

Come down, O Love divine,
seek thou this soul of mine,
and visit it with thine own ardour glowing;
O Comforter, draw near,
Within my heart appear,
And kindle it, thy holy flame bestowing.

O let it freely burn,
Till earthly passions turn –
To dust and ashes in its heat consuming;
And let thy glorious light
Shine ever on my sight,
And clothe me round, the while my path illuming.

Let holy charity
Mine outward vesture be,
And lowliness become mine inner clothing;
True lowliness of heart,
Which takes the humbler part,
And o'er its own shortcomings weeps with loathing.

And so the yearning strong,
With which the soul will long,
Shall far outpass the power of human telling;
For none can guess its grace,
Till he becomes the place
Wherein the Holy Spirit makes its dwelling.

Bianco Da Siena (d.1434) Tr. R. F. Littledale (1833-90)

A message from the Archdeacon

Thank you for all that you are doing to ensure your congregation, and members of the local community, are cared for and looked after. May I thank everyone who has stepped up to the challenge of what it means to 'be church' in this 'new world' in which we find ourselves; livestreaming services, using social media, grasping 'zoom' meetings, and so much more. As I've sampled various online services and resources from different churches across the Archdeaconry I've been amazed and thankful for the creativity and willingness of people to use these technical resources to demonstrate something of the light of Christ to their community.

Please do take care and stay safe. God bless

Venerable Dave Middlebrook – Archdeacon of Bedford

Community Help Initiative:

If you need help during this difficult time contact:

| | |
|---------------|--|
| for Wilden | Martin & Susie Cooper wildennews@hotmail.com |
| for Colmworth | Jeremy & Jenny Freedman j.freedman@sky.com |
| for Ravensden | <ravensdenhelpline@gmail.com> or phone 772230 |
| for Keysoe | Laura Barry PellrLaura@outlook.com |
| for Bolnhurst | Jane Browning janebrowning50@gmail.com |

Editors: Revd. Timothy Wilson revtimwilson@wcrchurches.org
 Eunice Welbourn newsletterwcr@btinternet.com 01234 771583

Wilden with Colmworth & Ravensden St Mary Keysoe with St Dunstan Bolnhurst

www.wcrchurches.org

NEWSLETTER

May 2020

The Lord is here! His Spirit is with us.

The whole of May this year falls in the Easter Season, and ends on Sunday 31st with the great festival of Pentecost or Whitsun. At Pentecost we remember the gift of God's Holy Spirit whom He gave at this ancient Jewish Festival which literally means '50th day' after the Great Jewish Festival of Passover. This 'Paschal Feast' is also when Christians celebrate Easter when Jesus was raised from the Dead. So, many of God's people were gathered in Jerusalem at that Pentecost Festival and were all gathered in one place when God gave us the gift of His Holy Spirit for all people who will receive Him.

No wonder that great acclamation has come down the ages 'The Lord is here! His Spirit is with us' as God is not just up in heaven but present with us, among us, around us and even within by His Holy Spirit.

God our Father created and loved the World. God the Son – our Lord Jesus Christ - came to save the world from sin and death and Ascended back into Heaven 40 days later as we mark this year on Thursday 21st May. God the Holy Spirit came down at Pentecost to be with us for ever so we can have a relationship with God our loving heavenly Father, because Jesus has dealt with the old order of sin and death. Because God is with us by His Spirit, we can commune in prayer with God, know Him, love Him and experience His presence with us often in unexpected and unpredictable ways and times.

This year I don't expect us to be gathering together in our church buildings yet by 31st May. This is particularly sad for us at Wilden, Colmworth, Ravensden, Keysoe and Bolnhurst because being a 5th Sunday we were looking forward to a joint service for the first time ever as our new family of 5 churches at Bolnhurst. But we shall still celebrate together that day. Archdeacon Dave was due to be with us as our preacher, and somehow over the internet and by phone we shall gather with a message from Dave for us all.

This isolation and lockdown is teaching us more about our relationship with each other, and also with God our loving Heavenly Father. Our families and friends are physically separated from us. But we still communicate with them. We still love them and know them. We do not see God as He is in Heaven. As is His Son Jesus Christ. But, 'The Lord is here! His Spirit is with us!' We don't see or even physically touch God's Holy Spirit. But we know God loves and cares for us. One day this virus will be past. One day we shall be able to meet up together again. One day by faith in Jesus we shall be with God in Heaven. Until that time, we rejoice in our relationships with our families and friends. And with God our Father in Heaven. But still, 'The Lord is here! His Spirit is with us!'

Timothy Wilson

During this time of the Coronavirus Outbreak, all Churches are closed.

**Please look at our website: www.wcrchurches.org
Each Sunday there will be a short 'Message of Hope' on the website led by Tim, Geraldine & David**

Readings & collects:-

Sunday 3rd May; 4th Sunday of Easter & 'Good Shepherd' Sunday:
Genesis 7; Acts 2.42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2.19-25; John 10.1-10

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again: keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Sunday 10th May; 5th Sunday of Easter
Genesis 8:1-19; Acts 7.55-60; Psalm 31.1-5,15-16; 1 Peter 2.2-10; John 14.1-14

Almighty God, who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life: grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect; through Jesus Christ our risen Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 17th May; 6th Sunday of Easter & Rogation Sunday
Genesis 8:20-9:17; Acts 17.22-31; Psalm 66.7-18; 1 Peter 3.13-22; John 14.15-21

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Thursday 21st May Ascension Day (Deanery Live Zoom service 7.30pm)
Daniel 7.9-14; Acts 1.1-11; Psalm 47 or Psalm 93; Ephesians 1.15-23; Luke 24.44-53

Grant, we pray, almighty God, that as we believe your only-begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the heavens, so we in heart and mind may also ascend and with him continually dwell; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 24th May; 7th Sunday of Easter & Sunday after Ascension Day
Ezekiel 36:24-28; Acts 1.6-14; Psalm 68.1-10,32-35; 1 Peter 4.12-14 & 5.6-11; John 17.1-11

O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven: we beseech you, leave us not comfortless, but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Sunday 31st May Pentecost

Numbers 11.24-30; Acts 2.1-21; Psalm 104.26-36,37b; 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13; John 20.19-23 or John 7.37-39

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.

'Come Down O Love divine'

This hymn is probably the most well-known of the traditional hymns for Pentecost or Whitsun, not least due to its suitability as a general as well as a seasonal hymn, and is also suitable for weddings. It is unusual as a Hymn in that it is a prayer, rather than a statement of truth as are most traditional hymns. So it's more like a modern worship song. But it is actually old C14th, written in Italian.

The words are from a longer devotional poem by Bianca da Siena who was a Mystic and all we know of him is he spent the last part of his life in Venice. Little was known of Bianco's poem until 1851 when it was copied up from an ancient manuscript, and some years later The Rev Dr Richard Littledale translated 4 of the verses into the English Text of the hymn we now sing. Littledale was a 'High Churchman' and translated many ancient hymns from Latin, Greek and other languages. It was first published in 1867 in his 'Peoples Hymnal'

It was not widely sung until included in the English Hymnal in 1906 to a new tune by Ralph Vaughan Williams which he named after his birthplace in Gloucestershire 'Down Ampney'. Whilst the text did not appear in the original 1861 Hymns Ancient and Modern, it did in 1952 Hymns Ancient and Modern Revised, but to an equally fine tune 'North Petherton' by Vaughan Williams' near contemporary William H Harris. By 1983 Hymns Ancient and Modern New Standard, and later Common Praise and Hymns and Songs for Refreshing Worship both tunes are included.

My earliest memory of the hymn to 'Down Ampney' are as a 10 year old chorister in the summer Choral Festival in Winchester Cathedral. Singing with 900 others accompanied on full organ inspired me both by the soaring tune and the powerful words.

Timothy Wilson