

Show me your ways, Lord,  
teach me your paths.

Psalm 25: 4



REDDITCH BAPTIST CHURCH - MAY 2026

## LEADERSHIP LETTER

This month, we're celebrating Pentecost – yes, we sometimes hide it away under the title Whitsunday, but biblically it's Pentecost, and it's actually a very important festival.

Pentecost started in the Old Testament as a harvest festival celebrated 50 days after Passover (the word "Pentecost" comes from the Greek word for "fifty"). At some point it also became a celebration of God giving the Law to Moses at Mount Sinai, basically the birth of the nation of Israel as God's covenant people – a very significant event in the unfolding of God's salvation plan!

To us today, Pentecost marks the coming of the Holy Spirit on the followers of Jesus, basically the birth of the church – another momentous event in the plan of salvation!

And note that in the New Covenant, the Holy Spirit was given not just to select priests, prophets and kings, but to everyone: young and old, male and female, rich and poor, 1<sup>st</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is one of the most extraordinary, breath-taking aspects of the Christian faith!

And why has God given us the Spirit? Here's the reason Jesus himself gives us: the Spirit will provide power for us to be his witnesses (Acts 1:8). The church – all of us! – is in the world to witness to Jesus' victory, his atoning death and his triumphant resurrection. If you feel inadequate, no problem; God knows we could never do it on our own, that's why he gives us his Holy Spirit!

The existence of the church is actually a very strong argument for the truth of gospel. If the Good News about the resurrection wasn't true, why would the first disciples have risked the wrath of the authorities by proclaiming that they had crucified the Messiah, but that God had overruled their stupid mistake and raised him to life again? You only risk your life and your reputation for something you're absolutely convinced is true!

Those first disciples went on to gain thousands of converts through their proclamation. No wonder, really: the message of forgiveness and eternal life in Jesus is great news! Maybe even too good to be true... but they were still convinced that it was indeed true.

How could all those thousands be so sure that the apostles were right, rather than the Sanhedrin? Only through the testimony of the Holy Spirit! First they saw evidence of the life-transforming power of God in the first believers, which confirmed the spoken message; then they received the same Spirit themselves, and his internal testimony confirmed the truth of what they'd seen and heard in others.

Don't ignore Pentecost; don't ignore the Holy Spirit. If you are a follower of Jesus, the above should be true of you as well: the Holy Spirit is yours by right – but are you making room for him to work in your life?

If you feel your faith isn't strong enough to withstand pressure, if you are scared to talk about Jesus with your friends, if God is more of an abstract concept than a living presence in your every-day life, maybe you need a Holy Spirit top-up?

### 3 Dates and information

Changes to our in-person prayer meetings:

We are still holding two in-person prayer meetings a month, but please note that the days, times and place have changed:

They will now take place in the church kitchen at 11am on the second Monday and at 8pm on the fourth Wednesday of the month.

We do still have a number of house groups which meet at different times during the week for prayer, Bible study and fellowship. If you would like to join one of them, please speak to David or one of the Deacons!

Saturday 23 May at 1pm. Dedication service for Joshua Bevan (here at Redditch Baptist Church)

Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> May (Pentecost Sunday) at 1m. Pentecost party for all the churches, with BBQ and a bouncy castle, as well as some prayer and worship. Venue: on the church green by the bandstand, next to st Stephen's.

Monday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 730pm: Women @ One. This is a monthly gathering for women from any church, currently meeting in our church kitchen at 7.30pm on the last Monday of the month. All women are welcome to join!



*...well you cannot fault the efficacy of  
the new 'Planned Giving' scheme...*

#### 4 DAVID'S SABBATICAL 2026

The Baptist Union strongly recommends that all pastors should have a sabbatical leave every seven years, lasting 1-3 months. Here's how they describe the reason behind it:

*Sometimes ... it helps to stand back from regular duties and to take time to study, reflect and pray at greater leisure than the demands of ministry allow. The purpose is to enrich their ministry and make it more effective, which benefits both the minister and the church.*

*A sabbatical is meant to be a stimulating and refreshing break from ministry (but not a holiday) leading to a minister returning better equipped to serve, through deeper understanding and new insights.*

It's now eight years since I last had a sabbatical, so this summer I will be taking a two-month sabbatical leave, starting on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> June and ending on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> August (inclusive).

During those two months I will focus on two specific areas:

1. – An important aspect is simply spiritual rest and refreshment. To this end, I will go on a five-day retreat at Lee Abbey (Devon), and of course aim to spend more personal time with the Lord throughout the two months.

I will also visit different churches every Sunday, not only to see what I can learn but also because I rarely get to be on the receiving end of ministry!

2. The other main theme that I want to focus on is pastoral care, a broad area of ministry where I feel I still have a lot to learn. There are many aspects to pastoral care – it's not just visiting the sick and house-bound! – and different churches approach it in quite different ways.

So I will do an online course on this subject, and also investigate what other churches do in this area. And of course I have a long list of books lined up as well, covering both practical issues and particular topics like relationships and mental health... Please feel free to suggest other relevant areas you think I should be looking into!

Hopefully both of these aspects – spiritual refreshment and delving deeper into pastoral care – will enhance my ongoing ministry, and hence benefit the congregation as well.

Practically, this means that even though I will be at home for most of the time, I will be absent from our regular church ministry, both Sunday mornings and mid-week events (although the deacons will be able to contact me in emergencies).

Please pray that this will be a fruitful time of spiritual and physical restoration as well as learning, and that it will be a blessing to all of us!



5 PP Looking at God may26

*By the Revd Roy Shaw, a retired but active priest in the diocese of York, where he is a spiritual director.*

## **50 days after Easter**

Pentecost. The word means '50 days after Easter'. It's the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts chapter 2, and it's the birthday of the Church. So far so good; but beyond this, things get a bit hazy for some of us. We are familiar with the idea of God the good Father, and we've heard and read of all that Jesus - God the Son - said and did. But the Holy Spirit? *Who He?!*

The images used of the Holy Spirit in scripture can be a bit of a barrier to understanding. Words like 'spirit' 'wind' 'flame' 'breath' are all a bit elusive, and they possibly leave us with a feeling that in trying to understand the Holy Spirit we're chasing rainbows. But if we dig a little deeper, we can see that these images speak of an unhindered force which can be powerful and yet gentle, cleansing and free.

The Bible is full of images of the Holy Spirit. There is 'dove', as seen on many Christmas cards and in stained glass windows. It's usually white. A white dove image speaks of gentleness and purity, unfettered as it wings its way across the sky.

Then there's the more difficult word 'advocate'. Someone who speaks up for us, comes alongside us, someone to aid us in times of need. We could go on with different images which tell us more of the character of the Holy Spirit, but there are two key things to remember. Firstly, this is the spirit of Jesus. All that Jesus was in earthly form, the Holy Spirit is to us now. Jesus is no longer among us as He was two thousand years ago, but the Holy Spirit makes Him available to us now.

Which brings us to the second point; the Holy Spirit is given by the good Father to us, His children - giving us, as it were, an injection of Jesus' personality, wisdom and holiness, enabling us to serve as Jesus did, enabling us, as Mother Teresa put it, 'to do little things with great love'.

The first Pentecost set the young Church in Jerusalem off on a great adventure which culminated in today's world where one in three people worldwide say they are Christians. It could be a great adventure for us as we ask God, the good Father, to gift us with the Spirit of Jesus. Let's do it!



A Friend to All

O faithful one who stays by me  
Through the trials from which I flee,  
Help me show your love to all,  
Let them believe and never fall

Sacred redeemer, loving friend  
You are the one on whom I depend  
My sins are gone, my wounds are healed  
Through you my future fate is sealed.

No words can tell no songs can sing  
Of all the love and joy you bring  
To every boy, girl, woman and man,  
You deliver your immortal plan.

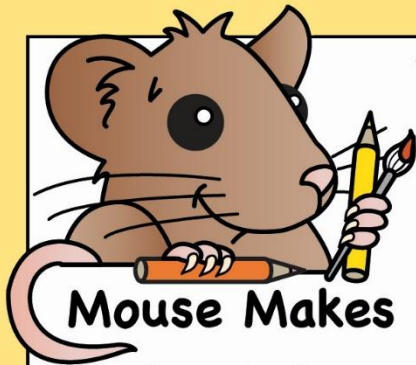
Life is full with our saviour at the helm  
He's Lord of all the eternal realm,  
Your kingdom comes and evermore  
We will meet on Zions shore.

Name above all names, saviour and friend  
He will be with me until the end  
Who is He? Why Jesus of course,  
The King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.

We show respect to you O divine one  
For being fully God and fully man,  
You who are ethereal, unchanging and pure  
A friend to all a friend for sure.

ROSIE





WHO IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

The Spirit of  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Genesis 1:2

The  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 of the Father.  
 Acts 1:4

The Spirit of  
 A \_\_\_\_\_  
 Romans 8:15

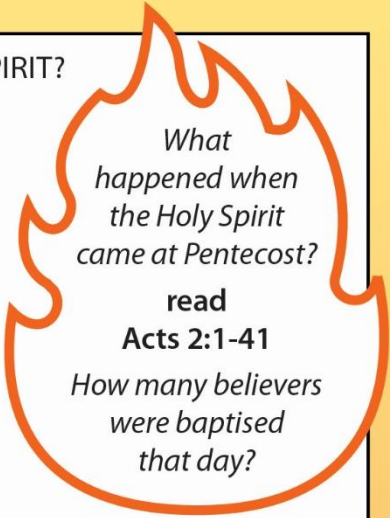
H \_\_\_\_\_  
 John 14:26

The Spirit of  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 John 16:13

The Spirit of  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Acts 16:7

The Fruit of the Spirit  
 Galatians 5:22-23

\_\_\_ O \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Y \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ C \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ T \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ I \_\_\_  
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What  
 happened when  
 the Holy Spirit  
 came at Pentecost?

read  
 Acts 2:1-41

How many believers  
 were baptised  
 that day?

D G C O M F O R T E R L C  
 K E O N P P E A C E G O D  
 I N U F A K J D H J R R F  
 N T N A T L O V E O A D H  
 D L S I I O H O L Y C D L  
 N E E T E A I C P L E E G  
 E N L H N D E A E D E B L  
 S E L F C O N T R O L J O  
 S N O P E P T E A C H E R  
 J S R J O T R U T H F S Y  
 R S P I R I T I L U I U K  
 K P P R O M I S E R S R  
 I D W I N D D O V E W

Look up the Bible verses and fill in the  
 missing words. Look for them in the  
 word search then look for these words below.

HOLY • SPIRIT • COUNSELLOR • COMFORTER  
 ADVOCATE • TEACHER • LORD • PROMISE  
 GLORY • GRACE • FAITH • DOVE • FIRE • WIND

## 8 Crossword Clues and Solutions – May 2026

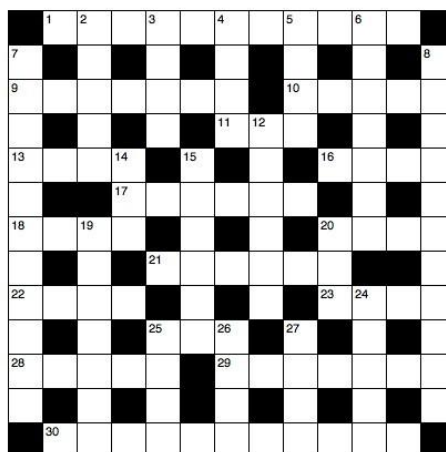
### Across

- 1 Overpowered (Deuteronomy 11:4) (11)  
 9 'The — are mantled with corn' (Psalm 65:13) (7)  
 10 'Each man—a sword to his side' (Exodus 32:27) (5)  
 11 On the death of Jesus the curtain in the temple was torn from— to bottom (Matthew 27:51) (3)  
 13 Stagger (Isaiah 28:7) (4)  
 16 'Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought—and doesn't do it, sins' (James 4:17) (2,2)  
 17 Stir up or provoke (Acts13:50) (6)  
 18 Burden (Luke11:46) (4)  
 20 'As far as the east is from the—, so far has he removed our transgressions from us' (Psalm 103:12) (4)  
 21 Sign (Luke23:38) (6)  
 22 'After that, Jesus poured water into a basin and began to—his disciples' feet' (John 13:5) (4)  
 23 The nature of the seven ears of corn which swallowed up the good ears in Pharaoh's dream (Genesis 41:23) (4)  
 25 Has (anag.) (3)  
 28 'This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, —sons' (Genesis 10:1) (5)  
 29 'I will...make them drunk, so that they...sleep for—and— awake' (Jeremiah 51:39) (4,3)

- 30 Paul said of him, 'he often refreshes me and is not ashamed of my chains' (2 Timothy 1:16) (11)

### Down

- 2 Worth (Matthew 13:46) (5)  
 3 'A bruised — He will not break' (Matthew 12:20) (4)  
 4 'Suddenly a great company of the heavenly — appeared with the angel' (Luke 2:13) (4)  
 5 Slip (anag.) (4)  
 6 'Take an awl and push it through his — — into the door, and he will become your servant for life' (Deuteronomy 15:17) (3,4)  
 7 Bountiful (2 Corinthians 8:2) (11)  
 8 'Therefore, as we have —, let us do good to all people' (Galatians 6:10) (11)  
 12 Acquire (2 Timothy 2:10) (6)  
 14 Container cover (Numbers 19:15) (3)  
 15 'He...became obedient to death, even death on—!' (Philippians 2:8) (1,5)  
 19 Refrain (1 Peter2:11) (7)  
 20 'She began to—his feet with her tears' (Luke 7:38) (3)  
 24 One who worships Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva (5)  
 25 'Give to everyone who—you' (Luke6:30) (4)  
 26 'I lift up my eyes to the hills; where does my—come from?' (Psalm 121:1) (4)  
 27 One of those whom the Lord said would be taken from Jerusalem and Judah as judgment on them (Isaiah 3:2) (4)



## 9 Lots of keys, but what do they open?

*“To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: These are the words of Him who... holds the key of David. What He opens no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open.” (Revelation 3:7)*

My house is full of keys. There seem to be pots full of them in many rooms. I have no idea what most of them are for. None are labelled.

We lost an important key recently, and the only clue as to what it looks like was that there were two keys on one ring. much help, because there are lots like that. I expect it will turn up some day, probably when we are not looking for it.

I had a large bunch of keys which I carry every day, but I removed most because they were so heavy. Probably some of those keys opened the house I lived in 50 years ago! We do not like throwing keys away. We always think they will come in useful. I cannot think how! At one of the churches that I attend, the wardens, quite rightly, decided to change the locks and presented me with a new key. I still have the old one on the ring as I have not thrown it away. Probably every time I try to get into the church, I will try both keys as they look the same. There are other keys on the church keys ring, but I have no idea what they are for.

St Peter was given the keys to the Kingdom, but there is another verse about keys from Revelation which I like. I expect that key will not get lost!



### Our British bumblebees

Did you know we have about 270 kinds of bee in the UK, including 24 types of bumblebees? Here are just six of them:

**Early Bumblebee:** - Found throughout the UK. Rather small, with distinctive lemon-yellow bands on thorax and abdomen, and an orange tail. An important pollinator of our soft fruit.

**Common Carder Bee:** - One of our most common bees, and often still feeding in November. Fluffy, brown and orange, with sometimes darker bands on the abdomen.

**Tree Bumblebee:** - Found in England and Wales, and recently Southern Scotland. A fuzzy bee, with brown-orange hairs on its thorax, a black abdomen, and a white tail.

**Red-tailed Bumblebee:** - The female is very large, with a big red 'tail', while males are smaller.

**Garden Bumblebee:** - A scruffy-looking large bee, with a long tongue and face. It has yellow bands at the collar, rear of the thorax and at the first segment of the abdomen, and the tip of the tail is white.

**Buff-tailed bumblebee:** - The biggest of our bumblebees, with a yellow collar near the head and another on the abdomen. The queen has a buff-coloured 'tail', while the workers have white 'tails' and black hair on their faces.

Be kind to our bees. They are in steady decline across the UK.

10Crossword Solution:

**ACROSS:** 1, Overwhelmed. 9, Valleys. 10, Strap. 11, Top. 13, Reel. 16, To do. 17, Incite. 18, Load. 20, West. 21, Notice. 22, Wash. 23, Thin. 25, Ash. 28, Noah's. 29, Ever not. 30, Onesiphorus.

**DOWN:** 2, Value. 3, Reed. 4, Host. 5, Lisp. 6, Ear lobe. 7, Overflowing. 8, Opportunity. 12, Obtain. 14, Lid. 15, A cross. 19, Abstain. 20, Wet. 24, Hindu. 25, Asks. 26, Help. 27, Hero.



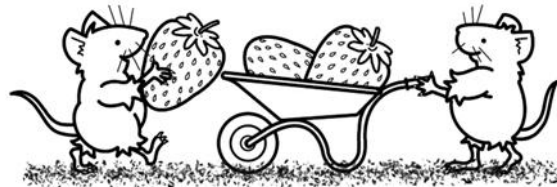
**Look:**

If you look at the world, you'll be distressed.

If you look within, you'll be depressed.

If you look t Christ, you'll be at rest.

Corrie Ten Boom



Lord, make us the instruments of your peace.

Where there is hatred, let us sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is discord, union;

Where is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

