

Greetings to Christians Together in Orleton

Welcome to this week's Sunday Sheet from Matthew

Welcome to this Sunday's news sheet on the great feast of Pentecost. It is perhaps fitting that the majority of the lockdown (at least so far) has taken place between Easter and Pentecost. Beginning with the reminder that evil and death have been overcome by the cross and resurrection, culminating today with the gift of the Holy Spirit being given to the Church empowering us to continue in spreading the Gospel. I pray that in these difficult times the gifts of the Spirit will continue to grow in us. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the Earth.

Sunday 31st May Pentecost

Acts 2: 1 – 21

1 Corinthians 12: 3b – 13

John 20: 19 – 23

Sunday's Gospel Reading: John 20: 19 – 23

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

A Reflection on the Gospel from Frances

At the moment breathing on someone is potentially dangerous. Thousands of people have died because they breathed in the Covid virus, and all of us have had to get used to social distancing and perhaps using a face mask. In an effort to make something bright and cheerful to wear I whipped out my sewing machine and ran up a face mask with butterflies on it. It seems to be appreciated in the shops I go into!

But for Jesus breathe on his disciples was a good thing, for by doing so he imparted the gift of the Holy Spirit. In those days, someone's breath was regarded as their life, so Jesus was passing onto to them all that he was. We have a sense of that too today; in an emergency we can give someone mouth to mouth resuscitation and very literally make our breath their life. Breathing is the fundamental hallmark of being alive.

So when we pray, we are breathing in God's life and power – God's Holy Spirit. All that God is, becomes an intrinsic part of our lives; it is put at our disposal, and it is given at God's initiative. After all, Jesus wasn't banging on the door of the room where the disciples were holed up shouting, 'Let me in!' Rather he mysteriously appeared in their midst and gave the Spirit as a gift and not a reward. He gave the Spirit as both Comforter in their time of worry and sorrow, but also as Advocate to stand with them in times of challenge.

Now obviously that's not going to turn us into little power-hungry gods (though tragically that has happened in the course of Christian History), but what it does mean is that when we are trying to live faithful Christian lives then the Holy Spirit is our resource. The Spirit is the one who nudges us into places and situations, who prompts us with (hopefully!) the right words. This morning Jon and I casually said hello to someone as we were walking in the Grange, and then spent 20 minutes or so listening to a heart-breaking story. Then we went on our way assuring them of our prayers. We shall never know if our listening helped – God knows- but we had a sense of being led into that situation, and that is the work of the Holy Spirit.

'Sin' in John's Gospel is not so much about moral or ethical failings, but rather the inability – or refusal to see the truth of who Jesus is. The tricky imperative at the end of our reading about forgiving or retaining the sins of others is perhaps more of an indictment against us as Christians for not being courageous enough at times to share the life-changing message of Jesus. Too often we end up being judge and jury upon those in our wider community. So many people have not been able to see the wonder of Christ because of our narrowness or small mindedness.

So let's all take a deep breath – socially distanced of course! - and breathe in once more the depths of Jesus' life, and with him breathe his love out into the world.

A Prayer from Stan

Pour out your Spirit, heavenly Father, that we may hear your prophetic word today.

Pour out your Spirit, living Lord Jesus, that we may live according to your ways.

Descend upon us, Holy Spirit, that we may be filled with power and with love.

Lord Jesus, we believe in you and we open ourselves to receive the streams of living water that you have promised.

We pray today for a fresh outpouring of your Spirit on people of faith all over the world,

for a willingness to be changed and made new,

for a softening of the ground of our heart,

to receive your love in fullness and without fear.

At this time of Covid 19 we pray for comfort and hope for those who are suffering, as well as for strength for ourselves, as we prepare to become your people in a new way once lockdown is over.

May your Spirit both support and challenge us today. Amen

Matters for Prayer for this week

Roger Farmer with his brother Robin have run a very successful and popular fruit and vegetable shop and market stall in Ludlow, following on from their father. Their mother in her eighties still plays a very active part in the business. The loss of Roger will have a dramatic effect on its future. He was an extremely hard-working and popular person on Ludlow's market scene. He died aged 62 after a long, brave battle against cancer. His private family funeral will take place at St George's Orleton at noon on 3rd June, and the hearse will pass through the village on the way to church.

Please remember in your prayers Lowri Lloyd and her family. Although she is feeling well, her kidney function continues to deteriorate following her transplant several years ago. She may need to have another transplant. Her mum Tracey and all the family much appreciate our prayers.

Please pray for Lynne and Roger Evans at the bedside of their son Ian as his life slips away.

Please continue to remember Diane, Robert and Chloe Harris with the passing of Martin. We uphold all the family at this time of sadness.

We join with Lindsay to thank the Good Lord that Digby has had his long-awaited heart bypass and we're both looking forward to his regaining good health.

Lindsay wishes to thank to all our friends in Orleton for supporting us so well through these testing times.

Two pieces of music to celebrate Pentecost

O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing

<https://youtu.be/X-dEfvz6Vms>

followed by a Gaelic Blessing set to music by John Rutter. In our prayers we remember those grieving the loss of a loved one and we give thanks for the healing of others.

I hope that this musical blessing will help us all at this time.

https://youtu.be/tS_2Y2xorRI

Please remember that Church and Chapel still remain closed every day.

Good health and best wishes, John jsberry47@gmail.com

PCC of Orleton – 100 Club

Many, many thanks to those who have numbers in the 100 Club, the proceeds from which provides continuing support for our lovely old church here in Orleton. Your contribution helps to keep our church and churchyard open and fully functioning for the use of all members of our village community.

It is that time of year again for your subscription of £26 for each number you hold please. We have 3 prizes each month of £30, £20 and £10.

In December there is an additional £250 prize and in March, June and September a £110 prize.

Cash or cheques in an envelope please with name(s) can be posted or pushed through my letterbox at

Berrybrook, Millbrook Way, Orleton, Ludlow, SH8 4HW

or given to any church member or PCC member for forwarding to me.

Cash welcome. Cheques made payable to **PCC of Orleton 100 Club**.

Many thanks

Christine Berry

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100 Club Administrator