Worship at Home service Sunday 8th June 2025 with John Atkin

A prayer of approach:

Father God, we thank you for sending your Holy Spirit at Pentecost. So vibrant God, call us afresh today, to a new vision of your kingdom, to a new understanding of your purposes, to a new knowing of how best to serve you, to a new appreciation of your presence with us, to a new awareness of all that you would have us do, as your people in this world today. In Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.

StF 385 Holy Spirit, We Welcome You.

Holy Spirit, we welcome you. Holy Spirit, we welcome you!
Move amongst us with holy fire. As we lay aside all earthly desire
Hands reach out and our hearts aspire
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

Holy Spirit, we welcome you. Holy Spirit, we welcome you!
Let the breeze of your presence flow. That your children here might truly know. How to move in the Spirit's flow.
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you!

Holy Spirit, we welcome you. Holy Spirit, we welcome you
Please accomplish in me today. Some new work of loving grace, I pray
Unreservedly - have your way, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you! Chris Bowater | Holy Spirit We Welcome You (Official Lyric Video)

Prayer of confession

Sometimes we try and build ourselves into a tower, cutting ourselves off from others, forgetting that we need them too.
Forgive us, great and glorious God, and break down our barriers.
Sometimes we turn away from people of other cultures, just because they're different. **Forgive us…**
Sometimes we cling on to our own prejudices,
and don't see diversity as a blessing.
Forgive us…
Lord of every language under the sun,
you understand our every word.
But, more than that,
you read the thoughts of our hearts.
You forgive us our sins, whoever we are,
and whatever we may have done.
Lord of every language under the sun,
we rejoice in your forgiveness. **Amen.**

Bible readings:

John 14: 9-17 & 25-27; Acts2: 1-21

Prayers of thanksgiving

Abba Father, your power and love is so enormous. It's hard to take it all in.
Thank you for creating us, all so wonderful and all so different.
We thank you that you created us all in your image, for your glory.
Thank you for the Holy Spirit, who fills and unites our hearts. **Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Holy God, we feel overwhelmed and helpless as we see and hear and feel the pain of the Holy Land, Ukraine and Russia. We pray for families there and all who are bereaved, fearful, homeless, and hungry, who are suffering because of the ongoing wars.
Holy Spirit, be with them today.
We pray, Holy Spirit, for all who lack confidence. For parents struggling to meet the needs of their families.
Holy Spirit, be with them today. For children struggling with their work at school. For teachers struggling to meet the demands of the day.
Holy Spirit, be with them today.
For young people who feel misunderstood...
For young adults struggling to find their place in the world.
Holy Spirit, be with them today. For carers trying to support and comfort those who are vulnerable.
Holy Spirit, be with them today.
For the frail, facing diminishing strength and loss of identity.
Holy Spirit, be with them today.
For all people struggling to be who they truly are.
Holy Spirit be with them – and us – today. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Time to reflect:

God calls and empowers us in many ways so we need to be alert in order to recognise that God is calling us today.
So how ready are we to hear and receive messages from God via the Holy Spirit, and with the strength of the Holy Spirit act on them?
We hear about the events of Pentecost as the Holy Spirit is given to individuals in all their diversity.

Those gathered from the surrounding nations hear God's good news being declared in their own languages. Peter addresses the crowds, telling them that what they have seen is a fulfilment of Joel's prophecy that God's Spirit will be poured out on all people. We are individuals with our own gifts, passions and personality traits, but we are united by our faith in God and a common vision.

Do we recognise gifts in each other and bring them together to present something beautiful to God? The disciples are together, praying, and God comes and blows them away, turns them inside out and fills them with life! But this is not just a private experience: it draws a crowd. From day one, the Church existed for others and not just itself; the Church faced outwards into the world not inwards into itself. The Holy Spirit didn't just anoint the leaders but filled each and everyone in the room (there were 120 or so there). And the Holy Spirit then pushed the disciples out of their comfort zone into the world to speak to any and every one in languages they understood. What began upstairs behind locked doors spilled out into the streets of the crowded city. And the ensuing rumpus ended with a baptismal service. Note that the list of countries in 2:5-11 is a picture of the Holy Spirit bringing down the barriers that divide people. all people, all languages, all hearing what God is doing.

But all these people, in Jerusalem for the festival, will be scattered back to the communities from which they came. These crowds report hearing the good news in their own language. Often, we think of the miracle of Pentecost as the gift of tongues, so the disciples could speak about what God is doing. But maybe it is more about hearing. The miracle is that everyone heard this good news in their own language, in a way that they could understand and respond to. How do we in our own language reach out to the world around us? As Peter unpacks what has happened, it starts with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on everyone and ends with signs in the heavens. What Peter is seeing here is the end of a world of division and antagonism, and the start of the new world where a diverse body of people is gathered by the gospel of Jesus and the power of his Spirit. In John 14.

Jesus draws our attention to the close link between what he says and what he does. Philip's perfectly reasonable question (v.8) elicits a response that tells us two vital truths. The first is that if we have seen Jesus, we have seen God. This is a vital New Testament theme reinforced in virtually every text: to encounter Jesus is to encounter God.

And the second is that the words and works of Jesus communicate the same thing: that he has come to reveal who God is. But in order to help the disciples make sense of this, Jesus is going to send the Holy Spirit, who will live in the followers of Jesus to remind us of what we believe and to give us the power to live for Jesus in a difficult world. But above all, he will bring the peace of God into our hearts and communities.

Just what Peter is getting at in Acts seeing an end of a world of division and antagonism, and the start of the new world where a diverse body of people is gathered by the gospel of Jesus and the power of his Spirit. Let's pray that we will deepen our relationship with God in Jesus Christ, and that we may be on fire with the Holy Spirit, not just today as we celebrate Pentecost, but for the whole of our lives.

StF 394 – Spirit of God unseen as the wind.
Spirit of God, unseen as the wind, gentle as is the dove;
teach us the truth and help us believe,
show us the Saviour's love!

You spoke to us long, long ago, gave us the written word;
we read it still, needing its truth
through it God's voice is heard. **Chorus**

Without your help we fail our Lord, we cannot live His way;
we need Your power, we need Your strength,
following Christ each day. **Chorus**
Spirit of God, Unseen as the Wind (Tune: Skye Boat Song - 2vv+refrain) [lyrics for congregations]

A going out prayer:
Thank you, Heavenly Father, for making me. Thank you for the talents and skills you give me. Thank you, Jesus, for showing us what God is like. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for giving us the power to go and tell others. Lord call us, guide us, and strengthen us in your service by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen