

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 20: 19-21—Jesus Appears to His Disciples—NIV

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!” After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

Acts 2: 1-18—The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost—NIV

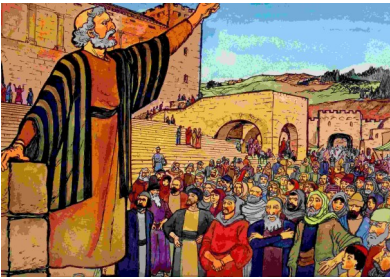
When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

Peter Addresses the Crowd

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: “Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:



“In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.
Even on my servants, both men and women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.”

Acts 2:32-39—NIV

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. ³⁴ For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

“The Lord said to my Lord:
“Sit at my right hand
³⁵until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.”

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”

Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”

While lockdown continues, as a key service provider, our warehouse remains a hub of activity and I am delighted to say that we have been able to distribute over **3,000 Emergency Packs** to those in need since the beginning of the pandemic! It has been hard work and a real team effort from everyone at Fresh Start, our partner organisations, our funders and supporters but getting feedback like below from those who have received the packs reminds us how much of a lifeline they are for people during this challenging time.

90% of people who received the packs said they enabled them to feed themselves and/or their family

- 94% of people who received the packs said they helped to ease their financial pressures
- 90% of people who received the packs said they helped to ease their stress/worries
- 62% of people who received the packs said they stopped them from having to borrow money or incur debt to buy items

While Fresh Start will continue to strive to deliver as many Emergency Packs as possible throughout the Covid-19 crisis we are also looking ahead at the bigger picture and our longer term aims with the hope that we will be able to resume some of our other services in the coming months. We hope that over the summer, when it is safe to do, we will be able to start taking donations of goods again (although this will likely be a bit different to how we've done it previously to comply with health and safety) and we hope to begin welcoming our volunteers back but again in a safe and controlled manner. As soon as we have some definite dates for this then I will be sure to update you all so you can share the information with your congregations and wider networks.



Sunday 31st May 10-10.30am—Pentecost—streamed on the Church of Scotland website and Facebook

The Moderator will lead a service to mark the birthday of the Christian Church with contributions from many different places. Like the disciples on that first Pentecost here is the invitation to step confidently into whatever the future holds. We would like to invite you to log on to this the service on that Sunday so that as much of the Church of Scotland as possible will be gathered in fellowship and praise.

Best wishes

Rev Dr George J Whyte

Principal Clerk