



The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church

Sunday 28th May 2023
The Feast of Pentecost
Staying in Contact



The Very Revd Rod Reid - Incumbent (*usual rest day Monday*)

Email: bockingchurch@gmail.com Call: (01376) 324887 www.stmarys-bocking.com
or on Facebook, search for 'St Mary's Church, Bocking', or 'Panfield Church'

Forthcoming Services

Hymns

St Mary's, Bocking

Sunday 28th May	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass
Wednesday 31st May	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday 4th June	8am/10am	Said Mass/Sung Mass

152

343

577

393

Panfield Church

Sunday 28th May	11am	Holy Communion
Tuesday 30th May	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Sunday 4th June	11am	Holy Communion

Gospel Acclamation

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of
your faithful people, and kindle in
us the fire of your love.*

NOTICES

Thank you - All the monies from the Flower Festival and May Day have now been counted, and I am pleased to say that over £6,700 profit has been made, our 2nd best result ever! Thank you to you all!

Stepping Stones - This new 5 week course started last Tuesday and will continue on Tuesday June 6th at 7pm. We are taking just a one week break to allow some leave for Fr Rod and family. The sessions will then run until June 27th. You are welcome to come to any sessions that you can make, and importantly the course is open to everyone. See Fr Rod for more details.

Rock Choir - Following popular demand, and after their successful concert last November we are thrilled that the Rock Choir will be back at St Mary's on Sunday June 11th at 4pm. We hope the concert will be outdoors with fabulous Summer weather for us to enjoy! If not, which seems a good possibility, we will be in church. Tickets on sale from TODAY. Adults £10, concessions £8 and children attend free.

Hymns - We would love you to choose your favourite hymns for us all to enjoy over the Summer months. The slips are at the back of the church and need to be returned by Sunday June 4th.

Friendly Friday Cafe - Following the success of Warm Space, our new regular community lunch space has re-launched in the Church Hall from 12-3pm and will run until July 21st.

Friends of St Mary's - The Friends have arranged a Barn Dance at Bocking Village Hall for **Friday July 14th at 7pm**. More information will follow in due course, but for the moment we wanted you to have the date, so that you can get it in your diaries now.

Benefice BBQ - You are all invited to the Benefice BBQ on Saturday July 29th from 3pm in the gardens at The Deanery, cost £5 for adults, children go free. More details nearer the time, but for now, please save the date.

Prayers - We keep in our prayers Peter Hopkins, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Peter, Jo, June Blackwood, Tony & Ann, and Margaret Everitt. We remember our care homes Millard House, Fern Lodge, Aspen Grange, Larchwood, The New Deanery & St Mary's Court. In our Years Mind, we pray for the families of Lucy Copp, Timothy Adcock, James Connelly, Andrew Telfer (Priest), Dorothy Joyce, and Stanley Bragg.

The Collect for Pentecost

God, who as at this time, taught the hearts of your faithful people
by sending to them the light of your Holy Spirit:
grant us by the same Spirit
to have a right judgement in all things
and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort;
through the merits of Christ Jesus our Saviour,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Epistle Reading - Acts 2:1-21

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.' But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Gospel Reading - John 20:19-23

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.'

Address

Today is Pentecost Sunday. This is the last big Sunday, feast day, before we enter ordinary or normal time which we mark next week at Trinity Sunday. So, we're wearing red today because red is the liturgical colour of the Holy Spirit. Red is the colour of fire and symbolizes the presence of God. Just as Moses saw the burning bush as a symbol of God's presence, so we wear red today as a symbol of God's presence with us, but also as a reminder of the first coming of the Spirit on that Pentecost after the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

Today for some of you is also known as WhitSun, or Whit Sunday. Why Whit? Well because it was on this significant day that many would be baptised. For that special service they would wear white, so White Sunday, that has since been shortened to WhitSun.

This is also the feast day that for many marks the birth of the church, the church's birthday if you like and some will have Pentecost parties in celebration. Thankfully, we are a little more served here but it is no less a significant feast.

In the Bible readings for today it emerges very clearly that God had a plan all along – the chaos and instability we go through in Lent, Holy Week and Easter give way at Ascensiontide to an excited expectation of the coming of the Spirit, the waiting and longing Fr Ian spoke of last week.

John's account of the breathing of Jesus on the disciples in the upper room being a little preview of the full immersion we read of in the Acts account of the Day of Pentecost. Acts gives us the prophetic background to the coming of the Spirit on the people that first Pentecost. God has a timing in mind for that event.

And let's be clear, the Holy Spirit is now available all the time, not just on the feast of Pentecost, to those whose hearts are open to receive Him. The church created a calendar to help us tell the story of Jesus and his followers; we are not even sure when the first Pentecost was, but we lump for 50 days on from Easter. It is tempting therefore to only pray "Come Holy Spirit" once a year on a Bank Holiday weekend, but I don't think that's the best timing for us. It is a prayer we should pray each day. Every day then could be the day we receive the outpouring of the Spirit. God in his grace waits for us to be ready; the timing then is in our hands as well as his. We need to be ready to open our hearts to receive the Spirit and his gifts. Are you ready to experience him today?

Thankfully, I think, our experience of the Holy Spirit is not usually fireworks and windstorms. Most frequently it is in the use of God given gifts and talents – yes that might be the supernatural ability to speak in another language, but it is more likely to be in the things that we realise we can do which can be of use to God's church and God's Kingdom. Our talents can be expressions of faith and confidence in God; they can proclaim the gospel even in the smallest ways.

If you think you don't have any talents like that, which can be of use to God, then think again; we are all God's children and he longs to give gifts to us all – if you haven't discovered yours yet maybe today, the time is right for you to discover it – what an experience that could be.

So, if we have a tradition, a habit, a practice, of openness to God, to the presence, the guidance and the inspiration of his Spirit, then our experience of God is bound to be a very positive one. Therefore, it doesn't matter what colour we wear, instead far more importantly at Pentecost we are called to connect to this day, to acknowledge the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus with his disciples when he appears in the locked upper room first offers them peace, then shows them his wounds and offers his peace again before breathing the gift of the Spirit on them. He is reminding them, and so us too, that his death and resurrection were acts of love for us, that offered forgiveness and reconciliation. Our Act of love is to be open to his Spirit, they go hand in hand. A passive response is not enough, an annual acknowledgement of the Spirit at Pentecost is not enough. He is telling us that he died and rose again for this. That when we trust in the Spirit, we too will know life's joys and frustrations, but we won't face them alone. His death and resurrection affect you now, your faith and call to discipleship. When we forgive, forgiveness is given, when we retain the sins of any they are retained.

That very last part is difficult, and for many is translated poorly. Jesus came to forgive sins, not to ask us to retain them. Instead, hold tightly is a better translation. If we hold tightly, cling only to what we know, those things we did wrong, then they will always be with us. Instead, we need to let go, forgive and release them, and so too will we be released for a fuller life in God.

This Pentecost, this WhitSun, we remember the Holy Spirit, the gift breathed upon the church, not a once only gift but daily moving, a daily blessing for us all. One that may not be as dramatic an experience as Acts but a transformative one none the less, that enlivens our faith, and shows us more clearly the gifts we have that God wishes to use within us.

My prayer is that each of us may know the fire of the Holy Spirit in our lives, forgiving us, healing us, guiding and re-shaping us. The time is now, but we must choose to open our hearts to him today. The question is, will we? Amen.

Post Communion Prayer

Faithful God,
who fulfilled the promises of Easter
by sending us your Holy Spirit
and opening to every race and nation
the way of life eternal:
open our lips by your Spirit,
that every tongue may tell of your glory;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.