

Acts 2.1-21; 1 Corinthians 12.3b-13; John 20.19-23

Today is very special, for two or three reasons! What is special about today's service I wonder. Does anyone have any ideas? Baptisms... Pentecost... The church's birthday! All these things are connected!

So first, baptism! Today we are baptising Sam and Harley. We're going to pour water on their heads, make the sign of the cross on their forehead to show that they belong to God, and we welcome them into the church family. Baptism is really special and exciting because it's like a new person being born into your family. Sam and Harley will be part of God's family forever!

Second, Pentecost. Who knows what happened at Pentecost? That's the name of the special day when we celebrate the Holy Spirit coming from God. We have lots of special days in church throughout the year, like Easter, Christmas, All Saints, and Pentecost is one of the most special days. Jesus had gone back to heaven, but God sent us the Holy Spirit so that we would still be connected to God in a really close way, and now every christian in the world has got the Holy Spirit living in their hearts.

Third: birthday of the church - because the day of Pentecost is the day the Spirit came to live among us, it is like the birthday for Christians, the birthday of the Church. And because our church, Holy Comforter, is named after the

Spirit, it's extra special for us today. Did you know that Holy Comforter is another name for the Holy Spirit?

So today is really like a big birthday party, and I've got some pictures to help us think about it some more. So could someone choose a picture, and show everyone what you got...

- **Presents** - we give the gift of God's love to each other. Whenever we are kind, loving, caring, tell people about Jesus and about the spirit, whenever we try to live like Jesus, we are giving the gift of God to the people around us.
- **candles** - Jesus is the light of the world. Big Easter candle symbolises Jesus with us, and in a minute when Sam and Harley are baptised they will get a baptism candle. We'll light their candles from the Easter candle, to show that the light of Jesus is now with them too, that they have got the Spirit living in their hearts too. Did you know that all of you are like candles - the Spirit living in our hearts is like a light shining out. The more we try to live like Jesus the brighter we shine.
- **Holy Spirit** flame - the most weird and amazing day! That day of Pentecost when the Spirit came like wind and flames, in that one day over 3000 people became Christians. We all got an amazing birthday gift that

day- the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives power to spread the joy of Jesus not just to one person but to everyone.

- **heart** - this heart is for our Holy Comforter family. Here at our church we say that 'love grows here', and we all try to love each other. And as well as that, every church across the country and every Christian throughout the whole world is also part of the same family with us, and the thing that makes us all part of God's family together is God's love for us.
- **birthday card** - baptism certificate. So Pentecost is the church's birthday, but Baptism is like a birthday too, because it's the day we welcome the baptised person into the church family. Sam and Harley are joining God's family today here at Holy Comforter and we are super excited about it.
- **food** - eucharist. At a birthday party there is usually lots of fun food, and a birthday cake, and it's good to eat together to celebrate. Today we're going to have lunch together after this service, but, we are also going to eat together during the service as well - we do it every week when we have the bread and wine. The Eucharist is our special celebration meal that we share as Christians to remember that Jesus came, and loved us. Every time we have the eucharist it's

like we're sharing a birthday meal together, celebrating that God loves us and is with us.

So all these things tell the story of Pentecost, the story of the biggest birthday in the world. We are reminded again that God's story includes everyone, no matter what language they speak, what country they live in, what they look like or what they are good at. We are drawn together through the awesome power of God-among-us, which is the Spirit. We are empowered to be Christ in the world, taking the light of God's love from this place out into darker places which need light. We are the family of God.

So I've got a challenge for you! Throughout this next week, if anyone asks you what you did over the weekend, I want you to say that you were at an awesome birthday party for the church! Then you can tell that person about Pentecost, about being baptised, and how you are part of God's family. And by doing that, you will be shining like a candle, with the light of Christ.

Now I think every birthday party needs to include chocolate, so as a little Pentecost gift, to remind you that we all have the Spirit and we all have God's love, I've got some red chocolates to give everyone after the service.

Happy Pentecost!