



TOGETHER

NewarkandSouthwellMethodist.org.uk

Celebrations

Revd Nathan Falla

Welcome to this very special double issue of TOGETHER to cover the celebration season of the next two Sundays when we celebrate Ascensiontide, Pentecost and the Platinum Jubilee. We wanted to ensure that with the special Jubilee bank holiday, everyone received TOGETHER in the most timely way and the best way to do this was this special celebration issue!

Tuesday was Wesley Day, the day when the Methodist Church remembers the events of 24th May 1738 when John Wesley's heart was strangely warmed. Charles Wesley had his conversion experience just days before on 21st May. John and Charles were both ordained clergy but something was missing; they previously knew about Jesus in their heads, they now knew Jesus in their hearts and were filled with the Holy Spirit. What a celebration it was, John Wesley records in his diary: "I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

I remember *my* excitement when at the age of 9 I realised that Jesus had died for me and invited Jesus into my life.

Thursday is / was Ascension Day, when the Church remembers Jesus ascending to heaven and marks the beginning of Ascensiontide leading up to Pentecost. It was not such a celebration at the time, as the disciples were a bit lost and bewildered, but it is really important and is definitely a cause for celebration as you can read in the main message for Ascension. Since 2016 the season from Ascension Day to Pentecost has been marked as *Thy kingdom come*, a season of specific prayer for people to come to know Jesus. Now Christians from 172 countries have taken part in praying 'Come Holy Spirit', so that friends and family, neighbours and colleagues might come to faith in Jesus Christ. Who can you pray for?

This year the Platinum Jubilee Celebrations conclude on 5th June, this is Pentecost, the day when we remember the birth of the Church and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both the Platinum Jubilee and Pentecost are reasons to celebrate and this is reflected on in the Pentecost message.

In all of our celebrations, and no matter how we may be celebrating may we know the joy of God filling us, the faithfulness of God sustaining us, the Spirit of God renewing us and the peace of God calming us.





Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service which this week is streamed live from Charles Street and led by Revd Nathan Falla.

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email!

Hymns and Worship Songs used:

Crown him with many crowns
H&P 255, SOF 77, StF 347

Lord, I lift your name on high
SOF 897, StF 332

Jesus is the name we honour
SOF 870, StF 354

We have a gospel to proclaim
H&P 465, SOF 1583, StF 418

King of kings, majesty
SOF 1404, StF 331

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus
H&P 592, SOF 153, StF 568

Click on title of song for YouTube link

Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am – 29th May

Waiting

City Church is a vibrant, multinational, all age Elim Pentecostal congregation, based in the heart of Cardiff. This Sunday falls between Ascension Day and Pentecost, representing the time of expectancy and preparation that the disciples experienced as they waited in hope for the promised Holy Spirit to come upon them.

BBC Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

Ascension: Witnesses not stargazers

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Acts 1:1-11 | Revd Nathan Falla

Picture the most nail-biting scene in a film; a real cliff hanger when the star of the film is in a predicament and you don't know what is going to happen, whether it indeed may even be the end! The Ascension is a bit like this; the disciples, after 40 days of getting use to the sporadic resurrection appearances of Jesus were faced with him leaving them.

We know because of our knowledge of what happened next that this was only the beginning, but the disciples did not know what would happen; Jesus had made suggestions about what their life would be like, but the full scale of their ministry was yet to be realised. Jesus had to ascend so that the disciples could experience the equipping and enabling power of his Holy Spirit at Pentecost. One of the Church fathers Augustine wrote: "You ascended before our eyes, and we turned back grieving only to find you in our hearts." It was a goodbye but it was also the beginning of something new both for the disciples and for Jesus, the story was to continue...

Our reading from Acts provides us with very few details. It would appear that all of a sudden it happened, Jesus had been talking with the disciples like he had done many times before and after he had said "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the world," Jesus was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid him from their sight.

The disciples were most probably in a state of shock, hence why when two men dressed in white stood beside them, they didn't notice because they were still gazing into the sky. These two men in white are understood to be angels. They provide what the disciples need so that they can focus on what is to come.

The disciples are called to be witnesses on earth not to gaze searchingly up into the clouds. They were also informed that Jesus would return in the same way that they saw him go into heaven. God sent these two men so that the disciples could experience closure so that they could move on and enter the period of waiting; preparing for the time when the Holy Spirit would come in power. They didn't need to gaze up to see God, because God was still at work in the world through them and their witness. This was to be a new chapter when the good news of God's love would be spread by God's people and in the ministry of the church, the story was to continue...

Ascension Day or the Sunday in Ascensiontide is seen as a festival celebrating the conclusion of Jesus' physical and geographically limiting ministry and the beginning of his reign at the right hand of God as King of kings and Lord of lords.

The Rt Revd Nigel McCulloch has said: "If Jesus had not ascended, his nativity would have come to nothing, his passion would have borne no fruit, and his resurrection would have been useless. In other words, this festival of Jesus is a kind of lynch pin of the Christian faith; it's the one celebration that holds together all the different dimensions of Jesus ministry that led to his earthly work being completed on the cross, and to his reign at God's right hand in heaven forever. What's more, as Jesus kept

saying it would, his going from this earth set in motion the energising power of his Holy Spirit and the hope of his coming again.”

So today what does the Ascension mean to us, how does it apply to our lives?

The Ascension marked the beginning; the true dawn of God’s work as God sent the Spirit of Jesus upon the disciples at Pentecost equipping and enabling them to be witnesses to the gospel; bringing into being the church. The days of gathering in an upper room were over, they were to be witnesses, spreading the good news, and the church grew! Throughout history various people have borne witness to God’s love and the story has continued, which brings us to today, now the story is with us.

Will we ensure that the story continues; will we be Jesus’ witnesses? We can be witnesses both as individuals and as a church, demonstrating Jesus’ love through our words and our actions and sharing our own story. We may find it easier to demonstrate our love for God by what we do rather than what we say but both are important. We may find it hard to share our faith, but we are called to be witnesses for Jesus. We do not do this alone or in our own strength; as the disciples were empowered by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus, to share the good news so are we.

As God sent the two men to encourage the disciples at a crucial time so God sends ordinary everyday people to encourage and spur us on in our witness and service. We can be encouragers to one another as well as witnesses so that the story may continue.

The ascension is the crowning moment for Jesus in heavenly terms but what about in our terms, is Jesus King of every part of your life, my life, the life of the church? Does he have free reign, or do we hold back? Do our lives give him the honour, glory and praise that he deserves? Does our witness; the things that we say and do – show to others that Jesus is King?

The story continues; Jesus went up to heaven and is seated at the right hand of God, the Lord of lords and King of kings, he is not confined by physical or geographical limitations, he is the cosmic ruler who has sent his Holy Spirit to equip and enable all who believe in him to serve, worship and witness. We may feel that we are not able to take up the responsibility of continuing the story, we may feel inadequate or unworthy, we may feel that we have done our bit now and it is now time for somebody else. Be affirmed, encouraged, strengthened and equipped for the Holy Spirit will equip us as we respond to God’s call. Today we may feel that we are being challenged and called to something new, step out in faith, trust in God, God will not let us down.

Today, how will we respond? With obedience, are we being called? With reverence, will we bow the knee and accept Jesus as King of every part of our life? With trust, will we trust Jesus more? Will we continue the story?

God has a plan for each and every one of us; may we be witnesses to God’s love in this world, that through our words and our actions we may proclaim that Jesus is King in our lives and in this world. Amen.

Prayer Space

Prayer for Ascensiontide

Almighty and everlasting Father,
you raised our Lord Jesus Christ
to your right hand on high.
As we rejoice in his exaltation,
fill us with his Spirit,
that we may go into all the world and
faithfully proclaim the gospel.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Methodist Worship Book

Prayers for others

Risen and ascended Christ
in whom the scriptures are fulfilled,
you called your disciples
to be your witnesses in all the world.
Help us to declare the good news
of your love to our generation,
proclaiming repentance and your gift of
forgiveness.

Fill us and all your Church
with your Holy Spirit
and make us worthy to stand before you
in your heavenly kingdom.

Amid the conflicts of the present age,
the injustice of war,
and individual acts of terror,
help us to live your peace.
Grant us the will to use the gifts we have,
as prophets or pastors or teachers,
or in any way you call us,
and announce your coming kingdom,
as we glorify your name.

May the people among whom we live
grow in the knowledge of you.
Bless, we pray, those who are sick or
distressed, and each one who mourns.
Grant them your comfort and hope,
and strengthen us to serve them.

Lead us in humility, gentleness and
patience
as we lift our eyes to you, O Christ.
Help us to be forbearing with one another,
and to speak the truth in love.
So may we glorify your name
and come at last to your heavenly
kingdom,
where the faithful disciples of every age
will gather at your throne. Amen.

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Online Service

Join us from 10:30am on Sunday for our online Circuit Service led by Revd Nathan Falla as we celebrate Pentecost.

Find it on the 'Newark and Southwell Methodist Circuit' YouTube Channel (<https://www.youtube.com/NewarkSouthwellMethodistCircuit>) why not invite a friend to watch it with you and share the link with them on your social media or by email!

Hymns and Worship Songs used:

O God of burning cleansing flame
SOF 955

Great is the darkness
SOF 742, StF 405

Rise up and serve

Lord, the light of your love is shining
SOF 362, StF 59

Click on title of song for YouTube link

Radio Services

BBC Radio 4 (Also [online](#).)
08:10am – 5th June

BBC Radio Nottingham

Listen every Sunday, at 8am, to a live church service on BBC Radio Nottingham. (Online or on 95.1-103.8 MHz FM for free.)

Prayer space

Call to worship

God declares:
I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh.
Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful people,
and kindle in us the fire of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



Pentecost: Crowned with the Holy Spirit

Online Circuit Service Sermon | Acts 2:1-21 | Revd Nathan Falla

Today we celebrate Pentecost; God's gift of the Holy Spirit, that transformed the disciples so on that day the church was born. But the Holy Spirit is not a gift of the past, it is a gift for today that we may be transformed, equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is a gift available for all, for monarchs, for you and for me. For all who believe in Jesus.

On 2nd June 1953 Her Majesty The Queen was crowned at Westminster Abbey, as part of the service she was anointed with oil and the following prayer was said: *Strengthen her, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter; Confirm and stablish her with thy free and princely Spirit, the Spirit of wisdom and government, the Spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the Spirit of knowledge and true godliness, and fill her, O Lord, with the Spirit of thy holy fear, now and for ever; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

As we mark The Queen's Platinum Jubilee we celebrate her life of faith and service. The Queen is the longest reigning monarch in British history, she never went to university but has been the adviser and confidante to fourteen British Prime Ministers. She is a 96-year-old senior citizen but still is very active. She employs 1,200 people, but feeds her own dogs. The Queen has no power to make political decisions but her personal authority has brought nations together. She attends church weekly, even on holiday, and pray daily, but never tells anyone to go to church. Her faith is her foundation, we can see the work of the Holy Spirit in her life, she was crowned with the Holy Spirit and with jewels, and we are crowned with the Holy Spirit too.

The Queen before her Coronation said: "The whole of life is a journey to God... I have not chosen this office for myself: he has appointed me to it, and I got to be consecrated to it by him... And because he leads, I may follow in complete trust."

Our Bible reading records that great day when God's Holy Spirit was poured out onto the disciples in a dramatic, powerful and amazing way – bringing transformation and renewal. We have heard about an awesome scene: the sound of the violent wind and the appearance of what looked like tongues of fire like a crown upon their heads, physical expressions of the Holy Spirit which then enabled them to do astounding things.

Jerusalem at this time would have been full because it was the Jewish festival Pentecost. God-fearing Jews would have gathered from as far reaching places as Rome to south-west Iran and north-eastern Turkey to southern Saudi Arabia to experience the festivities from the centre of Jewish worship at the Temple.

You can then understand their surprise when they heard the disciples speaking their own language and this soon drew a crowd. They were perplexed, "how can this be" they asked. Some understandably thought

that they were drunk with wine, then Peter who had experienced doubt and denied Jesus, stood up and delivered his first sermon.

Equipped and enabled by the Holy Spirit he preached, that God's Spirit is for all people and those gathered responded. The Spirit of Jesus that had been promised was now with the disciples and at work, enabling them to do great things in Jesus' name. The Spirit had breathed life into them and the Church was growing, three thousand were added to their number on that first day.

Pentecost recalls the transformation for the early disciples as they went from a group that met in the privacy of a room to a highly effective evangelistic tool that formed the Church through the equipping, enabling, and empowering of the Holy Spirit. But what about us? The gift of the Holy Spirit is for the whole Church, for you and for me, that we may be the people that God calls us to be.

If you are in any doubt about the significance of the Holy Spirit, John Stott in his commentary on Acts writes: "Without the Holy Spirit, Christian discipleship would be inconceivable, even impossible. There can be no life without the life-giver, no understanding without the Spirit of truth, no fellowship without the unity of the Spirit, no Christlikeness of character apart from his fruit, and no effective witness without his power. As a body without breath is a corpse, so the church without the Spirit is dead."

When you think about the first disciples, how with Jesus they did not always understand, they didn't always say or do the right thing, they sometimes doubted, they even sometimes denied but still God used them in a mighty way. Through the Holy Spirit working in their lives; their vulnerability, failings, and weaknesses were transformed into wonderful opportunities.

How comforting this is for us, God takes us as we are, with our weaknesses, failings and insecurities, God sees our potential and calls us to fulfil it, then by the Holy Spirit gives us the resources: equipping us, enabling us, leading us and guiding us that we may become the people that God desires us to be.

Through the Holy Spirit we know God, God who loved us from before we were born, and who calls us by name, who leads us and is with us at all times, who comforts us in our distress and helps us in times of need, who transforms us and equips us through his Holy Spirit.

To be crowned with the Holy Spirit we don't need to go through any elaborate ritual, we simply pray the ancient words, Come, Holy Spirit.

May we as individuals and as the church know that we are crowned by the Spirit and be transformed by the Holy Spirit that we may fulfil God's purposes, being open to where God leads and knowing how special and loved we are to God that we may go out into the world to share it.

Prayer space

Prayer for Pentecost

Faithful God,
you fulfilled the promise of Easter
by sending your Holy Spirit
and opening the way of eternal life
to all the human race.
Keep us in the unity of the Spirit,
that every tongue may tell of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

The Methodist Worship Book

Prayers for others

Faithful and loving God,
we give you thanks
for the servant heart of our Queen.
We thank you for the example she has set
of godly humility and reliance on you
in good times and bad.
We pray that you would strengthen her,
give her joy, and be her strength
as she runs her race faithfully to the end.

We pray for all our leaders,
that they would seek you
and look to you for wisdom
as they carry the weight of their
responsibilities.
We pray they would be motivated
by a desire to work for the good of others,
and that their decisions would honour you.

Loving Lord,
you are a God who sees and cares for the lost,
the lonely, the broken and the hopeless.
You know the needs of the people in our
community –
the obvious needs and those that are hidden.
We pray that your presence would comfort
those who are suffering.
In a moment of silence,
we bring before you those known to us
who have particular struggles,
and we ask you to draw near to them even
now.

Almighty God,
we are your hands and feet on this earth.
Forgive us for the times
we have turned away from those
we could have helped in your name.
Forgive us for our cold hearts
and our selfish ways.
Help us to use our time,
our resources and our energy
to serve those in need.
Give us compassion, kindness and the
willingness to sacrifice
in order to show your love to the world.
Amen.

Discussion Questions | 29th May

Church is best done together but we know that this isn't always possible - particularly if you're housebound, isolated or even shielding. But why not contact a friend and arrange to watch the church service online or read the newsletter simultaneously and get in touch by telephone afterwards to talk about it. Below are some questions that might help you to reflect together!

1. What does the Ascension mean to you?
2. Who are the people who have encouraged you? What impact did it have?
3. Who might you need to encourage?
4. How will you be a witness so that the story can continue?

Discussion Questions | Pentecost

1. Christians experience the Holy Spirit in different ways, how have you experienced the Holy Spirit?
2. What does it mean to you that in the Holy Spirit you have a comforter?
3. What difference does it make to know you are crowned with the Holy Spirit?
4. How has your life been transformed through the work of the Holy Spirit?

Zoom opportunities

If you're feeling isolated, are not ready to be face to face yet, or can't, but are happy to meet on Zoom, there is a weekly coffee time at 3pm on a Monday run by Charles Street but open to all, email Mel Watson for more details: mellwatson42@gmail.com.

There is also still a weekly Zoom fellowship called 'The Gathering' which is part of Southwell Methodist Church and run by Philip and Francine Holmes. You'd be most welcome, contact Philip to connect: philipholmes8100@gmail.com.

Email prayer chain

If you would like to join a prayer chain and receive prayer requests or to submit a prayer request (with permission of the recipient) please get in touch with Colin Beckett colin1244@gmail.com. It is for those of any church or none!

In person worship across the Circuit during the next four weeks...

		29th May 7th of Easter Sunday in Ascensiontide	5th June Pentecost	12th June Trinity Sunday	19th June Sanctuary Sunday
Balderton	10.30am	A Trowbridge	K Trowbridge	Ward T	N Falls HC
	Other		LA SoP 2pm		
Charles Street	10.30am	Falls HC	Mathews	N Falls HC	Winnington
	6pm	Mathews	Beech	Gibson	N Falls HC
Collingham	10.45am	United Service at Parish Church HC	A Trowbridge	Gibson	Dalby T
Elston	10.45am		Jubilee at All Saints US / 10.30am	LA	
Hope Community	10.30am	LA at B'gate	N Falls at B'gate / HC	Winnington Breakfast / at H'ville / 9am	Ward at B'gate
Long Bennington	10.30am	Ward T	Hart	United Service at Parish Church	LA
North End	6pm	Hibberts	Hart	Hibberts	Mathews
North Muskham	10.30am	K Trowbridge		Hucknall HC / T	
	2pm		LA Café		N Falls Café
Southwell	10am	Winnington at 10.30am	Adams	Hardy	Hibberts HC
	Other	Falls 4pm			Hucknall 4pm
Sutton-on-Trent	10.30am	Hibberts at Tuxford Café / 2pm	Morley US	Hibberts Breakfast / HC / 9am	Hibberts at Old England 4pm

The new preaching plan for June-August is now out and available [here](#) or from your local church.



On Thursday 16th June at 7.30pm Charles Street Methodist Church are welcoming Patrick Reagan OBE and the Kintsugi team who will share their experiences of how we can bounce forward and learn to thrive and support each other through life's challenges. Tickets are FREE- please book via <https://bit.ly/3yaek0d>