**Messy Church – 18th May 2024**

**Pentecost**

The activities are:

1. **Pentecost – the wind –** Acts chapter 2 verses 1 and 2

Windmill (in the celebration)

1. **Pentecost – the flames –** Acts chapter 2 verses 3 and 4
2. Flames descending (in a glass jar)
3. Red and yellow paper with black cut-outs of people
4. Pentecost plates
5. **Birthday of the Church**
6. Large birthday cake to share
7. Decorations for gifts (in the celebration)

**Stories and Activities**

**1 Pentecost: the wind –** Acts chapter 2 verses 1 and 2

Ten days after Jesus went to heaven was the Jewish festival of Pentecost. The friends of Jesus were still staying in Jerusalem, all together. Suddenly, they heard a noise like a gust of wind. It seemed to blow right through the house where they were. Then they seemed to see flames, touching each one of them. Then they were amazed to discover that they appeared to be able to talk in languages they didn’t know they knew.

1. **Windmill (in the celebration)**

**You will need:** a square of paper – sugar paper, or printer paper – scrap printer paper will do; a mapping pin (a drawing pin will work, but may be less successful), a small bead that the pin will go through (this is why you will need a longer pin), a length of cane (garden canes are a little hard to push a pin into, but a sturdy twig might work, or a piece of dowel, or something similar), a pencil, a coin (2p or 10p would be best) and a small piece of corrugated cardboard (from a parcel or other packing)

Fold the square of paper diagonally both ways and unfold again. Put the coin over the point where the two folds cross and draw round it. Cut down each of the fold lines to the pencil line in the middle. Put the square down with the corrugated cardboard underneath the middle. Bend alternate points to overlap the middle point and each other (see the diagram provided – bend each of the points marked with a dot but don’t press the folds down) and push the mapping-pin through all five layers of paper into the cardboard. Carefully take the corrugated card off the pin, put a small bead on the pin, and then stick it into your stick. Hold the windmill in a draught, and watch it turn. Or hold it out of the window – carefully! Watch it blow.

**Talk about:** how you know it is windy. Can you tell where the wind comes from, or where it is going? Talk about the damage wind can do, and how some plants need the wind to help scatter their seeds.

**2 Pentecost: the flames –** Acts chapter 2 verses 3 and 4

This bit of the story is with the story of the wind – just a line each, but different experiences.

1. Flames descending

**You will need:** a glass jar with a lid, crepe or tissue paper in flame colours, (red, orange, yellow, blue if you want to be complicated), glue or sticky tape (glue might be easier), an electric night light and a little blue tac; scissors and perhaps a glue spreader.

Cut the crepe or tissue paper into narrow strips, and use glue or sticky tape to fasten them around the inside of the jar at the bottom. Fasten the night light to the inside of the lid of the jar with blue tac (you will need to turn it on first!), and put the lid on the jar. Stand the jar upside down in a dark room, so you can see the flames!

1. Flame paper with silhouetted people

**You will need:** a piece of sugar or other paper, red and yellow paint, an old comb or plastic fork, (you could make a card comb if you haven’t a real one you can use!) and some black paper (this could be paper coloured black in advance – if you paint it, make sure it is dry before you cut it.), scissors and glue

Paint the paper red and yellow in stripes, and then use the comb or fork to drag the paint across the stripes, to blend the edges together, so that it looks a little like flames. Cut out people shapes from the black paper, about half the width of the flame paper. Stick the people on the painted paper – if your flame paint is still wet, you may be able to stick the people without glue!

1. Pentecost plates

**You will need:** a paper plate, red, orange and yellow poster paints, a drinking straw or two and a felt tip pen to write with.

Pour some red or yellow paint into the middle of the plate and use a straw to blow the paint around the plate. Then repeat with the yellow (or orange). Continue until you are happy with the design. Leave the plate to dry. When it is dry, punch a hole at the top of the plate and thread some string or wool through the hole to hang up the plate. Write these words around the bottom of the rim:

God gives his Holy Spirit

**Talk about:** fire. Think about where it might be safe to have a fire, and where not. Some trees need their seeds to have been heated before they can grow into new trees, but people are scared of fire, so they try not to let wild fires happen. Wild fires can destroy much more than the trees, if they are really powerful, or if the weather is really dry and windy.

**3 Birthday of the Church**

When Pentecost came – which was about ten days after Jesus had gone to heaven – Jerusalem was still crowded with visitors. Pentecost was the Jewish feast that happened fifty days after Passover, so fifty days after Easter, for us. People who had travelled a long way to be in Jerusalem for Passover might well have decided not to go away again before Pentecost, and have two festivals in one holiday. And, of course, lots of people lived in Jerusalem anyway. When the people heard the noise of the wind, and the friends of Jesus rushing out of the house, all talking at once, they came to see what the commotion was. What they found was a bunch of men all talking different languages – languages they could understand, their home languages!

The first thing all these people thought when they heard the disciples, and hadn’t noticed that they could understand them, was that the men were drunk. When Peter realised that they were thinking that, he started to tell them what was going on – today we call it Peter’s first sermon. When he had explained about Jesus, people started asking what they should do next, if this was what had really happened at Easter. In the end, more than 3000 people were baptised that day, saying that they wanted to follow Jesus, even though they could no longer see him.

That is why Pentecost has been called the “Birthday of the Church”.

1. Large birthday cake to share

**You will need:** the recipe attached, the tools and ingredients listed, a microwave oven. If you don’t have a microwave, the cake will take longer to cook, but should be fine – use the cooking time you would use for a light fruit cake.

Make and cook the cake – have some for your tea, and think about birthdays!

1. Decorations for gifts (in the celebration)

**You will need:** some strips of paper in different colours, or ribbon in different colours – four or six lengths, about 6 inches (15 cm) long – a stapler, a double sided sticky pad (to cover the staple underneath), and a decorative sticker to cover the staple on the top, scissors

Cut the strips of paper, or lengths of ribbon. Arrange the strips of paper or ribbon in a star on your working surface, so that they cross in the middle of the strip. Curl the ends of the strip over so that they all cross in the middle, where the original crossing point is. You will have a circle of loops. Staple the whole lot together through the middle, so that you catch all the ends, and the loops are all fastened together. Peel the paper off one side of the sticky pad and stick it over the ends of the staple – this will be the bottom of the rosette – and a decorative sticker over the staple on the top. If you want to stick the rosette to a present for a friend, peel the rest of the protective paper off the sticky pad.

**Talk about:** the happiness that birthdays bring. We should be happy on the Church’s birthday too.

**Celebration**

Easter seems a long time ago now. Do you know how many weeks it is since Easter? You might have thought that, after Easter, Jesus would want the disciples to get straight on to telling everyone about his resurrection, but he didn’t. Jesus still had things for the disciples to learn, and every now and then he came to see them and taught them something else. However, it was soon time for him to leave them and go back to heaven. But it was still not the right time. The disciples had to wait just a little bit longer, and there was a special gift to come, something that would help the disciples tell the story. Pentecost, also called Shavuot, was a Jewish harvest festival, and on that day there were a lot of people in Jerusalem.

Now the special gift was God’s Holy Spirit.

We’ll sing “Spirit of God, unseen as the wind” <https://youtu.be/ozWAspk5Zcg>

Well, the disciples were in Jerusalem. They had waited there. All of a sudden, they heard a noise. The noise was like the sound of the wind. Like a really strong, loud wind. Then they saw flames! The flames came down, on their heads!! And that’s when they knew that the Holy Spirit, God’s special friend for them, had arrived. They were filled up with it, full to overflowing. They just had to let some of it out.

One reason Christians use the idea of the wind when they think about the Holy Spirit is because you can’t see the wind, and you can’t see the Holy Spirit, but you can feel them both, sometimes very gently, and sometimes quite strong. On that first day the disciples felt the Holy Spirit like a very strong wind, enough to blow them along. These days we know that a lot of electrical power is generated by great big windmills. We’re going to make some small ones and see them go round in the wind.

Let’s sing Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart <https://youtu.be/EPkWw3J-6Fc?si=-cCwK8wOcGey6F8b>

When God’s Holy Spirit comes to you, changes happen. The disciples stopped being afraid, and went outside into the centre of the town, and started to talk to everybody who’d listen about Jesus. It was quite early in the morning when it happened but because it was a celebration day there were a lot of people around, from a lot of different countries.

When the disciples went out on the day of Pentecost, 3,000 people decided to follow Jesus. This was the start, the birthday of the church. This is why we made a birthday cake, but we can’t put the right number of candles on as we don’t have space for 1,991 candles.

We think about gifts for a birthday. Paul wrote about gifts of the Spirit. When God wants you to do something, the Holy Spirit gives you the power to do it. It could be preaching or teaching, but they are not the only gifts. Every job for God needs the gift of the Holy Spirit. We’re going to make gift decorations to remember gifts.

We’re going to say a prayer, then we’ll sing another song.

Let’s pray.

Dear father God, thank you for sending your Holy Spirit to the disciples to be their friend and to help them be strong. Please send you Holy Spirit to us, and let us know what you want us to do and be.

Amen

Sing Be bold, be strong. <https://youtu.be/OdQYmGTsKmE?si=t_7jjhx5YfNZwff4>

Next Messy Church is 15th June. See you then.

Enjoy our celebration on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw>

Then have tea or a treat if it isn’t tea time!

If you send me pictures of anything you do, I will share them on the Church Facebook page (if you want to send pictures that you don’t want shared, just tell me. I’ll only share the one’s you’re happy to share.)

Harlington Messy Church Team

We’ll have a Zoom meeting open for those who can’t come to the church. Our end of Zoom will go on YouTube during the celebration, but we won’t put pictures from your end on. Contact me if you want the link for Zoom. Look out for the broadcast on the Harlington Methodist Church YouTube Channel. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTMWR_QCxujkh1zHjTFcoJw/videos>