

# MHA Sunday



**One Sunday, one service, one church**

## **Suggestions for an Order of Service**

### ***Hymn suggestions***

Remember me O Living One (75th Anniversary hymn)

We shall go out with hope of resurrection? June Boyce-Tillman. Tune: Londonderry Air

Come down, O Love divine

### ***Call to worship***

At Pentecost those who loved and served the Lord “were all together in one place”. Here, today, we are one people, gathered in one place, united by our common faith. Each of us is made uniquely in the image of God; all of us reflect a part of the Divine Glory. Together we offer our worship and await with hope the gifts of God’s Holy Spirit. Let us now take a moment to collect our thoughts, to prepare our hearts, and to pray for all those with whom we worship today.

### ***Opening prayers - one or more of the following prayers may be used***

Lord God, we thank you that the world is in your hands and that you are constantly creating and re-creating. We thank you for the beauty and diversity of your creation, and of the cultures and peoples on this earth. We pray that you would be with us today as we consider the differences that exist in our own communities. As we look for ways in which we can care for and communicate with one another, we ask for the help and guidance of your Holy Spirit. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Loving Father God, we come as one family to worship you.

Some of us have known you for a long time;

Some of us are just beginning to learn of your love;

But as friends of Jesus together, we come as one family to worship you.

Oh God and Father of us all, we love you, and we come as one family to worship you.

Help us, loving Lord,

To see other people as you see them;  
Each person special and unique,  
Worthy of respect and loving care.  
Help us, loving Lord,  
To see the worth of others

That we may know our worth to you. Amen.

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving**

*Leader (L): Thank you for loving us in Jesus:*

*Response (R): Thank you for loving us in Jesus.*

Lord, when we think about all that you have done and continue to do for us and in our lives, we are amazed, and our hearts fill with humble gratitude and praise.

*L: thank you for loving us in Jesus:*

*R: thank you for loving us in Jesus.*

We thank you for the gift of life with all its possibilities and challenge, and for the gift of faith that makes our lives complete.

*L: thank you for loving us in Jesus:*

*R: thank you for loving us in Jesus.*

We thank you for the gift of one another,  
for the love of family, church and friends,  
for opportunities to give and to receive,  
for companions on the journey of life.

*L: thank you for loving us in Jesus:*

*R: thank you for loving us in Jesus.*

We thank you for the gift of yourself in Jesus who turns us around and brings us back to you; for his dying for us on the lonely cross and his new life on Easter Sunday.

*L: thank you for loving us in Jesus:*

*R: thank you for loving us in Jesus.*

### **Suggested Readings**

Acts 2:1-21

Psalm 67

Psalm 139

I Corinthians 12:12-20

### **Sermon on Acts 2:1-21**

The city of Jerusalem, like cities today, attracted diverse crowds of people; people seeking pleasure, spectacle, employment, education, well-being, safety and stability.

Modern day transportation and communication mean that many of us who would have taken our holidays somewhere in the UK, now (sun-seekers and skiers alike) go to places all over the world for a holiday. Our families are spread out over the globe and over the next few months, many of us will brave the queues at the airports just to get away for a couple of weeks. So you will probably know how it feels when you're in a country where English isn't the first language, and you suddenly understand what is being said because English is being spoken.

Someone 'like me' is here. Someone I can talk to. Someone understands me.

*I was in Morocco a few years ago and made the train journey from Ouarzazate (down in the south) back to Tangier. I speak neither French nor Arabic and the train was delayed. Although I wasn't unduly worried it was a long journey and beyond smiles and gestures no-one was able to communicate with me. It was a relief to get off the train and have someone know my name and greet me in English! Right there and then, I felt a sense of home-coming. I knew that I had been 'found'. I knew that I belonged. I was safe.*

Language is important.

The passage from Acts tells us that there were people from 'every nation under heaven' living in Jerusalem, and specifically mentions countries around the Mediterranean - Rome, Crete, Turkey, Libya, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran and Syria. And each heard their own language being spoken.

But spoken language wasn't all that was going on. The disciples were behaving as though they were drunk and the crowd was drawn by their behaviour before hearing what they had to say.

The way we behave, the way we act, speaks volumes too. And Christ's disciples have much to learn about that today. We cannot simply speak, we must also live. There has to be authenticity. Our words and our lives must communicate the gospel.

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The passage from Acts talks about the disciples 'speaking in tongues' and it's easy for us to get hung up on those few words. But if we think this is a passage about just one of the many charismatic gifts listed in the New Testament (NT) then we are missing a more significant and fundamental point, that the people understood what the disciples were saying. The large, diverse crowd understood what they were saying 'each in their own language'.

This was God saying – ‘This message isn’t just for you, it’s for the whole world. Get out there - speak it, act it, live it..!’ As Paul says in his letter to the church in Corinth:

*‘If I speak in the language of humans or angels  
but have not love  
I am but a clanging gong and a sounding symbol.’*

There are various lists of gifts of the Spirit to be found in the NT - and skills such as wisdom, prophecy, administration, helps are all to be found there - Then there is the fruit of the Spirit love, joy, peace, long-suffering and so on..

Take a look at them and you’ll find that God’s Spirit is as diverse as humanity and more so.

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The small group of disciples, who a few weeks before had run away because they were terrified, and since then had been meeting mainly behind closed doors because they were afraid, were now out in a public place acting like idiots and speaking in a language which no-one knew but everyone understood.

And that’s because there’s another kind of communication that goes on which involves listening rather than speaking.

Jesus talked about OUR responsibility to listen and to live out our faith in the world.

*“When the Advocate comes,  
whom I will send to you from the Father,  
the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father,  
he will testify on my behalf.  
You also are to testify  
because you have been with me from the beginning.”*

God speaks to us in a language we understand. It is OUR individual language that God speaks in.

God doesn’t ask us to be what we’re not, but to be what we are, and to be that as envoys in this world of great need.

Peter was a natural leader and speaker. We see that throughout the pages of scripture, and with the coming of the Holy Spirit, Peter saw those gifts escalate to a whole new level.

What are your gifts? What are mine? Are they available for God to use?

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The message from the Day of Pentecost is – don't stay behind your closed doors because of fear, but use the gifts and skills you've been given to live and work to God's praise and glory.

Yes, come in here - to confess, know God's forgiveness and healing power, receive the sacrament, but then go out, go out, go out....live and work...

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We recognise the darkness inside ourselves and the disordered nature of our own spirits as we pray for ourselves and for the peoples, cities and nations of our world using the words of the ancient hymn:

*Expand thy wings celestial dove  
Brood o'er our nature's night  
On OUR disordered spirits move  
And let there now be light.*

### ***Prayers of Intercession***

*Prayers for wholeness & healing if appropriate... We can be whole in our woundedness.*

Leader: Lord, in your love and mercy

Response: Hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for the world and its leaders,

Asking that you will open the eyes of those with power, authority or influence to the wise and true ways of your kingdom of justice, peace and love, where every human life is valued and protected.

L: Lord, in your love and mercy

R: Hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for the Church and its mission on earth,

That together we might transform lives with the good news of your saving love for all humankind.

We pray for the work of MHA amongst older people, bringing a sense of worth to those whose voice is not always heard.

For....

L: Lord, in your love and mercy

R: Hear our prayer.

Lord, we pray for those who suffer or are in need,  
Especially for ....

And for the old age of those we know and of ourselves, that despite its restrictions it may be a time of blessing, a time of feeling valued and loved.

L: Lord, in your love and mercy

R: Hear our prayer.

We make these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ,  
Who, while we were yet sinners, gave himself for us, Amen.