

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

What's on

Sunday 15 June: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Sunday 22 June: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Sunday 29 June: 10:30 AM.

Church service

Sunday 06 July: 10:30 AM.

Malcolm speaking

Monday 7th July: Mentoring training

Sunday 20 July: 10:30 AM. Dr Rolan Monje is our visiting speaker from the Manila ICOC.

Monday 1st September: Mentoring training

3-5 October: Young Professionals' retreat



Pentecost Sunday

What is Pentecost, and does it matter?

Pentecost is a festival celebrated by both Jews and Christians - but for different reasons. The word means 'fiftieth' - the 50th day after Passover (Leviticus 23:15-16).

The Jewish background.

"Pentecost is the New Testament name for the Feast of Weeks, when the wheat harvest was celebrated by a one-day festival during which special sacrifices were offered (Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:15-21; Deut. 16:9-12). Just as other festivals were associated with important events in Israel's history (e.g. Passover with the exodus from Egypt), so in Judaism the festival was associated with the renewal of the covenant made with Noah and then with Moses (Jubilees 6); in second-century Judaism Pentecost was regarded as the day when the law was given at Sinai."

Marshall, I. Howard. *Acts: An Introduction and Commentary*.

Pentecost is the second of the 'big three' festivals in the Jewish calendar (Passover, Pentecost and Feast of Tabernacles). It is this Jewish festival Paul is referring to when he writes to the Corinthians about his travel plans:

"But I will stay in Ephesus until Pentecost, for a wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries." 1 Cor 16.8

Christian Perspective

The Christian perspective on Pentecost began with the events of Acts 2, when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles and other believers gathered in Jerusalem.

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." Acts 2:1-4

This happened 50 days after Jesus' resurrection and 10 days after his ascension. The Spirit empowered the apostles to speak in other languages, leading to the baptism of about 3,000 people. To all intents and purposes it is the birth of the Church.

Early Christian Observance

The earliest Christians were Jewish and would have continued to celebrate Shavuot (Pentecost). But after the Acts 2 event, the meaning of the day transformed. By the 2nd century, Christians began observing Pentecost as a distinct celebration of the Holy Spirit's coming.

It became part of the Easter season, as the culmination of the 50 days following Easter Sunday (known as Eastertide). Some early churches baptised people on Pentecost, echoing Acts 2.

The day is often symbolised by the colour red, representing the fire of the Spirit.

Celebration

Tertullian (c. 198) an early church father describes Pentecost as a day distinguished by a “solemnity of exultation”. Fasting and kneeling in prayer were considered “unlawful”. Celebration was the flavour of the day. The promised Holy Spirit had come, bringing the life of Christ to his followers (Romans 8.9-11) and guaranteeing their inheritance (Ephesians 1.13-14).

What are we celebrating?

1. Empowerment for Mission

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8)

The Spirit empowers us to boldly proclaim the gospel. We ordinary people become extraordinary witnesses, continuing Jesus’ mission with courage, clarity, and conviction.

2. Creation of a New Community

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship...” (Acts 2:42)

The Spirit formed the Church—a diverse, Spirit-filled family marked by unity, generosity, worship, and mutual care. Pentecost established the Church not as a building but as a Spirit-led community.

3. Indwelling Presence of God

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit...” (Acts 2:4; see also the promise in Acts 2.38)

God’s presence no longer dwells in a temple but within each of us. The Spirit guides, comforts, convicts, and transforms us from the inside out, enabling us to live like Jesus.

What do you like to celebrate when it comes to the gift of the Holy Spirit? What gives you joy as you reflect on God’s great gift?

Your brother, Malcolm



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