

**Cheshire South Circuit**   
**Worship at Home - Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

**Call to Worship**

This is the day that the Lord has made. God of all, breath of life, Living water, Saviour, friend, we come as the hungry, to feed on your Word. We come as the thirsty, to drink of your love. We come as the faithful, to worship the Lord. **Amen.**

**A prayer of praise and adoration**

O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we adore you. You are one God in three Persons. You are the source of all creation, love and salvation. We praise you for your infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. We are humbled by your presence and grateful for your blessings. May your love fill our hearts and guide our lives. **Amen**

**A prayer of thanksgiving**

Holy Spirit, we come to you with thankful hearts, amazed by the love behind your creativity, in awe of the vastness of all that you have imagined and brought into being. Every day we experience the beauty that surrounds us: colours and shades, mountains and clouds, the intricate patterns of our own fingerprints, the rhythm of the tides, the scent of the sea. Your creativity never stops, from the smallest ladybird, to the mighty lion. Each one crafted by you and each one known to you. Thank you, Creator God. Thank you that you took the time to create us, your children, each of us unique and each of us loved. By your grace, you made us in your image, for your purposes. Keep our eyes open to the wonder of what you have done. Open our eyes to the wonder of being filled with and known by you - Holy Spirit who breathes all life. May we always experience your creativity Lord, in this your world. In the powerful name of Jesus, we pray, **Amen.**

**A prayer of Confession**

Gracious God,  
We thank you for your Holy Spirit and for the Spirit's generosity, comforting, interceding, inspiring, revealing truth, manifesting spiritual gifts and yielding spiritual fruit. Forgive us when we have neglected your gifts, shunning opportunities to build your Church. Forgive us when we have not borne the Spirit's fruit, lacking love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, or self-control. May your Holy Spirit not only confront us with our imperfections, but also inspire us to see the way of Christ more clearly. May we be so filled with your Spirit's power, that our lives bear rich fruit and help to build your Kingdom. In Jesus' name we ask, **Amen.**

**Assurance of Forgiveness**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) **Amen.**

**StF no. 379** *Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost*

**1** Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,  
taught by you, we covet most,  
of your gifts at Pentecost,  
holy, heavenly love.

**2** Faith that mountains could remove,  
tongues of earth or heaven above,  
knowledge, all things, empty prove  
without heavenly love.

**3** Prophecy will fade away,  
melting in the light of day;  
love will ever with us stay:  
therefore give us love.

**4** Love is kind, and suffers long,  
love is meek, and thinks no wrong,  
love than death itself more strong:  
therefore give us love.

5 Faith, and hope, and love we see,  
joining hand in hand, agree;  
but the greatest of the three,  
and the best is love.  
*Christopher Wordsworth*

### **Genesis 11:1 – 9** *The Tower of Babel*

<sup>1</sup> Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. <sup>2</sup> As people moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

<sup>3</sup> They said to each other, “Come, let’s make bricks and bake them thoroughly.” They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar. <sup>4</sup> Then they said, “Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth.” <sup>5</sup> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. <sup>6</sup> The LORD said, “If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other.”

<sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup> That is why it was called Babel—because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

### **Acts 2:1 - 21** *The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost*

<sup>1</sup> When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: “Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans?” <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!” <sup>12</sup> Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, “What does this mean?”

<sup>13</sup> Some, however, made fun of them and said, “They have had too much wine.”

### **Peter Addresses the Crowd**

<sup>14</sup> 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. <sup>15</sup> These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It’s only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup> No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: <sup>17</sup> “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. <sup>18</sup> Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. <sup>19</sup> I will show wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below, blood and fire and billows of smoke. <sup>20</sup> The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord. <sup>21</sup> And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’

### **Romans 8:14 – 17**

<sup>14</sup> For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. <sup>15</sup> The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “*Abba, Father.*” <sup>16</sup> The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children. <sup>17</sup> Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

### **Message**

The tower of Babel has been depicted in artworks as a huge structure reaching high into the sky, suggesting perhaps a desire to strive for closeness to heaven and to God. This was far from the true purpose of the tower, however. Whilst there is no evidence of an actual tower of Babel, it was likely a ziggurat - a pyramid like structure with stepped sides - and it was likely a very large ziggurat. But God was not pleased when the tower was being built. It was a great human achievement and the people were extremely proud of the great monument to themselves rather than to God. There had been a single language spoken by the people, and when the tower was being built God saw that this enabled the people to achieve great things - and in so doing become self-glorifying and proud. So God confused the language of the peoples, so that they could not understand each other. If they could not communicate freely they could not work together to achieve greater things and increase their pride and sense of self-importance. In our passage from Acts of the Apostles we see the apostles gathered together for Pentecost - otherwise known as the Feast of Weeks, held 50 days after Passover. It was a festival of thanksgiving for the harvested crops.

Whilst the apostles were gathered there was a sound like a rushing wind and then tongues of fire alighted on each of them. This was foretold by John the Baptist: "John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Luke 3:16) Tongues were a symbol of speech - telling and spreading the Gospel. Fire was symbolic of God's cleansing presence and of setting the believers' hearts aflame to share the Good News with others. Whilst God had created many languages to confuse the people at the tower of Babel in the Old Testament, in order to stop their self-congratulatory and vainglorious attitudes - here the Holy Spirit empowered communication to others who had different mother tongues. The apostles began speaking in many other tongues than their own. This was to the glory of God - not to celebrate mankind and his own achievements. The Good News was communicated to those who understood in their own languages. There were others in the crowd, however, who heard the words spoken by the apostles but did not comprehend them; these did not receive the message, and many mocked the apostles, accusing them of drunken babbling. Peter then spoke to the crowd, explaining to them why they should listen in their own languages to the testimony of the believers. Peter told how the Old Testament prophecies had been fulfilled. That day of Pentecost, following Jesus' death by crucifixion, his resurrection to life and his ascension, was dramatic and fulfilled the promise made by Jesus recorded in John's Gospel: "If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you" (John 14:15-17) Jesus was speaking to his disciples when he spoke these words - but we must remember that when we read the scriptures, it is we the readers who are also being addressed. We as believers are disciples of Christ. He is speaking to us. He is promising us that the Holy Spirit will be with us - always. Paul reiterated this in Romans, when he used adoption or "sonship" to illustrate all believers' new relationship with God by the presence of the Holy Spirit. In Roman culture an adopted person lost all rights in his or her old family and gained all the rights of a legitimate child in his or her new family. We are all children of God. We are no longer slaves or underlings. We are the Master's children. We are co-heirs with Christ. God has already given us the greatest gifts. God has given us his Son, forgiveness and eternal life. And our Father encourages us to ask him for whatever we need as we speak to him in prayer. We are privileged as children of God to be led by the Holy Spirit. "But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir." (Galatians 4:4-7) Life can be difficult at times for us all, as trials will come our way. We may not always feel as though we belong to God, but the Holy Spirit is our witness. The inward presence of the Holy Spirit reminds us who we are and encourages us with God's love. "And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." (Romans 5:5) **Amen.**

**A prayer for guidance from the Holy Spirit (Collect for Pentecost)**

Almighty God, your ascended Son has sent us into the world to preach the Good News of your kingdom: inspire us with your Spirit and fill our hearts with the fire of your love, that all who hear your Word may be drawn to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**StF no. 400** *Wind of God, dynamic Spirit*

**1** Wind of God, dynamic Spirit,  
breathe upon our hearts today;  
that we may your power inherit,  
hear us, Spirit, as we pray:  
fill the vacuum that enslaves us –  
emptiness of heart and soul;  
and, through Jesus Christ who saves us,  
give us life and make us whole.

**2** Voice of God, prophetic Spirit,  
speak to every heart today  
to encourage or prohibit,  
urging action or delay:  
clear the vagueness which impedes us –  
come, enlighten mind and soul:  
and, through Jesus Christ who leads us,  
teach the truth that makes us whole.

**3** Fire of God, volcanic Spirit,  
burn within our hearts today;  
cleanse our sin – may we exhibit  
holiness in every way:  
purge the squalidness that shames us,  
soils the body, taints the soul;  
and, through Jesus Christ who claims us,  
purify us, make us whole.  
*CCL 821965 Michael Saward*

**A prayer of intercession**

God of all creation, how wonderful are your works! So many that we cannot count them or know them all. And yet, you care so deeply about each and every one of your children, that you continue to work, for your kingdom to come and your dream for all people to be made real on earth. You are the wisdom beyond all knowing. You are the Maker of all things, and the earth is full of your creatures. We pray for our world, for the sea, great and wide. Help us to find ways of living more compassionately and sustainably, that we would stem the tide of climate change, and that we would work together for climate justice. We pray in your name that justice would roll down like fresh water, devoid of pollution and full of life for all.

We pray for all living things, both small and great. In your wisdom you lovingly created them; inspire us to care too, for all life. You breathe life into each of us. May we do more than respect the dignity of others, no matter how small or great they may seem. Inspire us to love our neighbour, empower us to work for justice for all. Open your hand that we may all have enough.

We look to you to give us food in due season, and for those who do not have and have no means to provide, we ask for provision, for justice, for equity. Help us to play our part in making this a reality.

Lord, send forth your Holy Spirit that we may all be renewed. We pray for your Spirit of peace to bring an end to the violence that is so visible; for all the conflicts that we know of Lord, we pray for an end. For all that we do not know, help us to become more aware of what we might do to play our part, as reconcilers and peace makers.

God of all creation, we ask of you now, that you would hear our prayers as we raise them to you, for all the different people in our lives for whom we care, for your Church and all her people, for all the work that we are involved in, for all of the situations that come to mind – we ask that you would uphold your people with your right hand of righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen**

**The Lord's Prayer**

**Closing Prayer**

Now may we go and light of Christ. And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us all, this day serve the Lord with the Holy Spirit so inflaming us that we are aglow with the and for evermore.

**Amen.**

***This worship service has been prepared by Sally Graham***