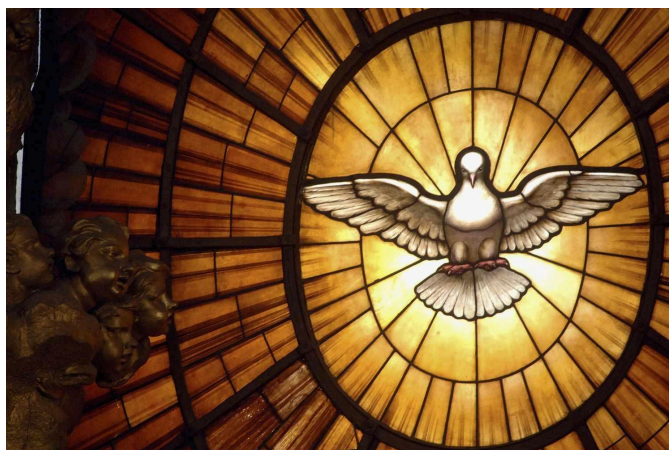


**Abbey International Baptist Church, Reading**  
**Worship Service 10:30AM 16<sup>th</sup> November 2025**  
**Leading: Bridget Gurney; Preaching: Rev. Zoltan Biro**  
[www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.abbeybaptistchurch.org.uk)  
**Find us on Facebook @Abbey Baptist Church, Reading**

***The Purpose of the gifts of the Spirit***



**Call to Worship**

O God, the Holy Spirit, come to us, and among us

**Come as the wind and cleanse us.**

**Come as the fire and burn, come as the dew and refresh.**

Convict, convert and consecrate many hearts and lives

**To our great good and your greater glory,  
and this we ask for Jesus Christs sake.**

**Hymn MP241**

Holy Spirit, we welcome you  
Holy Spirit, we welcome you  
Move amongst us with holy fire  
As we lay aside all earthly desire  
Hands reach out and hearts aspire  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Holy Spirit, we welcome you  
Holy Spirit, we welcome you  
Let the breeze of your presence blow,  
That your children here might truly know  
How to move in the spirit's flow  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you.

Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Holy Spirit, we welcome you  
Please accomplish in me today  
Some new work of loving grace I pray  
Unreservedly have your way  
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit, we welcome you

Chris Bowater © 1997, Sovereign Lifestyle Music Ltd.

## Family Time

### Hymn BPW 295

Spirit of God, unseen as the wind,  
gentle as is the dove:  
teach us the truth and help us believe,  
show us the Saviour's love!

You spoke to us-long, long ago-  
gave us the written word.  
we read it still, needing its truth,  
through it God's voice is heard.

Without your help we fail our Lord,  
we cannot live his way;  
we need your power, we need your strength,  
following Christ each day.

Margaret Old © public domain

*During the singing of this hymn our financial gifts will be taken and our young people will go to their classes*

## Prayers

**Bible Readings** 1 Corinthians 12:4-8

1 Peter 4:10-11

### **Sermon: Building One Another Up: The Purpose of Spiritual Gifts**

When we think of gifts, we usually think of something personal, something we receive and enjoy for ourselves. But spiritual gifts are different. They are *given to you, but not for you*.

God gives every believer a gift of grace not to make them look respectable, but to *help someone else grow*. Spiritual gifts are like tools — the Spirit places them in our hands so that we can build together... What we are building is the church, the body of Christ.

The question isn't simply, "*What is my gift?*" not even, what shall I do with my gift... but "*What am I doing with my gift to strengthen others?*"

This is the question we are going to focus on today!

*"What am I doing with my gift to strengthen others?"*

#### **1. The Purpose of the Gifts: To Build the Body (1 Corinthians 12:7)**

Paul says clearly, "Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good." The phrase translated "*for the common good*" in the original Greek has uses this word to describe things that "contribute to" a positive outcome or advantage. In the New Testament, it consistently refers to what is genuinely beneficial or working for good, rather than what is comfortable or worst selfish interest. In the literal sense it also means to collect things, or bring

things together. I strongly believe that what Paul wants to tell us is that gifts are given to bring people into the body of Christ, to build them into the church.

Imagine a human body where one part stops functioning. Couple of years ago a small ligament in my knee was torn, which led to my knee becoming wobbly, sometimes popping out. The doctors decided to use another ligament and replace the original. They used a hamstring ligament. We have 7 of those so 1 missing shouldn't be a problem. But the 7 hamstrings create balance and removing 1 resulted in all sorts of other problems. One morning I woke up and I couldn't walk up or down the stairs. Called the doctors and after talking with a physiotherapist I was told that I have to stretch my hip and leg's every day for at least 10 minutes, otherwise the muscles around my hip and knee tens up and lock. You see a tiny ligament, which I didn't even know existed can cause the whole body to suffer.

The same is true in the church. When each part — each believer — uses their gift, the body grows strong and healthy. When we don't, the body becomes weak and incomplete.

*However...*

## **2. What does it mean to “build up” the Church (1 Corinthians 14:12, 26)**

In 1 Corinthians 14, Paul writes to believers who were excited about the more visible gifts, like speaking in tongues and prophecy. But their gatherings had become chaotic and self-focused.

Let me read two verses from chapter 14, verse 12 and verse 26.

*“Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.” (v. 12)*

*“What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.” (v. 26)*

To build, literally means housebuilding... or building with a purpose... Here of course it has a figurative meaning, to strengthen the faith or build up knowledge, in other word teach. *What the apostle* want's to say is that the gifts are given as construction tools. It's like spiritual construction work — the goal is to build up the Church, by building others up so they become more like Christ. Let me give you some examples:

- Helping one another **know God's truth** more clearly.
- Encouraging one another to **keep going** in faith.
- Supporting one another when life is hard.
- Guiding one another back when someone drifts off course. Going after the lost sheep.
- Celebrating what God is doing in others, not competing with each other.

In short, building up means doing whatever helps your brother or sister **stand stronger in Christ**. So naturally, the next question you may ask:

## **3. How do we build each other up? What is the practical expressions of our gifts?**

Peter gives the simple command:

*“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others.” (1 Peter 4:10)*

This is where theory becomes practice... or theology becomes practical. What does build one another up look like in everyday church life? I would like to give you couple of examples... They are sort of connected with the different types of gifts we talked about two weeks ago.

### **a. Words that Strengthen**

We often think of speaking gifts that are used here at the front of the church: teaching and prophecy. But encouragement is also one of them and is often done at the back of the church at coffee time. It means being attentive to those around you, listening for unspoken needs, offering encouragement when you sense someone is down, and choosing words that heal rather than harm. It can be as simple as sending a thoughtful message, sharing a personal testimony that mirrors another's situation, or publicly acknowledging the growth and contributions of others. Your words, when guided by the Holy Spirit, become a powerful tool for building up, comforting, and inspiring your fellow believers, helping them to stand firmer in their faith and drawing the church community closer together in love and unity.

### **b. Acts that Serve**

If your gift is serving, hospitality, giving, or mercy — you build up the church by meeting needs quietly but powerfully. Time shared with a grieving family. A ride given to someone without transport. Inviting people for a meal who struggle with loneliness. A kind gesture that says, “You’re appreciated.”

These simple acts of service strengthen the body because they show the love of Christ in action.

### **c. Leadership that Guides**

Those who have the gifts of leadership or administration play a crucial role in building up the church community by not only organising ministries but also by formulating vision, setting direction, and creating an environment where every individual’s contributions are valued. Effective leaders identify the unique strengths and passions of each member, then create opportunities for these gifts to be used in meaningful ways, whether through forming teams, coordinating events, or launching outreach projects. Their careful planning and guidance help ensure that the various activities and ministries of the church work harmoniously together, preventing duplication of effort and reducing confusion.

### **d. Prayer that Uplifts**

Intercessory prayer is one of the most powerful ways to build up the body. When you pray for others (for healing, guidance, or strength) you become part of God’s building process in their lives. Praying for other people is more than just a thing we do in church; it shows real care and togetherness in the church family.

Such prayers not only uplift those being prayed for but also strengthen the unity and understanding within the church. When someone knows they are being prayed for, it can bring a deep sense of encouragement, reminding them they are not alone in their journey. When the needs of individuals are brought before God by the church community, every victory or breakthrough becomes a cause for shared celebration. In this way, intercession acts as a spiritual glue, binding the church together in compassion, hope, and mutual support, making the body of Christ stronger and united.

### **Conclusion**

The church is not built by bricks or programs - it’s built by **people using their Spirit-given gifts.**

Every time you help someone grow in faith, every time you strengthen another believer, every time you choose to serve instead of seek recognition, you’re building the house of God.

And when every member builds, the church becomes what Christ intended:

**a strong, united, living temple where His Spirit dwells and His glory shines.**

“Let all things be done for edification.” (1 Corinthians 14:26)

### **A Challenge for the week:**

- **Ask God:** “Who can I build up this week?”
- **Act on it:** Use your gift, (speak, serve, pray, encourage, lead) with the aim that someone else stands stronger in Christ because of you.
- **Remember:** When we build each other up, you are part of building up God’s Church.

### **BPW 282**

Breathe on me, breath of God,  
fill me with life anew,  
that I may love what thou dost love,  
and do what thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, breath of God,  
until my heart is pure,  
until with thee I will one will,

to do or to endure.

Breathe on me, breath of God,  
till I am wholly thine,  
until this earthly part of me  
glows with thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, breath of God,  
so shall I never die,  
but live with thee the perfect life  
of thine eternity.

Edwin Hatch (1835-89) © *public domain*

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for speaking to us, blessing us with your gifts, showing us your love and how to love one another. We pray that you fill us with your Holy Spirit every single day, give us the wisdom to help, support, serve, guide and celebrate with each other in the church family, so that we can continue to build the body of Christ. May we learn how to intercede, encourage, empower and guide your sheep, for we know that in all things You work for the good of those who love You (Romans 8:28).

Lord, calm the hearts of those waiting for the visas and permissions to stay in this country, and those troubled by the changes in visa policies, give them your peace which transcends all understanding, guard their hearts and their minds in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

Sweet Jesus, during this troubling time of increased violence, we pray that you soften people's hearts so they can let go of their hatred, and find love for one another; Comfort those families who have lost their loved ones. Lord, You are the one who makes wars cease to the ends of the earth, You break the bow and shatter the spear, You burn the shields with fire (Psalms 46:9). We pray for lasting peace in Sudan, Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Gaza.

We also pray for the increased violence in our nation, the stabbing attack on LNER train and in Reading College. May the victims find forgiveness in their hearts, and the aggressors find their ways to repent.

Father, help those who have been affected by the weather, the city of Rio Bonito do Iguacu in South Brazil which has been hit by a devastating tornado, the population in the Philippines who have been struck by the super typhoon, and the people impacted by the Storm Claudia around us. Send the necessary help to the families so that they can rebuild their homes. Heal the people who are injured, comfort the hearts of those who have lost loved ones in these disasters.

Grant wisdom to the world leaders participating in the COP30 (Conference of the Parties 30) which is taking place from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> of November, for them to reach agreements on the fight against climate change, so that we can be better stewards of your creation.

**For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever. In Jesus' name we pray Amen.**

### **Hymn BPW 300**

There's a spirit in the air,  
telling Christians everywhere:  
'Praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.'

Lose your shyness, find your tongue,  
tell the world what God has done:  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today!

When believers break the bread,  
when a hungry child is fed,  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.

Still his Spirit gives us light,  
seeing wrong and setting right:  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today!

When a stranger's not alone,  
where the homeless find a home,  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.

May his Spirit fill our praise,  
guide our thoughts and change our ways.  
God in Christ has come to stay.  
Live tomorrow's life today!

There's a Spirit in the air,  
calling people everywhere:  
praise the love that Christ revealed,  
living, working, in our world.

Brian A. Wren © Oxford University Press

### **Blessing**

Now unto him who is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

### **The Grace**

**May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. Amen**

Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup>	5.00	Baptismal Class
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Renew Wellbeing
	12.15	Bible Study
	2.00	iCaf
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup>	10.30	Bible Study
	10.30	Toddlers
	7.30	Men's Bible Study
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup>	10.30	Prayer meeting
	5.00	Table Tennis Club
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup>	10.00	Decluttering
	2.30	St Laurence outreach

Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup>      10.30    **Worship with Communion**  
**Roles and Responsibilities**  
**(The diversity of the gifts of the Spirit)**  
**1 Corinthians 12:4-8; 1 Corinthians 12:26-31a**

**Followed by Church Meeting**

If you would like to contribute financially to Abbey International Baptist Church electronically, please scan the QR code to pay:

**QR Code for Financial Offering**



**QR code for Church Survey: *The future of Abbey Baptist Church***

