

Alton Baptist Church

e-service ~ June 13th 2021

Notices:

Our call to worship comes from Luke 1:78-79 [NRSV]

By the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
and guide our feet into the way of peace.'

Let's pray:

Merciful God:

We come together to worship longing for tenderness - because this world can be hard.

We come longing for light - because our lives are crowded with shadows.

We come desperately needing direction.

Fill us this morning with your peace:

your spirit is our peace and our path.

All creatures of our God and King - <https://youtu.be/0d3gO6qDLNA>

Lord's Prayer (contemporary version):

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come,
your will be done on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.

Amen.

Prayer:

Come, Holy Spirit: breath into our prayers your breath of life.

Come, Holy Spirit: fan the flame of love within us, and draw us into the life of God -
Father, Son and Spirit.

Come Holy Spirit: renew us and revive us, that in our worship and in our living, we may live a life of
love for the praise and glory of God. Amen

Readings:

Acts 1:8

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in
Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.'

Acts 2:1-12 ~ The Holy Spirit comes at Pentecost

When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.

² Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house
where they were sitting.

³ They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. ⁴ All
of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues^[a] as the Spirit enabled
them.

⁵ Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven.

⁶ When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard
their own language being spoken.

⁷ Utterly amazed, they asked: 'Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans?

⁸ Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language?

⁹ Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,^[b] ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome ¹¹ (both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs – we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!

¹² Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, 'What does this mean?'

To God be the glory - <https://youtu.be/2CeBoSQsBR0>

Prayers:

Think about someone or something and commit them / that situation to God.

Spirit of God, you are the breath of creation,
the wind of change that blows through our lives,
opening us up to new dreams, and new hopes, new life in Jesus Christ.
Forgive us our closed minds which barricade themselves against new ideas,
preferring the past to what you might want to do through us tomorrow.
Forgive us our closed eyes which fail to see the needs of your world and
blind to opportunities of service and love.
Forgive us our closed hands which clutch our gifts and our wealth for our own use alone.
Forgive us our closed hearts which limit our affections to ourselves and our own.
Spirit of new life, forgive us and break down the prison walls of our selfishness,
that we might be open to your love and open for the service of your world;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Speak O Lord - <https://youtu.be/3tPp8ov7cks>

Reading:

Matthew 28:16-20 ~ The great commission

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go.

¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted.

¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

My Lighthouse (by Rend Collective) - <https://youtu.be/reAlJKv7ptU>

Sermon – More than just a car factory!

One of the many highlights of our recent holiday in the Malvern's was a tour around the Morgan car 'factory'. This was a birthday present to me from Anne.

This is a car factory like no other!

Morgan cars are known to be 'hand built' – what does that mean?

As we were taken around, I thought that this would be a good pattern or platform to base this sermon on!

This morning as I take you around the factory, I want you to get a taste of what we saw and link that with the command of Jesus to go in to all the world, the disciples waiting for the Holy Spirit and his arrival.

It was 13.40 on another bright sunny day and we signed in at the Morgan Car company, Malvern. We were given lanyards and told to wait. There were only a 6 of us on this tour and because of the current Covid regulations that is the maximum per group.

Waiting is always the hardest thing to do, isn't it?
There is a sense of anticipation, expectation and of a not knowing what is to follow.
For us this tour was going to take two hours.

When Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 28:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

I wonder what the disciples thought. Was there that sense of waiting and then going and doing?

We were waiting for the tour to start:

One of the first questions was 'had we ever driven a Morgan and, if so, did we know what it felt like'?

– although the disciples had been with Jesus there was still the fact that they did seem detached from him. The disciples had seen Jesus at work so they knew in the broadest terms what journey they were embarking on too.

We began by watching a ten-minute video outlining the history, the journey of the Morgan car company.

The disciples had literally walked in the footsteps of Jesus.

Our physical journey was about to begin – this was going to be an encounter of a lifetime.
Microphones and earpieces on – our tour was about to go to places that most people had never been.

Jesus said to the disciples that when the Holy Spirit came upon them they would receive power to be and do more things than they could ever imagined –

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth"

You know that sometimes we are too quick to judge others, we are too quick to 'tut' either physically or in our minds.

As the church sometimes we are too quick to condemn and not quick enough to love, too quick to wag the finger and too slow to offer the hug (covid allowing).
Sometimes we are too quick to do the judgement stuff and too slow to show new life in Jesus.
We are too quick to declare Good Friday and never quick enough to shout Easter Day "He is Risen, indeed"

We were given an overview and history of **the site** as it has developed over the years. It wasn't as it had started.

That surely is the same for the disciples and for us – our history, our development has changed because of our encounter with Jesus.

Knowing all that had gone on the disciples were told to wait – they had some resources of their own but more (in the person of the Holy Spirit) were on their way.

From a site overview we went **through the stores** – these are essential for the total construction of the cars, without the stores, the backup, the support, the car cannot be completed.

Jeremiah 11 tells us that God knew us before we were created. The blueprint for humanity was created. That is like outline planning permission to say YES, but then moving towards detailed planning permission.

In the same essence we were taken to **the assembly point**. Surely this was the nub, the centre point of the whole event.

While the disciples were waiting, they knew that things were going to be different, after all Jesus had ascended and they were left, for all intents and purposes, alone. Jesus had told them to wait for the Holy Spirit. He would equip them and in effect send them out with a new design.

Each car has a 'Journey Book' – this is a log of who does what on which vehicle and although all cars may look the same, each person involved can tell you what part they played. It is as if they each leave a signature with their expertise. So, the final drive out it is just like having an autograph book in the shape of a Morgan car.

More than that though, **no one person does everything**.

It is what the disciples experienced too. They didn't all do the same things. For instance they didn't all write books that ended up in our Bible.

Just as Morgan cars are unique – so are we.

Not only is our physical DNA different, so is our spiritual DNA different. By that I mean that the way we each journeyed to and with Jesus is different. Your history is different to my history.

Isaiah 55 says ***"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the Lord.***

As we are called to serve and be served, that is never a calling to leave all God's work in a fellowship / community to one or two people. Discipleship maybe individual in one sense, but working out that discipleship is a group activity. Sharing that discipleship, your discipleship is a community event.

Someone cannot just opt out of the assembly line, because the final Morgan is dependant on all constructors / engineers / trade skills people taking part.

What was good to see at Morgan was the fact they had a person on day release, they seek apprentices and they employ people with history and experience in the trade.

If we are able to - do we encourage and train others?

That is certainly one of the things the disciples did – if it was left only to those in the upper room – where would we be now?

If we do not take our discipleship seriously where will the next generation of followers come from?

I do not think it is enough just to sit there and pray!

Our Christian heritage and framework is just like the **Aluminium chassis**, which for Morgan's now come pre-constructed. This is the bedrock of the car's development. Originally totally made of ash, now because of changes in safety law the car needs a robust chassis, over which the ash frame is fixed.

Things change. The disciples changed. Who'd thought that Peter could get up and deliver a speech straight after Pentecost. We shouldn't be surprised at what God wants to do with and through us!

The **Engine and gearboxes** now come assembled as one unit from BMW. Other manufacturers have been used in the past. This is the heartbeat of the life of the car.

What is the heartbeat in your Christian life?

So much of the final car is 'hidden' and unseen, but is required for the car to work!

For example - **Spoked wheels** are made in India, **wiring looms** pre made locally and tyres provided by Continental.

That is the same for us isn't it – so much of our formation and direction of the Holy spirit is unseen physically (unlike at Pentecost – tongues like flames), but nevertheless is integral to 'who we are' as Christians and 'how we are' as Christians. The disciples were radically changed after their encounter with the Holy Spirit.

However, Covid made the assembly line reorganise so that social distancing is the norm. But as a result, the output indicators are showing that the Morgan assembly line is more efficient.

There will be things we want to change post Covid personally and church-wise, let's not be frightened to try, after all the disciples didn't know what was beyond 'Pentecost'. They had to trust God and move on in their 'not knowing'. They did trust – and look what happened – people from all around heard the Good News of Jesus **in their own language**. Remarkable and amazing.

The car begins to take shape with hand formed **Aluminium panels**, pressed and fitted to the wooden ash frame parts of which are laminated and formed into a curve for wheel arches. The final intricate shaping of the wooden frame is completed by using a spokeshave. All unseen but essential. At this point the car is **sprayed** in any colour you choose. Interestingly though the car's ash frame is removed complete with panels for spraying.

The car is then polished to ensure that there are no blemishes.

Leather for the seats is cut and sewn and the **carpets** are fitted.

The car re-assembled and almost ready for the road.

And then to the final Road Test. Only when the test driver knows that all is 'good to go' can the new owner take delivery.

You can always take a 'picture' too far and there aren't always easy parallels to be had, but I hope you get the flavour of faith in the progression, the journey, the putting together of all the pieces and that through these words you have heard God afresh.

Our final hymn – I the Lord of sea and sky - <https://youtu.be/2zr9SMm1gII>

Benediction:

So, may the God who breathed life into creation be your delight.

**May Christ Jesus give hope to your dreaming,
and may the Holy Spirit, your advocate and supporter,
set your hearts ablaze with a passion for peace.**