

# Standing up for the Spirit

Andrew Lyon *reflects on* Acts 2:1-21

The Holy Spirit coming to the Church is a story of transformation, a watershed moment for the disciples. Beforehand they had been afraid, doubting, ridiculed and attacked; afterwards, they rise up, defend Christ and preach with confidence.

In this famous story, once again the disciples are being mocked, this time for being drunk. But they are no longer a weak band of people cowering behind their leader, easy to deride and dismiss. This time, in an uncharacteristic display of confidence, all the disciples rise to their feet as one to defend themselves. It must have been quite a moment. Peter commands attention and emerges from the group as the spokesperson. Infamously afraid even to admit that he knew who Jesus was, he is now the great orator, preaching the Church's first ever sermon, and converting thousands.

Not only a watershed for the first disciples, this is a story that is still being worked out today. The Spirit is continually poured out onto us, God's people. But do we find ourselves willing to admit that we know who Jesus is? There is plenty of ridicule around for those who dare. But Jesus sends the advocate to us and, like the first disciples, the Spirit will transform us, help us recognise Jesus for who he is, and show to others that he is Lord. ☺



**God the Holy Spirit, our comforter and advocate, breathe through me, speak through me, act through me, love through me. Steer me towards Jesus and empower me to bring his message of redemption to the world. Amen.**

## Beating the bounds

by Lisa Tulfer

As we've seen in previous weeks, the custom of beating the bounds during Rogationtide has been practised in England since Saxon times. Parishioners, including children, and clergy would walk the perimeter of the parish, praying the Litany and asking for God's blessing on the crops.

Although it had Christianity at its heart, the practice also had economic and political significance. Up until the nineteenth century the parish was the unit for much of civic society, for some kinds of taxation, and for support to the poor and needy. The parish boundary established who had to pay, and who was entitled to benefit. In an age before maps and apps it was important to pass the knowledge from generation to generation, as a collective annual reinforcement of the folk memory of the boundaries of the parish. ☺

## Walking with Poppy

Playtime

by Gillian Cooper

As a puppy Poppy spent many hours chasing rabbits in the local woods. Rabbits being in short supply in central London, she has had to adapt to squirrels, though she is still slightly puzzled about how they vanish with no holes.

On a holiday walk on seaside cliffs, though, there are rabbits

in abundance. Poppy goes into fierce terrier hunting mode, one front paw in the air, and the rabbits scatter. She is doomed to disappointment. The rabbits don't understand that they have no need to be afraid, that she only wants to play with them.

The signs of the Spirit are fearful ones – wind that can blow you down, fire that can burn you. They may make us afraid of the power of God. But wind can be fun, and fire can be warm and beautiful. Perhaps God would like us not to cower or run away, but to stay and play. ☺

“ The highest proof of the Spirit is love.

Albert Schweitzer

# Church of Scotland: Parish of Orphir & Stenness

**Interim Moderator:** Rev June Freeth 721449

**Locum Minister:** Rev Martin Prentice 851139

**Session Clerk:** Nicol 811242

## Kirk Information

There is a loop system. Adjust hearing aids to benefit.

**A warm invitation is extended to everyone to meet in the hall, after the service, for a cup of tea or coffee.**

## Intimations

**Tuesday 8pm:** Choir

**Thursday 10-12:** Community Café

**Urgently needed - Bakers and servers:** Could you bake for the cafe or spare a couple of hours on a Thursday morning to serve and chat to folk? It would be gratefully appreciated. The same few folk always have to bake and serve. Help would be fantastic. Liz

**Café Transport:** If you, or anyone you know would like to come to the Community Café on a Thursday morning but don't have transport, please get in touch with Anne Groundwater on 811394 to arrange a lift.

## **Reading**

Genesis 1:1-2

Acts 2: 1-4

John 7:37-39

## **Hymns**

622 We sing a love

588 Praise the Spirit in creation

252 As a fire is meant for burning

600 Spirit of God, unseen as the wind

593 She sits like a bird

448 Lord, the light of your love is shining

## **Doxology** 786

May the God of peace go with us as we travel from this place;  
May the love of Jesus keep us firm in hope and full of grace.