

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday August 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020



*Almighty and eternal God, revealed for all time and to all the world as one God, yet three persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, living in the unity of love. We now join the Saints of the ages, together yet apart and 'make a Spiritual Communion, rejoicing in the grace of God come to us in fullness through Christ our Lord and Saviour, by the will of the Father and through the presence of The Spirit with us, now and for ever.*

### An Acclamation for the Season

All: Alleluia, alleluia! It is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God. For you have revealed the glory of your eternal fellowship of love with your Son and with the Holy Spirit, three persons equal in majesty, undivided in splendour, yet one God, ever to be worshipped and adored. Alleluia!

Hymn Thy Kingdom come, O God

### Preparation

All: This is the day that the Lord has made.  
Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Through the brokenness of Christ, we become one body  
as one body we now gather in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

## Our Confession

*God the Father forgives us in Christ and heals us by the Holy Spirit. Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness, all slander and malice, and confess our sins to God our redeemer.*

All: Jesus Christ, risen Master and triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection.  
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing.  
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven.  
In your mercy, forgive us, hear us and help us.

*Be still for a moment in confession and in receiving God's Grace in Christ*

All: May Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Risen Lord.

**Amen.**

## The opening prayer

All: The night has passed, and the day lies open before us; let us pray with one heart and mind.

*Silence is kept.*

All: As we rejoice in the gift of this new day, so may the light of your presence, O God, set our hearts on fire with love for you;  
now and for ever. Amen.

## The Psalmody Psalm 138 *We say the psalm aloud*

I will give thanks to you, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods will I sing praise to you.

I will bow down towards your holy temple and praise your name, because of your love and faithfulness;  
for you have glorified your name and your word above all things.

In the day that I called to you, you answered me; you put new strength in my soul.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth.

They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

Though the Lord be high, he watches over the lowly; as for the proud, he regards them from afar.

Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you will preserve me;

you will stretch forth your hand against the fury of my enemies; your right hand will save me.

The Lord shall make good his purpose for me; your loving-kindness, O Lord, endures for ever;

forsake not the work of your hands.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be,  
world without end. Amen

## Scripture Reading Romans 12.1-8

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.

<sup>3</sup>For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. <sup>4</sup>For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, <sup>5</sup>so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. <sup>6</sup>We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; <sup>7</sup>ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; <sup>8</sup>the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

*At the end of the reading we say:*

All: This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

## Gloria

All: Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

## The Gospel Matthew 16.13-20

*Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.*

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' <sup>14</sup>And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' <sup>15</sup>He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' <sup>20</sup>Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

*Alleluia, alleluia. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, one God, who was, and who is, and who is to come, the Almighty.*

## A Reflection for the day Revd John Webb writes

Many of us will have been deeply distressed by the problems created for our young people who couldn't take the exams they had worked so hard for because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Exams are designed to assess not only what has been learnt, but more importantly what has been understood. Without exams this has proved impossible to do and the media have underlined this by showing us pretty girls with smudged mascara telling us, between sobs, that after all their hard work their hopes and dreams have been dashed and their futures shattered. Our hearts must go out to them.

Jesus had a similar problem in our Gospel reading. The apostles had been with him for some time. They had heard his teaching, witnessed his miracles, and seen his love and compassion expressed in so many ways. But had they understood? Exam time had come with just one, apparently simple, question; Who am I? At first they avoid the question by reporting what others were speculating that he might be Elijah, or Jeremiah, or one of the prophets, or John the Baptist, who had just been murdered by Herod, come back from the dead. It was only when Jesus directed the question directly to them that Peter made the astonishing claim that Jesus is uniquely 'the Messiah, the Son of God.'

Jesus praised him for saying this but all the indications are that although he somehow knew this to be the case neither he nor the other apostles really understood what it meant. Right up to the crucifixion they seemed to expect some divine intervention to make Jesus a powerful leader in the image of his ancestor David, to purge the temple, give their nation victory over Rome, and bring justice and peace throughout the world. This was an extremely dangerous thing to suggest because it was treason not only against Herod, but also against Caesar. Indeed, that was the very charge on which Jesus was crucified. It was only after Easter that they began to realise that it was only by sharing the totality of humanity, by sharing the suffering of outcasts and sinners by His terrible sacrifice that he could fully show the depth of God's compassion for us all.

We are challenged to face the same question; Who am I? Our answer to this will ultimately affect the whole of our lives. Can we answer that he is the Messiah the Son of God? Can we recognise that He has come to build a new temple, and a new Jerusalem, not in stone, but in a community consisting of all those who accept Him as God's Son – starting with Peter and the apostles and continuing through the ages to us.

Since I started thinking about this, news has just come through that the government have shown compassion to the exam students and re-instated the teacher predictions. That is a brave thing to do because their critics will sneer at them and it will make a lot of extra work. However, it gives hope to those of us who are still struggling with the exam question Jesus asked, 'Who am I?' Jesus was very patient and understanding with the apostles who failed many times. We may not be able to echo Peter's answer now, but one day with his help we can be given an A\* even if we don't really deserve it.

## The Creed

All: I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

*Prayers*                      *We make our intercessions*

O God of peace, who has taught us that in quietness and confidence shall be our strength; help us, as we come into your presence, to be still and know that you are God.

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ let us pray to the Father.

Let us pray for Peter our Bishop and those who care for him in hospital.  
We pray for Bishop Ruth and all who seek to serve you in this diocese as they take on additional responsibilities. May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

We Pray for Our Queen, Prime Minister, and all World leaders, that they may have the Spirit of wisdom to lead us through this difficult time.    May they always use their power for the good of the people and avoid the temptation to personal gain.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

We pray for the victims of oppression, discrimination, and bullying.    And we pray for the work of the United Nations and NATO in their efforts to create and maintain world peace.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

We pray for all our young people those whose lives have been disrupted by the coronavirus outbreak and have missed so much at this critical time in their lives.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

We pray for the hungry and starving, that the available food may be used for the benefit of all.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

We pray for our families, friends, and neighbours that we may serve Christ in one another and seek the common good.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

We pray for the sick, suffering and dying .....    and we give thanks and pray for those who use their skill and risk their lives to care for them.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer

Hear us as we remember those who have died.....    According to your promises grant them a share in your eternal kingdom.  
Lord in your mercy.    Hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.    Amen.

## A Prayer during the Covid-19 Pandemic

All: Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.

## The Collect

All: God of Glory the end of our searching, help us to lay aside all that prevents us from seeking your kingdom, and to give all that we have to gain the pearl beyond price, through our saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

*Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us*

All: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory  
for ever and ever. Amen.

## The Conclusion

All: Christ, as a light illumine and guide me this day.  
Christ, as a shield overshadow me.  
Christ under me, Christ over me;  
Christ beside me on my left and my right.  
This day be within and without me.  
Amen.