



Pentecost is often called the birthday of the Church, but is that correct?

Pentecost Sunday is one of the movable feasts in the Church calendar. This is because it depends on the date of Easter. In the Church calendar it falls seven Sundays or 50 days after Easter Sunday. This year it is Sunday 19th May.

Pentecost is traditionally known as Whitsun. This comes from the term White Sunday, because historically people wore white gowns on Pentecost. In some countries they still do.

The day after Whitsun was Whit Monday. Bank Holidays were introduced into the United Kingdom by the Bank Holiday Act 1871, and Whit Monday was one of the first British Bank Holidays. On this day, in many places around Britain, it was the custom that Sunday Schools went on parades carrying banners through the towns and villages and finished with a big party. It was a time when all the churches of different traditions would come together for a big party, because Pentecost was considered the birthday party for the Church. In 1971, the British government reviewed the 1871 Bank Holiday Act on its 100th anniversary. It was then decided to fix Whit Monday Bank Holiday as the last Monday in May. Whit Monday became Late May or Spring Bank Holiday, which falls on Whit Monday some years, but not every year.

Pentecost is actually the Greek term for the Jewish holiday Shavuot. In the Jewish calendar Passover was followed by Shavuot, which was called the Feast of Weeks, and it was the Harvest Festival for the first fruits of the wheat harvest in the Holy Land. The Feast of Weeks was seven weeks. The Hebrew words for seven and week are related, so it was a week of weeks or 49 days. The Sabbath following a week of weeks is the 50th day, as explained in Leviticus 23.15–16. The New Testament was written in Greek and the Greek for 50th is Πεντηκοστή (Pentēkostē), hence Pentecost.

At Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples. Peter stood up and preached, telling the story of Jesus to the crowds. That Harvest Festival was the first fruits of the great harvest of souls. According to Acts 2.41, ‘about three thousand were added to their number that day’. These people were Jews of the diaspora, and some Gentile converts to Judaism. They returned to their homelands and synagogues with the Gospel message. According to the list in Acts 2.9–11 the people returned to their places of origin in what is today Greece and Italy in Europe; the Holy Land, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Arabia in the Middle East; as well as Egypt and Libya in Africa. Sometimes Jews also come from further afield as well. A bit later we also read in Acts 8.27 of the Ethiopian eunuch who came to Jerusalem to worship. In fact, these are the geographical areas where the Early Church was strongest.

In 1904 when the Welsh Revival occurred and similar things happened like at the first Pentecost it was known as the Pentecostal movement, which today is a worldwide form of Christianity.

In March 2012 the National Geographic did a special issue called ‘In the Footsteps of the Apostles’ which said, ‘They were unlikely leaders. As the Bible tells it, most knew more about mending nets than winning converts when Jesus said he would make them “fishers of men”. Yet 2,000 years later, all over the world, the Apostles are still drawing people in.’

A birthday is an anniversary of your birth. Your first birthday is held a year after your birth day. So, Pentecost was not the birthday, but the birth day of the Church. If you want to know what happened next, read the book of Acts.

Dates for May and early June 2024

Sunday 5th at 10.30 – Helen Porter including Sacrament (Penketh Methodist Church).

Thursday 9th – Ascension Day.

Sunday 12th at 10.30 – Rob Brooks.

Monday 13th at 19.30 – Deacon's Meeting at 3 Kensington House.

Sunday 19th at 10.30 – Susan McArthur (Pentecost)

Sunday 26th at 10.30 – Christine Ormerod (Bethel I.M. Church, Wigan).

Sunday 2nd at 10.30 – Diane Bennett including Sacrament.

Monday 3rd June at 19.30 – Church Council Meeting – Fellowship Room. Presentation by Audio visual company.

Sunday Morning Worship can be shared on Zoom. Meeting ID: 874 0789 6194 and Password: 427632.



Songs of Praise Experience. Bob Ellison recently attended a recording of Songs of Praise. The recording was featured in 'Songs of Praise' on Sunday 28th April. It will be still available on the BBC I Player. Here are his thoughts.

I got my ticket after Googling Songs of Praise venues then applied. The venue was a large building called The Edge in Wigan. The evening started at 6:45pm, introduced by Sean Fletcher with a good number of people in the audience. The evening consisted of a group of musicians and singers, who led the audience in singing 6 or 7 songs repeated twice. They were excellent, very passionate about their faith with a number of prayers throughout the evening which ended about 10pm. The intention is to show individual songs from the event over the coming months on the Sunday programme. Met a gentleman from Cambridge who had been to 77 recordings and a lady who had been to 50. Would I go again, NO, too many hands in the air and happy slappy type event. I am very much of a traditionalist. However, I believe their Sunday attendance is around 400, with a good proportion of young people attending.

Monday Afternoon Working Group. Continue to meet every Monday with the exception of Bank Holidays, 2- 4 pm. Suggested 'Skip Day' has been put on hold for the present but due warning will be given when one is arranged.

Thank You. From Gill and Rob for all the cards, flowers and unexpected gifts that were received on the occasion of their Golden Wedding.

Afternoon Quiz suggestion. Would anyone be interested in holding a regular afternoon tea and quiz not only for themselves but for friends and neighbours? We would appreciate feedback on this idea to either Anne or Rob.



May Prayer Points.

- Following the recent meetings to consider the best way forward for the Connexion of Independent Methodist Churches, please pray for those who lead the denomination that they will fully explore all the options.
- That we at Grappenhall will pray for opportunities of making known the Christian Message locally in an age of scepticism.
- Pray for our 'home' the earth. Give thanks to God for his wonderful provision.
- Remember in your prayers those who are no longer able to join us in fellowship.

Amongst others remember Enid Hart, Ron Banks, Marjorie Stockton, Irene Roney, Mike and Anita Lynsky, Roger and Lillian Hazeldine, Sandra and Lionel Mathias, Dylis Hancock, Pat Weaver.

- Continue to pray for peace in the Middle East and elsewhere and for those who are attempting to relieve the suffering caused by warfare and crop failure in Gaza and Ethiopia.

What are your prayer points? Please put them on a piece of paper and drop in the offertory plate.

May Birthdays. 5th – Sharlee Misal, 15th – Margaret Jenkinson, 23rd – Rob Brooks, 25th – Philip Newlan.

Wedding Anniversaries. 3rd- Graham and Elaine Welborne, 14th- Colin and Jocelyn Whitby.