

Dear Friends,

Do you remember Whitsuntide? Whit walks of witness, Whit sings in the park, new Whitsun clothes? In the Christian calendar Pentecost was and still is a hugely significant event. This Sunday we will celebrate what is often called the birthday of the church so please do join in on Sunday from 10am.

<https://www.allsaintstotley.church/>

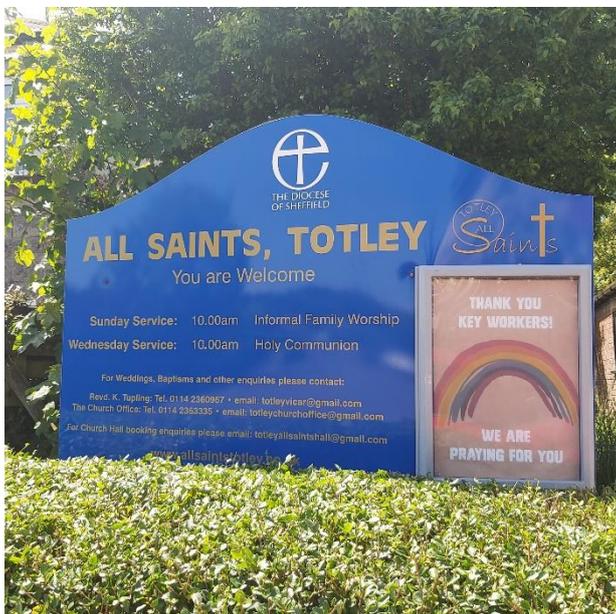
Pentecost marks the day when the disciples, still reeling from the amazing events of Easter Day and the resurrection, were waiting for the helper that Jesus had promised them. They didn't know what to expect, but when the helper arrived, he did so in spectacular fashion. A noise like a great rushing wind, tongues of fire, and everyone able to speak in foreign languages and yet still be understood. This was the Holy Spirit, the special helper promised by Jesus.

The morning service on Radio 4 on Sunday came from Sheffield cathedral and was led by Catherine Wilcox, and her husband, the bishop. It was a lovely service and two things have stuck in my mind. Firstly, on referring to the current situation with Covid 19, Catherine pointed out that the Holy Spirit is not on lockdown and can take our love and prayers to whoever and wherever we ask him to, in prayer. That is such a comforting thought!

Then the bishop spoke on John 21 – Jesus and the miraculous catch of fish. In verses 6 & 7, 'Jesus says "Throw out your nets on the right side of the boat and you will find some"'. When they did, they were unable to haul in the net because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said, 'It is the Lord!' 'Bishop Pete said that many believers, and non-believers, have asked the question, 'Where is God in this awful pandemic?' Churches throughout the land, including our own, have had to find new ways of reaching out to people, especially by using virtual services, and as a result we are finding that hundreds, if not thousands, of people are hearing God's word preached every week. +Pete believes that 'It is the Lord!' We have been encouraged to cast our nets on the other side, to try a new way of doing something we have done forever. The big challenge for us will be what happens when we open our churches again. Will we go back to our traditional ways, or 'keep the nets on the other side of the boat'

The pandemic has brought communities together in ways that we never imagined. People of faith and none have joined together and we have seen just what society can be like when we truly "love our neighbour". There has never been a better opportunity to serve others and to show that the church is so much more than a building. This is "Life on the Frontline" where we have the chance to show that we all matter to God, whoever and wherever we are.

As the church stands empty for the immediate future Angela and I wondered about our notice boards



where we usually try and change the posters regularly to reflect different seasons in the life of the church. We hope you like our latest poster. This message took on an unexpected significance this week as Neil Hayden had an accident whilst using a drill on Monday and was rushed to A and E. He had severed nerves and dislocated his finger and needed surgery. The surgery was successfully carried out on Wednesday and he is now back at home recovering from what was a very frightening ordeal. We are fortunate to have access to such skilled and dedicated surgeons and specialist centres such as we do at the Northern General and Hallamshire hospitals although we are hoping not to avail ourselves of their services again!

You may remember that Gay told us about CSW having arranged prayer for Leah on 14th May. She has sent us the following encouraging update and also news of old friends that some of us will remember

On Thursday evening (14th May) I joined the CSW (Christian Solidarity Worldwide, that fights for justice for Christians throughout the world,) in their Zoom prayer evening. It was an uplifting event with over 220 for over an hour. We were particularly gathering together to pray for Leah, on her 17th birthday. She was one of the Nigerian girls who was kidnapped by a branch of Boko Haram, but when the others were returned refused to renounce her faith in Christ, so was not freed. Melvyn Thomas CSW director and his team were there as were other friends and pastors including Leah's pastor in Nigeria. (The internet is amazing!) Two MPs spoke and later prayed for Leah. They were David Linden, (Glasgow,) and Shara Bruce. (Congestion.) It is good to have some Christian MPs.

On Sunday evening I joined a live service at Rayleigh, and during a time of open sharing of good news, I spoke about the CSW meeting, and one of the ministers said she was so pleased to hear of it since she had a photo of Leah on her wall to remind her to pray for her! I e-mailed CSW to encourage them and received an appreciative reply.

A couple of days ago I had a long chat with Lynda Liddle who with Harry, is in a Christian home at Lytham. She felt her surgeon had been right in the circumstances to postpone her keyhole surgery to the aorta, and sounded cheerful. Though they are missing mixing with the other residents for meals, as are Maurice, and Marjorie at Windsor house, what they do appreciate is the morning prayer they still have. Someone does it outside in the garden and everyone opens their windows to hear! How lovely, especially since their home leads on to the promenade and sea! As one of the psalms reminds us, praise the Lord in all the outdoor spaces!



Thankfully the current pandemic does appear to have passed the peak, though this does not mean that it is any less dangerous. We still need to exercise the same caution as before in order to keep ourselves and other safe. There is still uncertainty about the future and we don't know what to expect. Just as the disciples were told to wait for the Holy Spirit, we too must wait patiently for the end of lockdown restrictions. As we wait, we can pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and help us in the weeks and months ahead.

With love

Angela and Liz