

ST PAUL'S CHURCH



31 May 2020



PENTECOST SUNDAY

Almighty God, who 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 Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Almighty God, who on the day of Pentecost sent your Holy Spirit to the disciples with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame, filling them with joy and boldness to preach the Gospel: send us out in the power of the same Spirit to witness to your truth and to draw all men to the fire of your love; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

A photograph of several lit sparklers in a clear glass jar. The sparklers are emitting bright, golden sparks that create a bokeh effect against a dark, gradient background. The overall mood is celebratory and warm.

I WAS THERE AT PENTECOST

A Monologue by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson
joyfulheart.com

Ah, Pentecost. People ask me about it every once in a while. I remember it as though it were yesterday -- though it's been twenty years or more since then. History was being made, the end of an old era, the beginning of the new -- and I was there.

I was 19 or so, up to Jerusalem from Galilee for Passover. Just a kid. It was the year they crucified Jesus, a fellow Galilean. I was stunned, heartbroken. After his death I just didn't go home. I hung around with some of his followers, in hiding actually. And then on Sunday, word came that he had risen from the dead. And so I stayed in the city.

Those were heady days, with Jesus appearing to the apostles and others for weeks on end. Then he ascended, went up into heaven. We were to wait in the city, the apostles told us. Something about power and witnessing and the Holy Spirit. So we waited -- about 120 of us -- meeting morning and evening, talking, reading scripture, praying. Nearly ten days we waited like that.

Then one morning when we had gathered together for early prayer -- about 8 o'clock or so -- the building where we were meeting was hit by a whirlwind -- or so it seemed. You could hear the howling of the wind but couldn't feel it in the room.

"O dear Jesus," someone called out. And then came the flames -- dancing flames appeared in the room above us.

"God Almighty," another person shouted. Peter was praying loudly, other apostles joining in. It was eerie, when I think about it. Wind that didn't blow, flames that didn't burn -- like the glory of God on the mountain when he appeared to Moses.

All over the room flames were licking, flaring over people. And as they did it seemed like the brother or the sister would explode. Joy would flood their faces, tears course down their cheeks, praise fill their lips. Hands were up and down. People were laughing and weeping, kneeling and standing on tiptoes reaching up, as it were, to God.

And then the flames touched me and I felt it too. I really can't describe it except that I felt flooded over by God. Happy, giddy even. Bursting with joy. Full!

The sounds were amazing, too. Moments before, the air had been filled with the sound of a windstorm. Now the room was full of the murmurs of voices -- some loud, some soft, all intense.

But it wasn't Greek or Aramaic. It seemed like different languages coming out of our lips -- powerfully, joyfully -- but different. We were pouring out into the square now, attracting attention. Since Pentecost was a major Jewish feast day, there were tens of thousands of pilgrims in the city from all over the world.

I didn't know what I was saying, but it felt good to lend my voice to God and just speak out to express the fullness and joy I felt within. As I was speaking in my own little world, people began to gather round to listen. A couple of families came by. Then some of them ran off to get others and soon there were hundreds of people gathered in groups around me and the others. Finally, I seemed to run out of words and just stood there with joy on my face.

Someone called to me in a language I didn't know.

"What?" I answered in Greek -- everybody knew some Greek.

"Don't stop!" he said.

"Don't stop what?"

"Don't stop saying the beautiful things you are saying about God's greatness. I've never heard anything like it in Cappadocian."

"Cappadocian?"

"Yes, aren't you from Cappadocia like the rest of us here?" He pointed to those who had gathered around. I shook my head. "It's like you're saying the Psalms, but in our own language -- so beautiful in our mother tongue! How do you know our language?"

I was about to answer, but someone across the square was shouting that we must be drunk. Peter was trying to deal with it. He climbed up on the steps of one of the houses and gestured for people to be quiet.

Peter raised his hand. "We're not drunk, brothers and sisters. It's only

nine o'clock in the morning. But what you're witnessing is a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that your sons and your daughters will prophecy. God's Holy Spirit has come upon us just like Jesus told us he would.

Peter said a lot more that I can't remember, but the crowd was hanging on every word. And he didn't go easy on them. "This Jesus whom you crucified," he said, "God has raised from the dead and exalted on high."

You could hear an audible gasp. Conviction was all over the square. Someone called out, "What should we do?"

Without missing a beat, Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized every one of you for the forgiveness of your sins and you'll receive the Holy Spirit, for the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are afar off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls."

"Where?" someone called. "Where can we be baptized?"

"Bethesda," another shouted. "There's water at the Pool of Bethesda." So the crowd started moving in that direction. Across town, through the narrow streets pushed this strangely quiet crowd of thousands. Down the grade, down the steps until they came to the waters of the pool. They stood at the edges, five to ten deep all around.

Peter was there by now and called for the apostles to join him in the water. Not enough. Then he motioned for me and other disciples to help. It was still. All you could hear was weeping from some, deep sighs from others.

Peter looked out at the multitude assembled around the pool and spoke quietly. "This is a baptism of repentance in the name of Jesus the Nazarene, whom God raised from the dead and exalted to the highest place. When you are baptized I want to assure you that you are both forgiven and loved by God. And you will receive the same gift of the Holy Spirit that you have seen upon us this day."

He invited people to come into the pool and they came by the scores. We would baptize them and they would come up sputtering -- and laughing and singing. All over the Pool of Bethesda that day we saw thousands -- someone counted three thousand people -- praising God and worshipping. I don't know if they were speaking in tongues or not.

that on that day, in that place, it seemed like the languages of all nations were turned toward God on High who had brought salvation and the joy of his Holy Spirit upon ordinary people who sought him -- from Jerusalem to Cappadocia and beyond.

Pentecost. Ah, Pentecost. That was the day that God began to pour out his Holy Spirit and he's never ever stopped since. Over the years I've seen the Spirit come in many ways -- sometimes like that day, sometimes quietly, sometimes in jubilation. But it's the presence of the Spirit, the Spirit of God, that matters, not our emotions or the circumstances.

Pentecost? Yes, I was there, and have never been the same since. You have seen a Pentecost haven't you? Haven't you?

This is, of course, a fictional account of the Day of Pentecost based on Acts 1-2. What it was like exactly, we don't know, but to one man it could have seemed like this.

Memory Verses

1

Our Vision

To be Ambassadors for Christ in the Community

2 Corinthians 5:20

Therefore, we are Ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

2

First Pillar

Being Spirit-Filled

Galatians 5:16

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

3

Second Pillar

Imitating Christ

Luke 9:23

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

4

Third Pillar

Persevering Prayer

Colossians 4:2

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Virtual AGM on 28 June 2020

Notice is hereby given that the St Paul's Church AGM will be held on **Sunday, 28 June 2020 at 10.30 am.** The meeting will be held via Zoom Webinar and we will be registering all members who are on the Electoral Roll to enable them to attend the virtual AGM.

The first notification will be sent by whatsapp/email to all to electoral roll members on Sunday, 31 May at 3pm. It will comprise the agenda, reports and guidelines for nominations for a People's Warden, 3 Synod Representatives and 5 PCC members. All nominations must be sent to the Chairman at **chairman_agm@stpaulschurch.org.sg** by **Saturday, 13 June at 12pm.**

There will be no direct voting at the virtual AGM on 28 June 2020. Hence all members will have to submit their votes via Proxy Forms to the Chairman. We will advise you further on the status of nominations and the proxy forms when we issue our second notification on Sunday, 14 June 2020.

There will be no discussion on the various reports during the AGM. The reports will be deemed as read. Members can submit any queries on the reports to Chairman (chairman_agm@stpaulschurch.org.sg) by 13 Jun at 12pm. All queries will be answered on 14 Jun, prior to the AGM. The queries and response will be conveyed to all members via whatsapp/email.

Please uphold the virtual AGM and the nomination of PCC leaders to the Lord in prayer.

VIRTUAL AGM 2020

TIMELINE

31 May, 3pm, Sunday

First notification will be sent by WhatsApp/Email to all electoral roll members.

13 June, 12pm, Saturday

Last day to submit nominations, questions you may have on the reports or issues you may wish to raise or seek clarification on to the Chairman.

14 June, Sunday

Second notification will be sent by WhatsApp/Email. This will include status of nominations, proxy forms and responses to the queries.

21 June, 12pm, Sunday

Last day to submit proxy forms.

28 June, 10.30am, Sunday

Virtual AGM via Zoom Webinar



Whitsunday free-will offering

This year's Whitsunday free-will offering will be given towards the Diocesan Missions Fund for allocation towards church growth.

The Whitsunday offering will be taken during the Pentecost Combined Online Service on Sunday 31 May 2020.

Cheques can be made payable to "The Diocese of Singapore", please write "Whitsunday 2020" on the back, and post to:

Diocese of Singapore
1 Francis Thomas Drive, #01-01
Singapore 359340

LOUNGE
TIME WITH
ST PAUL'S CHURCH



FRIDAYS, 8PM, LIVE ON YOUTUBE 

A monochromatic, teal-tinted photograph of a person with long, wavy hair seen from behind. Two hands are placed on their shoulders, one on the left and one on the right, suggesting a comforting or supportive gesture. The background is softly blurred, showing the profiles of other people.

Pastoral Care

For those who require prayer or pastoral care, do drop us an email at contact@stpaulschurch.org.sg or contact the respective pastoral staff directly.

Rev Jeremy: 9477 5476

Pastor Leon: 9199 3815

Pastor Shalini: 9857 0023

Pastor Leroy: 9710 2900

ST PAUL'S CHURCH

ONLINE GIVING



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St Paul's Church

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Please indicate "S2" under Reference No. The code "S2" refers to the English Congregation. Other information like specific giving (e.g. mission, building, etc.) as needed. Names are optional.



GIVE BY CHEQUE

Made payable to "St Paul's Church" and mailed to our Church address - 843 Upper Serangoon Road Singapore 534683. Kindly indicate English Congregation at the back of the cheque.