



## Pause to pray - week 6 - 15th May

*'A time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshippers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.'* [John 4:23-24]

Today is Pentecost Sunday; the day when we remember and celebrate the coming of God's Spirit in power upon the early believers. We may remember too that it was a day when around 3000 people became followers of Jesus. At the centre of it all was the Holy Spirit, bringing transformation not only to the lives of those who were already committed followers of Jesus, but to those who until then were simply bystanders.

The Holy Spirit is also at the heart of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Jesus speaks to her of living water; an eternal spring of life within - images and language that we regularly associate with the Spirit's work. As their conversation continues to discuss religious practice, Jesus cuts across such formalities with a profound declaration - the worship that God seeks is not tied to any religious tradition or ritual, but is worship that is offered with integrity and indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

There are many people in the world who, like the Samaritan woman, come from traditions and backgrounds that will be very different to ours. It is easy to see these differences as defining the barriers and boundaries of our Gospel endeavours. But God's Spirit knows no such limitations; God's Spirit flows and works where he will. And the impact of God's message is ultimately not reliant upon our human efforts but the power and work of the Holy Spirit.

As we pray today that we might experience the renewing of God's Spirit afresh; we might also take the opportunity to pray that God's Spirit will be at work beyond the boundaries of our church community. Who are where are the lives that we long to see transformed by God's Spirit? Where might God's Spirit already be at work? What are the boundaries and divisions that we cannot overcome but God's Spirit can? To what degree are we open to recognise encounters of "Spirit and Truth" in traditions and cultures that are different to our own?

**Generous God, by your life-giving Spirit,  
Fall afresh and renew us in every part of our being.  
Just as Jesus promised,  
Become a spring of eternal life within each of us;  
Inspiring and equipping us  
To make your Good News known.**

**By your Holy Spirit  
Overcome every barrier and boundary that separates our world  
From the promises and possibilities of your love.  
Bring life and hope where there is despair;  
Peace and healing where there is brokenness;  
Acceptance and response, where hearts are closed to you.  
Send forth your Holy Spirit;  
Make us alert and sensitive to recognise where he is at work,  
And open to receive all who seek you in Spirit and truth.**

**AMEN**