

**Lectionary readings: Ezekiel 37: 1-14; Psalm 104: 24-34, 35b; Romans 8: 22-27; Acts 2: 1-21 (Pentecost)**

**For reflection and prayer**

- **Ezekiel 37:** Ezekiel saw in his vision a valley filled with bones. Let's see our land filled with bones, and hear God asking us, 'Can these bones live? Can they come alive with life, real life?' The bones are a picture of the Jews in exile. The bones of our society are a picture of us cut off from God, spiritually dead. Are we willing for God to breathe His Spirit into us to bring us alive with His life? Are we willing to recognise that we are dried up, that we need the fresh wind of God's Spirit, a re-awakening? Let's ask God to breathe new life into us this week so that we will feel an excitement, an enthusiasm, and we will be invigorated because God has become real in our lives.
- **Psalm 104:** This is a hymn of praise to God, the Creator. v30: '*When you send your Spirit, new life is born.*' (NLT) Do we want new life? Do we want to be bubbling over with God's life? If so, let's ask God to pour His Spirit into us as individuals, as a church, as a society.
- **Romans 8:** I love this passage in The Message. Paul speaks of the pain and suffering in the world as birth pangs, not only around us in creation, but also within us. We're in a time of waiting for the fulfilment of God's promise, but we don't have to wait till after death for God's promise to be fulfilled. We can allow God to enlarge us with His life now so that we are not

diminished in this time of waiting by the painful, hard experiences of life, but we are filled with God's presence, God's life. And, as we cry out to God in prayer, we realise that the Holy Spirit is praying in us through our sighs, our tears, our deep desires, our longing heart. Let's allow the Holy Spirit this week to lead us to a new experience of God's presence.

- **Acts 2:** The symbolism in this passage is wonderful. A gale force wind is used to describe the coming of the Spirit. This was no gentle breeze, but the power of the living God energising the disciples to go out fearlessly and courageously to preach, heal the sick, bring life where there is death. Flames of fire describe the disciples' hearts being set on fire with love for God so that their overwhelming desire is to share that love with others. Their speaking in other languages signifies that there are no language barriers when love is operative. Love is a universal language recognised and understood by all. Doctrines divide, but love unites. Let's open ourselves to God's Spirit, allowing Him to overwhelm us with His life and power and love, so that we can do no other but go out and love as God loves. But let's be aware that the Spirit takes us out of the safety of our 'upper room' and thrusts us out changed and transformed, open to God working in and through us in new ways that may not fit with our preconceived notions of how God operates.

**A prayer**

Lord, send the gift of Your Spirit into our heart, into our church, into our society, into our world. Touch us with love that burns like fire, with power that moves us like the wind;

and set us free to try new ways of living and loving, free to forgive ourselves and others, free to lay aside our burden of security to be all You want us to be and to rejoice as Your children, sharing Your joy and peace and love wherever we go. Amen.