



# The Aldershot and North Camp Anchor

Issue 47: Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2021



Dear Friends,

I am very pleased to be able to write to you all once again after seven weeks away from my desk. As many of you know, although my first eye operation repaired the original retinal detachment, a subsequent examination revealed that a further detachment had taken place. This meant that a second operation and recovery period was required. For the first week after each operation, I had to spend most of my time 'head down'. After the second operation I was able to hire a head support as shown in this photograph. This made the process much easier. I will need further surgery at some point but, at the time of writing, I don't know when that will take place.



Joy and I are deeply thankful to you all for your practical and prayerful concern and I want to particularly thank Rev. Philip Simpkins and Rev. Gina Hoff for taking over my responsibilities at Aldershot and North Camp at such short notice. As I continue my recovery, Gina and Philip will continue to be involved at North Camp and at Aldershot.



I return to work in the days leading up to Pentecost Sunday. This is, of course, the day when we celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, poured out on the first followers of Jesus. We often refer to Pentecost Sunday as the 'Birthday of the Church' and that phrase reminds us that, as a church, we are invited to find our life, energy and vision through the power of the Holy Spirit working in us today.

Those first followers of Jesus, filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, burst out of the house where they were gathered and began to proclaim to everyone the Good News of Jesus. As we move out of lockdown and seek to be a faithful community of God's people in the new 'Post-Pandemic World', we are reminded on Pentecost Sunday that we all need to pray that we will be open to the Holy Spirit's transforming and enabling power.

Yours in His service

*Chris Blake*

## Worship Reflection

I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. (Psalm 104 v 33)

### Hymn (StF 388)

Let every Christian pray,  
This day, and every day,  
Come, Holy Spirit, come!  
Was not the Church we love  
Commissioned from above?  
Come, Holy Spirit, come!



Prayer: Lord Jesus, as we remember and celebrate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, help us to open our lives to the movement of the Holy Spirit today. Amen.

### Bible Reading (Acts 2 v 1-11)

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. <sup>2</sup> Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. <sup>3</sup> They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. <sup>4</sup> All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

<sup>5</sup> Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. <sup>6</sup> When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. <sup>7</sup> Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?" <sup>8</sup> Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? <sup>9</sup> Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, <sup>10</sup> Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near

Cyrene; visitors from Rome <sup>11</sup> (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!”

### Reflection

At the end of his Gospel account of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, Luke records the moment of Jesus' ascension into Heaven. Immediately before Luke's description of that event, Luke notes that Jesus spoke to his friends in these words, **“I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.”**

I wonder how the first disciples understood those words. They had been through so much over recent weeks. They had travelled through the emotional and spiritual roller-coaster of Good Friday and Easter Day; they had met with the risen Jesus at various times and in various places and then, at the moment of ascension, he had left them for what was apparently the final time. They must have struggled to get their minds around not only what had happened in the recent past but also around what would happen in the future.



And yet they are obedient to the command of Jesus. They go to the city of Jerusalem and they wait

for ten long days until the Jewish festival of Pentecost. Those must have been difficult days of waiting, but, when the day of Pentecost arrives, they encounter the reality of all that Jesus had spoken of when he had told them that he would send what his Father had promised so that they would be “clothed with power from on high”.

For us all, the last 15 months have been difficult days of waiting. We have waited for the next announcement about lockdown regulations, we have waited for opportunities to meet up with family and friends, we have waited anxiously for news of those we know who were unwell at home or in hospital and we have waited for things to ‘get back to normal’.

There may yet be more of these times of waiting ahead, but we are invited on this day of Pentecost to wait, with open hearts and minds, for the power of the Holy Spirit to come upon us as individuals

and as congregations. This is what the Father has promised. The Holy Spirit will clothe us with power, and we will be able to look to the future with confidence and with hope and then, like those first disciples, burst out of this time of waiting, full of the power of the Holy Spirit, to tell others about the Good News of Jesus.

### Prayers of Intercession

This week let us pray especially:

- For peace in ‘The Land of the Holy One’ and for ways to be found so that Israelis and Palestinians can look forward with hope.
- For wisdom to be given to those who make decisions in our country in the light of new Covid variants.
- For the generous and efficient distribution of vaccines throughout the world.

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. Amen

### Hymn (StF 395)

Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.  
Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me,  
Spirit of the living God, fall afresh on me.

Final Prayer: Holy Spirit, unpredictable as the wind, unquenchable as fire, yet gentle as a dove: come now and breathe new energy into our lives and new life into our souls, by your gracious power. Amen.

## **Gathering for worship**

As previously agreed by the Church Councils, we are planning to re-open the Church buildings at Aldershot and North Camp for gathered worship this coming Sunday as we celebrate Pentecost.



The service at Aldershot will be at 9.30 a.m. and will be led by Yvonne Farrar. The service at North Camp will be at 10.30 a.m. and will be led by Steve Clay.

Booking is not required for either of these services at the moment, but face masks must be worn, and the social distancing and hand sanitising protocols will need to be followed.