



Pentecost 2025

'The wind blows where it wills; you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born from the Spirit.' (John 3:8)

Dear friends,

A number of times recently when I have been leading worship, I have found myself introducing the service by inviting people to join with me in singing John Bell's Iona chorus, 'Come Holy Spirit' (*Singing the Faith* 23):

Come, Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Maranatha!

Come, Lord, come.

It's a beautiful invocation of the Spirit which draws upon the Aramaic word, *Maranatha*, (literally, 'Come, Lord, come') as we seek to be drawn into the Lord's presence. It's a song for both the individual and the community and because it is a song it connects us to something deeply mysterious, something beyond ourselves which we find impossible to describe. As Augustine of Hippo is supposed to have said, 'When we sing, we pray twice.'

I came across another Song to the Holy Spirit the other day in the second volume of *Celtic Daily Prayer*. The prayer song is taken from James K. Baxter's, *Thoughts about the Holy Spirit*. It has a number of evocative images of the Spirit. The Spirit is likened to, '...the sun who shines on the little plant,' '...the mother eagle with her young, Holding them in peace under your feathers,' '...the bright cloud in whom we hide,' and, '...the kind fire who does not cease to burn.' I was drawn though to the first verse:

Lord, Holy Spirit,

You blow like the wind in a thousand paddocks,

Inside and outside the fences,

You blow where you wish to blow.

What a wonderful image of a God who is both deeply mysterious and beyond us and yet strangely intimate and close to us – as close as the breeze upon your face or the breath in

your body. If I have one prayer for you over the next year as I serve as President of Conference it would be this: consciously seek God's Spirit in all that you do, in your meeting together, your worship, your discernment of the future, your hopes and dreams, your laughter and your tears. Jesus lead us to the Father, by your Spirit, help us draw near (*Singing the Faith* 29).

Come, Holy Spirit!

Revd Richard Andrew

District Chair

A Prayer for God to break through in the life of our churches

God of love, God for all, your purposes are more beautiful than we can possibly imagine.

Fill us with your Holy Spirit.

Help us to let go of all that holds us back.

Open our lives and our churches to new seasons of humility and faith, of change and growth.

Shake us up with the good news of Jesus and show us the way. Amen