inheritance, not only the eldest son, or those who seemingly think they deserve it. This is an equitable and just sharing, of all that is good, the fruit of the Kingdom of God. This passage does not lay out some windfall that will see us right, or entitle us to be part of the wealthiest. No, it points to a deep sharing in both suffering and glory, perhaps similar to the fulness of life that Jesus also talks about.

*"It is that very Spirit, bearing witness with our spirit..."* Here we have words that are reminiscent of deep cries to deep. The profound nature of our relationship with God, who is not only 'never distant' from us, but is in constant communion if only we would notice, if only we would dwell and let that encounter manifest as our lived-out faithfulness to God and God's Kingdom (the inheritance).

Note the word 'led' at the beginning of the passage. We are not static, we are drawn to God, and we are led by God into the mission of God. Just as the builders of the Tower of Babel had become static with God then dispersing them, we are not called to become idle, but are called to both follow and to go, sent by God, whose Spirit is at play in every place and space in creation. We are also receivers of a spirit of adoption, not one of fear or of slavery – like that of the spirit of the builders of Babel, fearful of the diversity that God imagined and made real. The spirit within us, is not only a defining part of our adoption into God's family, but also as that which makes us alive, that makes us human.

As we see the constant output of AI bombarding our media feeds, we are witness to continual synthetic hyper real images and distorted visions of the truth. How, with all this static and distortion, can we discern what is true, what is real, what is life giving and spirit filled and worthy of our attention? As we pray and discern, as Spirit bears witness to spirit, we need to be aware of the absence of the divine within the data-mining algorithms that feed us a monetised truth, distorted with agenda and rhetoric. As we create, with the same Spirit present that hovered over the beginning of all things, we are fully recognising our humanity and embracing the divine nature of what we are called to be and to do.

In the midst of all the unending online offers, of easy ways out or ultimate fix its – God's gift of inheritance is given to us that we be thankful, that we rejoice and glorify God. We do this



by serving others, loving justice, walking humbly and journeying together through the story of the reconciliation and salvation of all creation (Christopher Wright: 'Salvation belongs to our God: Celebrating the Bible's Central Story').

### [John 14:8-17, 25-27](#)

This passage is an intriguing partner to Acts. There is a contrast between the coming of the Spirit, where in Acts, we have the dynamic public spectacle; in John, we have something else. Something perhaps more intimate, with more emphasis on peace, and dwelling. In Acts, we have the explosive and passionate beginnings of the church, and here in John, we have Jesus rooting this experience of the Spirit coming, within the relationship and response to the Father. Jesus, God with us on earth – instrument for the Father and the coming Kingdom – prays for the Spirit to come into the community of followers, who will after Jesus ascension, make God incarnate once more.

Jesus does not give as the world gives. There is nothing exclusive or privileged, rather the Advocate and Peace Bringer is empowering the community of followers to be all that God desires them to be and to let go of fear and to do the works that Jesus did. As we are filled with the Spirit, we are emboldened to bring peace, to reconcile, to heal, to bless and to build the Kingdom of God in every context we encounter. It may not be as bombastic as the Acts story, but here we have a profound invitation into something “even greater”.

Jesus responds to Philip's appeal to see the Father with a response that I doubt he was expecting. As we ask to see, know and experience God, where and how are we searching? Returning to the notion of AI and faith – we are in constant use of 'search engines' as we seek answers, perhaps even seek the truth. What does it mean for us now – as we move away from the myriad of options various search engines offered us in the early days (that invited us to use our imagination and intelligences to consider the most fitting answer) to the new reality – which is the single, definitive answer offered up by the AI engine which represents the 'held truth' of those in charge of the platform.

*“The world cannot receive the Spirit of truth because it neither sees or knows...”* When we seek Jesus, when we desire the truth of the Spirit, we have the tools to discern what is true. We can see and know, that which is truly from God, will lead to God's Kingdom-imbued outcomes – justice, equity, compassion, grace, mercy and peace. That which does not glorify God cannot carry the recommendation of being a good and trustworthy source. As we discern what God is asking of us, what God is saying to us, we have the Spirit to guide us. In the midst of the chaos of our news-feeds and barrage of media, it is perhaps reassuring to remember that Jesus did not pray for the Comforter to come to a bold, or elite group of



people who had it all figured out. No, Jesus promised them the presence of God within the confusion, chaos and fear, and that the Advocate would bring a peace that goes beyond any human understanding. As we seek to bear fruit for God, as we discern what that may be like, the Spirit helps us to understand our intimate connection and rootedness with God.

## Sermon ideas

We might forget the context and history that the people gathered here had with Jesus. They saw Him ascend to heaven having been raised from the dead and walk into locked rooms. They heard His teachings, saw the miracles, and did likewise. They had their faces turned to Him when He breathed on them and said, 'receive the Holy Spirit' and now, with their hearts soft towards God, they manifest the new covenant era that Christ inaugurated with power, strength, beauty and compassion for others.

When preaching about this passage, I find it beneficial to first remind people about God's deeds of power in the present day to strengthen and build faith. This can be interactive and a super opportunity for all-age involvement, sharing in answered prayers, or signs of God's power, or sharing a short video. Here is a link to a Bear Grylls story:

<https://youtu.be/qfiQoHyJC10?si=kdpvyr6o4SYAvsP8>

Seeing, describing, and explaining this 'miraculous operation of God manifesting Himself in the Spirit' (Meyer in Meyer's 'Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament') aligns with the flow of the passage and, as there was an immediate result in the scripture, it suggests we can expect an immediate result in our services. This might be a manifestation of God's power, such as is seen in Acts, it might be an understanding of the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, or it might be something else.

I find people are curious about the gift of tongues and the many other Biblical gifts, and teaching plainly can help bring maturity of faith. We can draw from other passages mentioned to explain it as a heavenly language to pray God's perfect plan and will when we don't quite know what to pray (Romans 8:26,27). It is a personal prayer language to edify ourselves (1 Corinthians 14:4). It is one half of a communal gift (interpretation being the other) which reveals God's mystery, praises God, and exhorts those gathered (1 Corinthians 14). These and other gifts of the Holy Spirit always point to Jesus, which is their purpose and are not intended to obscure or skew our view of God.

Spurgeon notes Peter's explanation was 'not an oration but a heart-moving argument, entreaty, and exhortation ... that pointed to the Lord Jesus.' As we preach and teach on the continual filling of the Holy Spirit, bringing and activating gifts and abilities which point to

Jesus, we can do so with the same boldness that Peter stood up and spoke with. His courage and boldness are also for all, as we all live lives pointing towards Jesus. Pentecost offers a space for response to the Holy Spirit and to 'table conversations' about personal experience and questions. It can also lead into in-depth Bible studies.

The Bible Project has a useful short video, explaining Pentecost:

[https://youtu.be/JQhkWmFJKnA?si=hiBB1rpJkJ\\_w753W](https://youtu.be/JQhkWmFJKnA?si=hiBB1rpJkJ_w753W)

When we take the time to ponder on God's goodness (through the sheer diversity of creation) we are reminded that God is very big and we are very small. We are reminded that the Holy Spirit is full of wisdom in creation, attention to detail and joy. This is an important message, a blessing to us when we are going through difficult times. The Holy Spirit, who makes the tiny ant and the enormity of space, is the same One who cares about each one of us. The same One who breathed the Church into being.

Below is a link to a delightful, five-minute video that shows some of the beauty of creation. This would provide a reflective, peaceful space, either before or after the sermon, giving people time to ponder for themselves what the Holy Spirit has created, and to remember that that same powerful God is also at work in their own lives.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cl\\_kXbhTi8k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cl_kXbhTi8k)

Something different to try, is to ask people in groups of two or three, to come up with some aspects of creation that are joy-giving for them. Everyone will have at least one thing that speaks to them of God's goodness and power. Use these things to shape a prayer of praise.

Tongues of fire, dispersion and diversity being scattered through the earth – there is a lot here this week, that is not only rooted in the beginnings of the Church and the dynamism of the missional impetus the God imprinted at the start, but there is also a real sense of the eruptive sceptical in Acts. So many voices, it must have been a cacophony, yet each and every person was able to hear the word of God in a way they recognised and responded to. In the midst of media and social feeds, constantly bombarded by things that we simply must pay attention to, how are we discerning what voices are worth listening to? How does this play out with the notion of trustworthy voices and indeed, what it means to preach within the 'post truth' context we find ourselves in? With the demise of fact-checking on social media platforms, there is open season on opinion being offered as 'gospel'.

Where do we recognise the Spirit present? Is there a difference between sensing the Spirit guiding and moving, whether in person or online? These conversations were very much to the fore during COVID-19 and the dramatic shift to online worship. There were papers and

conversations about what it meant for us to share in ritual and sacrament and how we understood the presence and power of God at work in places and spaces we could touch and understand as real, and also places we once labelled as 'virtual'. Understanding of online spaces and community has deepened over the years and how we understand the notion of reality has moved also. This sense of 'real' is again in flux, as we witness the hyper reality of AI imagery and narrative content being thrust upon us incessantly. As we discern the validity of point of view, of the trustworthiness of it all, we do well to note the impact of how much the varying degrees of cartoonishness or ultra-real feeling content have created a set of disorientating parameters, which mean that we are too often desensitised to alarmingly real images and powerful human stories and experience.

## Prayers

### Call to worship

All the people of God

**WORSHIP GOD OUR MAKER.**

All the world and its peoples

**WORSHIP GOD OUR REDEEMER.**

All the earth and all living things

**WORSHIP GOD OUR DELIVERER.**

May the glory of the Lord endure forever

**BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL.**

**PRAISE THE LORD!**

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

God of the Ages,

Working in all ages,

Loving in all ages

We are an age who welcomes You, worships You, adores You.

Your instructions are to love You above all else, all others, bless You.

Your commands are to provide for the hungry and needy, bless You.

Your way is for us to love others as we love ourselves, the way You love us, bless You.

Your power throughout the ages brings mercy, justice, and compassionate healing.

In this age and the age that is to come.

Will You visit us as You have done in the ages?  
Where wind and fire meet?  
Your power filling us to overflow.

Holy Spirit, flood our mortal bodies.  
Our hearts, souls, minds, and strength.  
Bring and activate abilities and gifts that point to and reveal Jesus, as in days of old,  
so that this day and our days ahead are times where all peoples can hear the name of the  
Lord Jesus, call on it and be saved.  
Let this be a Pentecost time for us.  
Let God's Kingdom come and God's will be done here.  
In the precious name of Jesus Christ, we pray, Amen.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

Holy Spirit,  
We come to You with thankful hearts,  
Amazed by the love behind Your creativity,  
In awe of the vastness of all that You have imagined and brought into being.  
Every day we experience the beauty that surrounds us,  
Colours and shades, mountains and clouds.  
The intricate patterns of our own fingerprints,  
The rhythm of the tides, the scent of the sea.

Your creativity never stops, from the smallest ladybird, to the mighty lion.  
Each one crafted by You  
and each one known to You.  
Thank You, Creator God.

Thank You that You took the time to create us, Your children,  
each of us unique and each of us loved.  
By Your grace, You made us in Your image, for Your purposes.  
Keep our eyes open to the wonder of what You have done.  
Open our eyes to the wonder of being filled with and known by You,  
Holy Spirit who breathes life.  
May we always experience Your creativity Lord, in this Your world.  
In the powerful name of Jesus, we pray, Amen

### **Prayer of Confession**

Gracious God,  
We thank You for Your Holy Spirit  
and for the Spirit's generosity,  
comforting, interceding, inspiring, revealing truth,  
manifesting spiritual gifts and yielding spiritual fruit.

Forgive us when we have neglected Your gifts,  
shunning opportunities to build Your Church.  
Forgive us when we have not borne the Spirit's fruit,  
lacking love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, or self-control.

May Your Holy Spirit not only confront us with our imperfections,  
but also inspire us to see the way of Christ more clearly.  
May we be so filled with Your Spirit's power,  
that our lives bear rich fruit and help to build Your kingdom.

In Jesus' Name we ask, Amen.

### **Prayers for others (based on Psalm 104)**

God of all creation,  
how wonderful are Your works!  
So many that we cannot count them or know them all.  
And yet, You care so deeply about each and every one of Your children,  
that You continue to work,  
for Your kingdom to come and Your dream for all people to be made real on earth.

You are the wisdom beyond all knowing.  
You are the Maker of all things, and the earth is full of Your creatures.  
We pray for our world,  
for the sea, great and wide.  
Help us to find ways of living more compassionately and sustainably,  
that we would stem the tide of climate change,  
that we would work together for climate justice.  
We pray in Your name that justice would roll down like fresh water,  
devoid of pollution and full of life for all.

We pray for all living things, both small and great.  
In Your wisdom You lovingly created them;

inspire us to care too, for all life.  
You breathe life into each of us.  
May we do more than respect the dignity of others,  
no matter how small or great they may seem.  
Inspire us to love our neighbour,  
empower us to work for justice for all.  
Open Your hand that we may all have enough.

We look to You to give us food in due season,  
and for those who do not have and have no means to provide,  
we ask for provision,  
for justice,  
for equity.  
Help us to play our part in making this a reality.

Lord, when You hide Your face,  
we are dismayed.  
Send forth Your Spirit that we may all be renewed.  
We pray for Your Spirit of peace to bring an end to the violence that is so visible.  
For all the conflicts that we know of Lord, we pray for an end.  
For all that we do not know, help us to become more aware of what we might do to play  
our part, as reconcilers and peace makers.

God of all creation,  
we ask of You now, that You would hear our prayers as we raise them to You,  
for all the different people in our lives that we care for,  
for Your Church and all her people,  
for all the work that we are involved in,  
for all of the situations that come to mind –  
we ask that You would uphold Your people with Your right hand of righteousness.

We wait now with You,  
as we bring them to mind.

[Hold silence for people to call to mind that which they want to pray for.]

And we pray now,  
on this day of Pentecost,  
in the language closest to our hearts,

with the words that Jesus taught us to pray:

OUR FATHER... [Say the Lord's prayer as per your local custom.]

## **Blessing**

Now may we go and serve the Lord  
with the Holy Spirit so inflaming us  
that we are aglow with the light of Christ.  
And the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
be with us all, this day and for evermore. Amen.

## **Musical suggestions**

*God Welcomes All* (GWA) is the new supplement to Church Hymnary Fourth Edition. This exciting new collection features over 200 hymns and songs in a wide range of styles by writers from Scotland and around the world.

The full music version and words-only versions are now available; and digital resources, including the expansion of the existing Church of Scotland music website, will be published in due course, with streaming functions and further information on each song; backing tracks; and lyric videos. *God Welcomes All* is available to order from

<https://chbookshop.hymnsam.co.uk/books/9781786225573/god-welcomes-all>

Our [online music resource](#) is on the Church of Scotland website; you can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship. You will also find playlists for this week and liturgical seasons and themes on the *Weekly Worship* and *Inspire Me* tabs.

You can find further musical suggestions for this week in a range of styles on the [Songs for Sunday blog](#) from Trinity College Glasgow.

Pentecost was quite a 'new' thing (!) for the believers, so why not introduce a new song at Pentecost?

## **God Welcomes All:**

- GWA 129 – “Come set your rule and reign”



- GWA 130 – “Holy Spirit, breath of heaven”

#### CH4:

- CH4 124 – “Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation”
- CH4 147 – “All creatures of our God and King”
- CH4 616 – “There’s a spirit in the air”
- CH4 619 – “Spirit of the living God”
- CH4 627 – “Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost”

#### Further song suggestions:

- “Holy Spirit” [Holy Spirit – Bryan and Katie Torwalt Lyrics and Chords | Worship Together](#)
- “Spirit Break out” [Spirit Break Out – Worship Central Lyrics and Chords | Worship Together](#)
- “Holy Spirit Again” [Holy Spirit inspire again by Jo Doré - Resound Worship](#)
- “Indescribable” (Chris Tomlin, written by Laura Story) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dLMVqNwypjA>
- Holy Spirit You are Welcome Here (Francesca Battistelli) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BoZd7ZXh9yY>
- How Great Is Our God (Chris Tomlin) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKLQ1td3MbE>
- A suggested playlist of songs from CH4 throughout Pentecost can be found on the Church of Scotland website (<https://music.churchofscotland.org.uk/inspire-me/playlist/pentecost>)

#### Reflecting on our worship practice

Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the way we worship has changed and we need to reflect on the changing or newly established patterns that emerged and continue to emerge as a result of the disruption.

We can facilitate worship for all by exploring imaginative approaches to inclusion, participation and our use of technologies in ways that suit our contexts. This is not an exhaustive list, but some things we could consider are:

- Framing various parts of the worship service in accessible language to help worshippers understand the character and purpose of each part. This is essential for creating worship for all (intergenerational worship) that reflects your community of faith.
- Holding spaces for reflection and encouraging prayer to be articulated in verbal and non-verbal ways, individually and in online breakout rooms.
- In online formats the effective use of the chat function and microphone settings encourages active participation in prayer, e.g. saying the Lord's Prayer together unmuted, in a moment of 'holy chaos'.
- If singing in our congregations is restricted, we can worship corporately by using antiphonal psalm readings, creeds and participative prayers.
- Using music and the arts as part of the worship encourages the use of imagination in place of sung or spoken words.
- Use of silence, sensory and kinaesthetic practices allow for experience and expression beyond regular audio and visual mediums.

The following questions might help you develop a habit of reflecting on how we create and deliver content and its effectiveness and impact, and then applying what we learn to develop our practice.

- How inclusive was the worship?  
Could the worship delivery and content be described as worship for all/intergenerational? Was it sensitive to different "Spiritual Styles"?
- How was the balance between passive and active participation?
- How were people empowered to connect with or encounter God?  
What helped this? What hindered this?
- How cohesive was the worship?  
Did it function well as a whole?  
How effective was each of the individual elements in fulfilling its purpose?

- How balanced was the worship?  
What themes/topics/doctrines/areas of Christian life were included?
- How did the worship connect with your context/contemporary issues?  
Was it relevant in the everyday lives of those attending and in the wider parish/  
community?  
How well did the worship connect with local and national issues?  
How well did the worship connect with world events/issues?
- What have I learned that can help me next time I plan and deliver worship?

## Useful links

*God Welcomes All* can be ordered from [Hymns Ancient & Modern](#)

You can listen to samples of every song in the Church Hymnary 4th edition (CH4) and download a selection of recordings for use in worship [here](#)

You can find an introduction to spiritual styles online [here](#)

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