

# Our Sunday Service Together

## Sunday August 2<sup>nd</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 Guide me O thou great redeemer

### 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 145.15 - 22 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up all those who are bowed down.

The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, and you give them their food in due season.

You open wide your hand and fill all things living with plenty.

The Lord is righteous in all his ways and loving in all his works.

The Lord is near to those who call upon him, to all who call upon him faithfully.

He fulfils the desire of those who fear him; he hears their cry and saves them.

The Lord watches over those who love him, but all the wicked shall he destroy.

My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord, and let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

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 9.1-5

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—<sup>2</sup> I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. <sup>3</sup> For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. <sup>4</sup> They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; <sup>5</sup> to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

*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 14.13-21

*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.*

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup> When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. <sup>15</sup> When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' <sup>16</sup> Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' <sup>17</sup> They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' <sup>18</sup> And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' <sup>19</sup> Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup> And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. <sup>21</sup> And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

*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.*

The miracle of 'The feeding of the multitude' was obviously very important to the evangelists because a similar miraculous feeding is recorded no less than six times in the four Gospels.

All the stories in the New Testament can be understood at many levels for those with eyes to see, so it is worth reflecting why they saw this particular miracle as so significant. Obviously, it is important because it shows Jesus's practical concern and compassion for the needy. It also fits into the overall biblical narrative reflecting back to Moses when God saved the Israelites by providing Manna in the wilderness. And it looks forward to the bread of the last supper feeding the faithful for ever. These are all rich areas for the preacher but I suggest there is yet another.

Just look where it comes. It is when Jesus's ministry has really taken off and his reputation has spread and is just after Jesus is told of the death of John the Baptist. Jesus, like John the Baptist is clearly established as a powerful and charismatic force in the Jewish nation. The question must surely have been asked if he was the promised Messiah and how that was to express itself.

Now look again at the details of the story. They were in a 'deserted place', it was a large crowd of predominantly men who were seated in fifties and hundreds. What would you conclude if you saw such a crowd in the middle of Salisbury plain? I suggest it looks very much like an army on exercise. And that is exactly what many scholars believe it was; a rebel Jewish army who believed that they would free their nation from Roman oppression and that they wanted Jesus to become their leader.

Now note what Jesus did. He fed them and sent them away. Then he went away privately to pray and we don't know that prayer but it may well have been to resist the pressure to use force.

And that has been, and always will be, a pressure that we are under and throughout history. People and nations in positions of power have used their power to coerce others to achieve their own ends which is clearly wrong. But sometimes, as with the rebels asking Jesus to lead them, it can be for more altruistic reasons and to achieve justice in an unjust situation or create a more harmonious world. This, of course, is the idea behind the United Nations. All those of us who have served with the military have to struggle with the apparent conflict of using force to achieve peace. There is no easy answer. Jesus's answer was simple, he showed the power of God not by military force, but by the power of love. He fed them and sent them away in peace.

If Jesus was being invited to lead a rebel army in revolt against Rome his refusal is significant on two grounds. It is significant on the practical grounds that it would not succeed as was proved by the events of AD 70 when the Jews were brutally crushed and never recovered. But it was significant on the more important ground that it was not part of God's plan. On Good Friday Jesus chose the same way. He rejected using the power of force but showed the love of God by defeating the corrupt power of both the state and the church by suffering and dying at their hands, and by rising from the dead on the third day.

It has been said that 'all power corrupts'. Jesus shows us this is not true. Earthly power may corrupt but the power of love will overcome.

## 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.

Strengthen Peter our Bishop and all who seek to serve you in this diocese May they be filled with the Spirit and serve you as the first disciples. May they remember that they are servants and not masters.  
*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 armed forces that they may always be used to overcome evil and bring peace between nations.  
*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: Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven  
and became poor for our sake:  
when we prosper save us from pride,  
when we are needy save us from despair,  
that we may trust in you alone;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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.