

### Welcome and notices

Thanks for those who came to the maintenance day yesterday.

### Call to worship

The Father is sending a great Helper, the Holy Spirit, in My name to teach you everything and to remind you of all I have said to you. (John 14: 26 The Voice)

### Opening song: Spirit of the living God

<https://youtu.be/ZPZrxZgQjrg>

Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
We only want to hear Your voice  
We're hanging on every word  
Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
We want to know You more and more  
We're hanging on every word  
Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
We only want to hear Your voice  
We're hanging on every word  
Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
We want to know You more and more  
We're hanging on every word

'Cause when You speak, when You move  
When You do what only You can do  
It changes us  
It changes what we see and what we seek  
When You come in the room  
When You do what only You can do  
It changes us  
It changes what we see and what we seek  
You're changing everything

Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
We're leaning into all You are  
Everything else can wait

Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
Come now and breathe upon our hearts  
Come now and have Your way

'Cause when You speak, when You move  
When You do what only You can do  
It changes us  
It changes what we see and what we seek  
When You come in the room  
When You do what only You can do  
It changes us  
It changes what we see and what we seek  
You're changing everything

When You move, You move all our fears  
When You move, You move us to tears  
When You move, You move all our fears  
When You move, You move us to tears  
When You fall, we fall on our knees  
When You fall, we fall at Your feet  
When You fall, we fall on our knees  
When You fall, we fall at Your feet

'Cause when You speak, when You move  
When You do what only You can do  
It changes us  
It changes what we see and what we seek  
When You come in the room  
When You do what only You can do  
It changes us  
It changes what we see and what we seek  
You're changing everything

Spirit of the living God  
Spirit of the living God  
We only want to hear Your voice  
We're hanging on every word

### Opening prayer

Father we thank you for the life you have given us in your son Jesus Christ, for the salvation he brought us through his sacrifice.

Send your Holy Spirit to empower us to walk ever closer with our Lord and saviour. May the Holy Spirit free our praise, inspire our prayers, shape our lives, make us ready for the kingdom of your son Jesus Christ. **Amen**

### Offertory prayer

**Lord accept and bless these gifts; they are but tokens of the bounty you have first bestowed on us. Use the gifts of money and our talents to further the life of your church in place and elsewhere. Amen.**

### Confession

When the Lord comes, He will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Therefore, in the light of Christ let us confess our sins. As we say together,

**Merciful God, our maker and our judge, we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart, we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. We repent and are sorry for all our sins. Father, forgive us. Strengthen us to love and obey you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

God is slow to anger and full of compassion. He forgives all who humbly repent and trust in his Son as Saviour and Lord. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. **Amen.**

### Reading: John 16: 5 – 16

5 but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' 6 Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. 7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away.

Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because people do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

12 "I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you."

### The Disciples' Grief Will Turn to Joy

16 Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me."

This is the word of the Lord

### Thanks be to God

### Reflection: He will guide you into all truth Mike Gibbs

There is a story told about a children's catechism class that was learning the Apostles' Creed. Each child in the class had been assigned a sentence from the creed to recite and one morning the class was going through the recitation of the creed with each child saying their sentence.

The first one said, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth." The second child said, "I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." Then, after a number of other children followed with their additional statements about Jesus (His virgin birth, death and resurrection), there was an awkward silence.

Everyone waited for the next line of the creed to be recited: "I believe in the Holy Spirit." And waited ... and waited ... until finally, one of the children put up her hand and said, "Miss, the boy who believes in the Holy Spirit isn't here."

I think I can say with some confidence that, for everybody witnessing this service, either in church or at home via Zoom, the Holy Spirit is very much 'here.' As disciples of Jesus Christ, we believe that there is one God in three persons– the Father Almighty, Jesus Christ His only Son, and the Holy Spirit. And our reading today allows us to focus on this important essential of discipleship: disciples of Jesus are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

He is sometimes called the neglected person of the Trinity – the American pastor Francis Chan named his book on the Holy Spirit "The Forgotten God" -- but the Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit isn't just an add-on to the Christian life, but rather is an essential part of it. Indeed, without the Holy Spirit, the Christian life is impossible.

- Unless the Holy Spirit is present and doing his work, nobody can be born again or grow in Christ-likeness.
- Without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot accomplish the mission of Jesus.

- Attempting to live the Christian life without the supernatural assistance of the Holy Spirit is like trying to drive from Lands End to John O'Groats without any fuel in the tank or, for those of you with green credentials, a fully-charged battery.

- In other words: the Holy Spirit points us towards, and guides us into, all truth.

One of the important things we need to understand about the Holy Spirit is that he works in the background and doesn't seek to draw attention to himself. Jesus explained this to His disciples when He said: "I still have many things to tell you, but you can't handle them now. But when the Friend comes, the Spirit of the Truth, he will take you by the hand and guide you into all the truth there is. He won't draw attention to himself, but will make sense out of what is about to happen and, indeed, out of all that I have done and said. He will honour me; he will take from me and deliver it to you." [John 16:12-14, The Message].

In a book called 'Your Father Loves You', the evangelist James Packer compares the work of the Holy Spirit to a floodlight illuminating the exterior of a building. If it's done properly, the floodlight calls no attention to itself and you might not even be aware of the source of the light. Rather the floodlight just calls attention to the building it illuminates.

That's the way the Holy Spirit works – he doesn't call attention to himself, but rather seeks to illuminate Jesus, so that we can see Jesus and understand Jesus, and follow him better. And more than just pointing us to Jesus, the Holy Spirit helps us to become more like Jesus. But, before we get into how

the Holy Spirit works in us, I want to remind us of how the Holy Spirit enters our lives.

The Holy Spirit comes to live in us at the time of our conversion to Christ. The apostle Peter declared, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." [Acts 2:38 NIV]. Peter and the apostles also said, "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." [Acts 5:32 NIV].

The apostle Paul explained about the Holy Spirit's role in Titus chapter 3 when he wrote: "But then the kindness and love of God our Saviour was made known. He saved us because of his mercy, not because of any good things we did. He saved us through the washing that made us new people. He saved us by making us new through the Holy Spirit. God poured out to us that Holy Spirit fully through Jesus Christ our Saviour. We were made right with God by his grace. God saved us so that we could be his children and look forward to receiving life that never ends." [Titus 3: 4 - 7 ERV].

Isn't that beautiful and wonderful!

Let's listen again to Paul, writing to the Romans: "And Christ lives within you, so even though your body will die because of sin, the Spirit gives you life because you have been made right with God. The Spirit of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, lives in you. And just as God raised Christ Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by this same Spirit living within you." [Romans 8:10-11 NLT].

So there is no doubt that the Holy Spirit is living in us and is giving us spiritual life. Now

let's spend a few minutes exploring how the Holy Spirit is working in our lives to help us to live as disciples of Christ.

First of all, we must understand that the Holy Spirit helps us to overcome the flesh and to live in obedience to God. We read from Romans 8 just a minute ago about the Spirit living in us and giving us life, but look at what Paul says about the Spirit in the next few verses: "Therefore, dear brothers and sisters, you have no obligation to do what your sinful nature urges you to do. For if you live by its dictates, you will die. But if through the power of the Spirit you put to death the deeds of your sinful nature, you will live." [Romans 8:12-13 NLT].

The pull of the flesh to act according to the practices of this world can be very strong, but the pull of the Spirit is even stronger. The good news for us is that there is no temptation we face that we can't overcome by the power of God's Spirit in us.

Isn't that what Paul meant when he wrote (1 Corinthians 10:13 ERV): "The only temptations that you have are the same temptations that all people have. But you can trust God. He will not let you be tempted more than you can bear. But when you are tempted, God will also give you a way to escape that temptation. Then you will be able to endure it." The way to escape temptation – the way out -- is through the leading and empowering of the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 3:16, Paul prayed that all of us would be strengthened with power in our inner beings through the Holy Spirit. This doesn't mean that any of this is automatic or easy, but if we cooperate with the Holy Spirit,

and depend upon him, we can overcome the flesh and live in obedience to the Lord.

Secondly, we must understand that the Holy Spirit helps us to become more like Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the ultimate change agent. The process of becoming like Jesus is called sanctification and this metamorphosis comes in at least two ways, neither of which is easy or instantaneous; they are in fact a process.

- The first of these ways involves a disciplined and habitual approach to walking in the Spirit including the historic spiritual practices of things like prayer, Scripture reading, fasting, worship and service. These spiritual practices shape our inner life as intentional habits and they orient our lives toward spiritual things.
- By practicing these disciplines, we open ourselves up to the Holy Spirit's transformative power. In 1 Timothy 4:7-8, Paul encouraged Timothy to train himself in Godliness. "For physical training is of some value, but Godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come", Paul wrote (NIV). Our training in Godliness comes through spiritual discipline and obedience to God's Word.
- The second way that the Holy Spirit helps us to become like Jesus is through suffering. In his first letter Peter wrote: "So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honour on the day when Jesus Christ is

revealed to the whole world." [1 Peter 1: 6-7 NLT].

- Our painful trials refine and prove the genuineness of our faith. At some point all of us are going to face suffering – it may be persecution because of our faith, or it may be the suffering that comes from living in a broken and corrupt world.
- We might experience the physical suffering that comes from cancer, chronic illness, or life's accidents. We might experience emotional suffering from childhood trauma, sexual abuse, domestic violence, or mental illness.
- We might experience relational difficulties that pierce our hearts – betrayal, insults, gossip.

Some of the suffering we face can be the result of our own sinful or foolish choices, and some of it comes because of the sinful and foolish choices of others. But whatever the reason or the kind of the suffering we experience, God wants us to view it as a trial or a test that can produce growth in us.

We don't get to choose our struggles, but God has given us the freedom to choose how we respond to them. When 'life happens', to coin a phrase, it can be very ugly; horrid and evil stuff may come our way; but when it comes, God is present and ready to help in ways that transcend our ability to understand.

The Bible says that Jesus was made perfect (or complete) through the things He suffered (Hebrews 5: 8-9). And so, just like Jesus, we can be made perfect (or complete) through our suffering. If – through the Holy Spirit -- we cooperate with God, then God can use our

suffering to build our perseverance, shape our character, and increase our hope.

There's a great promise in Galatians: "Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." [Galatians 6: 7-9 NIV].

If we keep trying to cooperate with the Holy Spirit, then we will be pleasing to our God. It will take time, but it will happen, because the Spirit will help make it happen, if we don't give up.

Remember, we can't pursue the Christian life in our own strength and ability – we don't have the ability to follow Jesus, be changed by Jesus, and join in the mission of Jesus – we need the Holy Spirit to be able to do these things.

The gospel is good news because it tells us that none of us are good enough or strong enough to do what Jesus asks of us. But God promises to give us the strength and ability that we need to please Him through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

But all of us have to start at the same place – we have to first believe, then repent and receive Jesus Christ into our lives; when we do we are born again and receive the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, who guides us into all truth.

Let us pray:

Loving Father, help us to realise and remember that the Holy Spirit is working in us and that we must not try to live our lives on

our own. That we must believe that He resides in us and rely on His work in us. That we must be sensitive to His ministries in us, sensitive to his help, sensitive to his conviction, and perhaps above all else, sensitive to his guidance towards the truths that are found only in you.

This we pray in the name of your Son and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, Amen.

### **Song: Spirit of God**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KuY5hv1pBUw>

We thirst for Your presence; send down Your rain

Here in this moment, a holy embrace  
Fire of heaven, come surround

We bow down in reverence on this holy ground

Spirit of God, fall upon this place  
Fan every heart into a burning flame  
We long for You, call upon Your name  
Spirit of God, have Your way  
Have Your way, have Your way

Nothing between us; the veil is torn  
You're calling us closer; We run to You, Lord  
Spirit of God, fall upon this place  
Fan every heart into a burning flame  
We long for You, call upon Your name  
Spirit of God, have Your way  
Have Your way

More of You and less of me  
God, this life will bring You glory, glory, glory  
Spirit of God, fall upon this place  
Fan every heart into a burning flame  
We long for You, call upon Your name  
Spirit of God, fall upon this place  
Fan every heart into a burning flame  
We long for You, call upon Your name  
Spirit of God, have Your way  
Have Your way

More of You and less of me  
God, this life will bring You glory, glory, glory

More of You and less of me  
God, this life will bring You glory, glory, glory,  
yeah

More of You and less of me  
God, this life will bring You glory, glory, glory,  
yeah

Spirit of God, fall upon this place  
Fan every heart into a burning flame  
We long for You, call upon Your name

Spirit of God, fall upon this place  
Fan every heart into a burning flame  
We long for You, call upon Your name  
Spirit of God, have Your way  
Have Your way

### Prayers of intercession

These are responsive prayers the response to  
“Risen and ascended Lord” is “**Send us your  
Holy Spirit.**”

Holy God, you have called us to follow in the  
way of your risen Son, and to care for those  
who are our companions, not only with words  
of comfort, but with acts of love. Seeking to  
be true friends of all, we offer our prayers on  
behalf of the church and the world.

We pray that the work of Christian Aid won't  
be forgotten amid concern about the  
pandemic, that through their partners the  
work can still go on despite the  
circumstances. Lord among our daily concerns  
let us not lose sight of the least in our society  
and especially the least around the world.

Risen and ascended Lord  
**Send us your Holy Spirit**

We pray that as the dust continues settles  
after the election that those elected will be  
open to the Holy Spirit moving in them,  
guiding them to fair and just decisions for the  
benefit of all and not just the few. May they  
be reminded they have been called to serve  
the people and take our great servant king as  
their model.

Risen and ascended Lord  
**Send us your Holy Spirit**

We pray that those in our community who are  
suffering from whatever the cause may know  
your comfort and compassion. May we as  
your people in this community continue to  
turn that aspiration in to practice. We thank  
you for the work of Connecting Bowthorpe.  
We know there is more to do, Lord send  
workers to the fields to help support the  
vulnerable and weak in our community.

Risen and ascended Lord  
**Send us your Holy Spirit**

For those in pain and distress from ill-health  
or bereavement we ask for your healing and  
comforting power. We ask for healing for  
those who are ill in mind, body, or soul,  
restore them to fullness of health. Comfort  
those who grieve, who are dealing with  
bitterness and loss remind them that you are  
a God of redemption, reconciliation, and  
salvation. Help us bring comfort and peace to  
our community.

Risen and ascended Lord  
**Send us your Holy Spirit**

We ask for your spirit of peace and reconciliation be poured out in those places we see in the news where there is violence and bloodshed. We call out for an end to violence as a means to resolve disputes. Lord pour out your spirit of peace in those places.

Risen and ascended Lord  
**Send us your Holy Spirit**

All these things we pray in Jesus' name and for the extension of his kingdom here on earth. **Amen**

Shall we join together with believers around the world as we say the prayer our Lord taught us:

*The Lords prayer*

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
Amen.**

**Closing song: Here as in heaven**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtoFEqlrcg>

The atmosphere is changing now  
For the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The evidence is all around  
That the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The atmosphere is changing now  
For the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The evidence is all around

That the Spirit of the Lord is here

Overflow in this place  
Fill our hearts with Your love  
Your love surrounds us  
You're the reason we came  
To encounter Your love  
Your love surrounds us!

The atmosphere is changing now  
For the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The evidence is all around  
That the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The atmosphere is changing now here in this place  
For the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The evidence is all around  
That the Spirit of the Lord is here

Overflow in this place  
Fill our hearts with Your love  
Your love surrounds us  
You're the reason we came  
To encounter Your love  
Your love surrounds us  
Overflow in this place  
Fill our hearts with Your love  
Your love surrounds us  
You're the reason we came  
To encounter Your love  
Your love surrounds us!  
Surrounded by Your love, Jesus  
We need Your love, oh, oh  
Feel the song, feel the song, oh  
Come on let's sing this together  
From the depths of our hearts tonight  
Spirit of God fall fresh on us  
We need Your presence  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here as in heaven  
Spirit of God fall fresh on us  
We need Your presence  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here as in heaven

Spirit of God fall fresh on us  
We need Your presence  
Your kingdom come, Your will be done  
Here as in heaven!  
Here as in heaven, Lord

Sweep through this place, Lord  
Sweep through this place, Lord  
Heaven come to earth  
Heaven come to earth  
Kingdom come

A miracle can happen now  
For the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The evidence is all around  
That the Spirit of the Lord is here  
A miracle can happen now  
For the Spirit of the Lord is here  
The evidence is all around  
That the Spirit of the Lord is here

### **Closing blessing**

Loving God, we thank you for hearing our prayers, feeding us with your word, and encouraging us in our meeting together.

**Take us and use us to love and serve you, and all people, in the power of your Spirit and in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Send us out Lord to do your will, fill us with the Holy Spirit that we are equipped to do your will and help us to turn good words into actions that we might live out your will in our lives and in the lives of those around us.

**Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
**In the name of Christ. Amen.**