



# The Benefice of St Mary's Bocking & Panfield Church

Sunday 19th May 2024

Pentecost

Staying in Contact



The Very Revd Canon Rod Reid - Incumbent (*usual rest day Monday*)

Email: [bockingchurch@gmail.com](mailto:bockingchurch@gmail.com) Call: (01376) 324887 [www.stmarys-bocking.com](http://www.stmarys-bocking.com)

or on Facebook, search for 'St Mary's Church, Bocking', or 'Panfield Church'

## Forthcoming Services

## Hymns

### **St Mary's, Bocking**

Sunday May 19th	8am	Said Mass
Sunday May 19th	10am	Sung Mass followed by the APCM
Wednesday May 22nd	9.30am	Said Mass
Sunday May 26th	8am	Said Mass
Sunday May 26th	10am	Sung Mass

See  
*special*  
*Booklet*

### **Panfield Church**

Sunday May 19th	6pm	BCP Evensong
Tuesday May 21st	5pm	Evening Prayer/Office Hour
Sunday May 26th	11am	Holy Communion

## Gospel Acclamation

*Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of  
your faithful people, and kindle in  
us the fire of your love.*

## NOTICES

**Charity of the Month** - In May, the monies given at Tea & Coffee after the main service at St Mary's will go to Christian Aid. The total raised for Roundwood last month was just over £100, thank you!

**Bocking Concert Brass** - Due to the poor weather on May Day, Bocking Concert Brass were unable to perform as part of this year's festivities. However, following some recent correspondence we are thrilled to say that they will be playing a concert in Bocking on Sunday July 14th from 2-4pm, and it will be here at St Mary's. More information to follow but for the moment please save the date!

**Flower Festival/May Day** - What a wonderful success the Flower Festival & May Day has been this year. Despite a little rain on May Day itself, it was brilliant to welcome so many down to the church over the Bank Holiday Weekend. I am delighted to say that the profit made from the weekend is £6,668.69.

**Annual Parochial Church Meetings** - After the 10am service on Sunday May 19th, it will be St Mary's Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) and Fr Rod would be really pleased if many could plan to stay for that. Please note that tea and coffee will be in church on that Sunday.

**Friendly Friday Cafe** - The Café had paused for an Easter break, but we are pleased to say that it is now back up and running every Friday until the middle of July. Why not pop in and bring a friend too?

**Men's Mental Health training** - We have partnered with MIND Mid & North Essex to offer free training. It will take place in the Church Hall on Tuesday June 11th 1pm - 4.30pm.

**Prayers** - We keep in our prayers Noreen Watkinson, Brenda Dunstone, Barry and Janice Goody, Jean Goodwin, Sue, Roger, Frances, Jo Meech, Tony & Ann, Joan Insole and Susan Cavill. We remember our care homes Millard House, Larchwood, Fern Lodge, Aspen Grange, Braintree Mews, St Mary's Court and The New Deanery, and the following whose anniversary of their passing falls this week; Harold Joyce, John Cox, Jill Archer, Mary Boswell, John Brown, Michael Warren, Keith Wright, Ernest Dyer, and Percy Hart.

### The Collect for Pentecost

God, who as 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 Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### ***Epistle Reading - Acts 2:1-21***

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.' But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel: "In the last days it will be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. Even upon my slaves, both men and women, in those days I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will show portents in the heaven above and signs on the earth below, blood, and fire, and smoky mist. The sun shall be turned to darkness and the moon to blood, before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day. Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.

### ***Gospel Reading - John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15***

'When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning. 'I did not say these things to you from the beginning, because I was with you. But now I am going to him who sent me; yet none of you asks me, "Where are you going?"' But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your hearts. Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgement: about sin, because they do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father and you will see me no longer; about judgement, because the ruler of this world has been condemned. 'I still have many things to say to you, but

you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.'

## Address

What is the world made of? It was a big question in ancient times and it still is today. One of the first philosophers of ancient times, Thales, a Greek scholar some 2500 years ago thought the world was made of water. Anaximenes, born some 100 years later, and a friend of Pythagoras who is famous for his mathematics equation, said the world was made of wind. Heraclitus, who was around at the same time said it was made of fire. Each looked to their understanding of the beginning of things and felt one of these elements was the answer. We take for granted now our knowledge that the world is made of earth, wind, fire and water. It seems impossible to believe anything less, but just a few thousand years ago they did.

For everyday folk then, I imagine they barely thought about it, most things were taken for granted. They had scholars who were testing the boundaries, and rarely did they need to wonder. I am not sure things are so different now. Do we need to know how the world is made? Do we think about it day to day? Today in our world we have so many who are dedicated to understanding this universe and how we got here, so we leave it to them.

However, every so often our interest is excited. Maybe it is a moon landing, or more recently when our UK astronaut Tim Peake spent six months at the ISS, International Space Station. Just 9-10 days ago we got another out of this world experience. Whether you were up to see them or not, the Northern Lights display was breathtaking. The small questions of whether we have enough milk, and 'when we should cut the grass?' were rightly put in their place, as we looked to the stars to see what is often unseen, to marvel, wonder at just how spectacular our world is.

Today is the feast of Pentecost, marking fifty days since Easter and our celebrations of a Risen Christ. About to ascend he tells them he will not leave them without an advocate but that the Holy Spirit will come to transform, to guide, to counsel, to challenge and to encourage. For me then, Pentecost is indeed a day when we need to have our minds stretched in awe and wonder at God because the reality is day to day we live in the small details, and ignore entirely that the Holy Spirit is amongst us. God is present here, now through the Spirit, and our anxieties are how much longer is the sermon? Is there tea and coffee today, and if so where?

Today is a good day then to have our minds blown a little bit, to realise there is more to this world than our everyday common sense might suggest. There are unseen elements interacting with us all the time. By the time Jesus was born, people were pretty much agreed: the universe was made of earth, wind, fire and water. And I think it's not coincidental that in the Pentecost story, all four of these elements are given new meaning when they are shot through with the Holy Spirit. In the readings set for this year we can see at least two of them.

Let's start with wind. Actually, in Hebrew the same word means "wind" and "spirit." On the day of Pentecost, there was a sound like a mighty rushing wind, even though the doors and windows were closed and the house was adequately draft-proofed. Wind is invisible – as Jesus once commented, you can't see where it is but you can see where it's been. Wind is majestic. Wind is power on an ocean, either taking you where you need to go or capsizing you altogether. Wind is uncontrollable. The Spirit is all of those things – power for good, dangerous to oppose, unpredictable. But remember, the Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus so although the Spirit is never safe, the Spirit is never unloving.

When I settle into a rut and think my tomorrow is like my yesterday, I need the Spirit to blow across me and give me a new adventure. That's what we come to church for, isn't it? To be freshened and given a new adventure? God wants to catch your attention. Can you hear the wind blowing? Just a few weeks ago, the disciples were locked away for fear of the authorities. Now Jesus has breathed on them and the Spirit has blown and they're speaking to multitudes and by a miracle of communication they are being understood. What courage will the Spirit inspire in you as you let yourself be blown upon?

Then there's fire. Tongues of fire on each of the disciples. It must have been terrifying to have your head on fire – but the disciples soon discovered that this fire was like the burning bush – it burnt without harming. What a good picture of the Holy Spirit. This world is charged with the glory of God. You are charged with the glory of God. God wants to fill you and bless you and burn in you with passion, but God doesn't want to consume you and turn you into dust and ashes so that all that is left is the fire of the Spirit – no, God wants to burn away what is not authentic and leave the real you behind, blazing with the Spirit's glory. I reckon God wants to catch your attention, as he did with Moses at the burning bush. Can you feel the crackle of the fire on your face? Don't just sit at the holy fire of God toasting marshmallows.

In the gospel reading, it is clear Jesus knows his followers aren't ready, but he also knows they never will be. He has been preparing them for his departure and telling them though it is good he goes because then the Advocate, Counsellor, the Holy Spirit will come. They though focus only on the first bit, that he is going, and it blinds them to the rest. Only on that day of Pentecost do things change as the Spirit, God's breath is dramatically blown through them.

We are just like those disciples. Our hesitancy isn't sadness over Jesus leaving, our hesitancy is that we can focus on this tomorrow, or the next day or maybe when things get tough at some future point. Our perspective is of what is around us, it doesn't occur to us to look up, to sit in wonder and awe, to realise that the sands of time continue to sift through the hourglass.

At Pentecost, we are shaken awake, our perspective altered, we are presented with the mind-blowing knowledge that God is here, that through wind and fire his Holy Spirit isn't just hiding in the background, but active, present and transforming things now. We don't need to be like those scholars constantly seeking to understand the stars, but we do need to be like the disciples and to find the courage to trust in the transformative power of the Spirit.

My prayer this Pentecost is just that. May each of us trust in God, trust in the love of his Son, and trust in the awe and wonder of his Holy Spirit. Today, tomorrow and always. Amen.

## Post Communion Prayer

Faithful God, who fulfilled the promises of Easter  
by sending us your Holy Spirit and opening to every race and nation the way of life eternal:  
open our lips by your Spirit, that every tongue may tell of your glory;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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