

Our Sunday Service Together

May 14th 2022

An Easter Acclamation

Praise be to God in the highest. It is our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, almighty and eternal Father, and especially in these days of Easter to celebrate with joyful hearts the memory of your wonderful works.

For by the mystery of his passion Jesus Christ, your risen Son, has conquered the powers of death and hell and restored in men and women the image of your glory. He has placed them once more in paradise and opened to them the gate of life eternal.

And so earth and heaven resound with gladness, while angels and archangels and the powers of all creation sing for ever the hymn of your glory.

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

Let us come to the light of Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

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 148 *We say the psalm aloud*

Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise him in the heights.
Praise him, all you his angels; praise him, all his host.
Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you stars of light.
Praise him, heaven of heavens, and you waters above the heavens.
Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.
He made them fast for ever and ever; he gave them a law which shall not pass away.
Praise the Lord from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and mist, tempestuous wind, fulfilling his word;
Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle, creeping things and birds on the wing;
Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the world;
Young men and women, old and young together; let them praise the name of the Lord.
For his name only is exalted, his splendour above earth and heaven.
He has raised up the horn of his people and praise for all his faithful servants,
the children of Israel, a people who are near him.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son: and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Scripture Reading Acts 11.1-18

Now the apostles and the believers who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also accepted the word of God. ² So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him, ³ saying, 'Why did you go to uncircumcised men and eat with them?' ⁴ Then Peter began to explain it to them, step by step, saying, ⁵ 'I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. There was something like a large sheet coming down from heaven, being lowered by its four corners; and it came close to me. ⁶ As I looked at it closely I saw four-footed animals, beasts of prey, reptiles, and birds of the air. ⁷ I also heard a voice saying to me, "Get up, Peter; kill and eat." ⁸ But I replied, "By no means, Lord; for nothing profane or unclean has ever entered my mouth." ⁹ But a second time the voice answered from heaven, "What God has made clean, you must not call profane." ¹⁰ This happened three times; then everything was pulled up again to heaven. ¹¹ At that very moment three men, sent to me from Caesarea, arrived at the house where we were. ¹² The Spirit told me to go with them and not to make a distinction between them and us. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. ¹³ He told us how he had seen the angel standing in his house and saying, "Send to Joppa and bring Simon, who is called Peter; ¹⁴ he will give you a message by which you and your entire household will be saved." ¹⁵ And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them just as it had upon us at the beginning. ¹⁶ And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said, "John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit." ¹⁷ If then God gave them the same gift that he gave us when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could hinder God?' ¹⁸ When they heard this, they were silenced. And they praised God, saying, 'Then God has given even to the Gentiles the repentance that leads to life.'

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 John 13.31-35

When he had gone out, Jesus said, 'Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. ³² If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. ³³ Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, "Where I am going, you cannot come." ³⁴ I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'

at the end of the reading we say:

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

A Reflection for the day *A Reflection by Revd John Webb*

The fallout from the ghastly events in the Ukraine has affected so many aspects of our lives. The increased price and shortage of food and fuel were perhaps predictable, but who would have suspected it would have a profound effect on the Christian faith. Non-believers and members of other faiths must look on with cynical amazement when they see Patriarch Kirill leader of the Russian Orthodox Church blessing the Russian troops and praying for victory, while the Pope is committing Ukraine to the care and protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary! They both claim to speak in the name of God.

The relationship between Christianity and the state is a long and complicated one. The Last Supper was held in secrecy for fear of the Jewish authorities and the power of Rome. In the Acts of the Apostles we see the new communities seen as a threat to Roman authority and suffering increasing persecution with many martyred for their faith. A fundamental change came in the 4th Century when the Roman Emperor Constantine had a dramatic conversion. Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire and persecution stopped.

The origin of the Church of England is inextricably tied up with power relationship between Church and State. It is very complicated, but briefly the situation in the 16th Century was that the Roman Catholic Church was very powerful in England and resented by Henry VIII who felt it undermined his authority. There was also a groundswell of discontent within the church throughout Europe ruled over by the Pope which was seen to be corrupt and in need of reformation. This came to a head when the Pope refused Henry a divorce which he wanted because he was concerned about the succession. As a result, Henry denied the Pope any authority in England and declared himself the temporal head of the Church in England. There have been many changes over the years but just as most of the powers of the monarch have now passed to the government so with the church and that is why the monarch becomes the temporal head of the Church of England, it is governed by parliament and we have Bishops in the House of Lords. It is also why, when our new bishop of Bath and Wells was announced a few days ago, it was 'announced by Downing Street' rather than Lambeth Palace.

This involvement of the state with the Church is not easy and creates some difficult tensions. In theory it enables the church 'to speak the truth to power' but it also involves the danger of the church being so closely linked to, and dependent on, the state that it compromises itself. That seems to be what has happened in Russia – the church is so closely identified with the state that it seems unable to criticise the government when necessary.

At the Last Supper Jesus said 'I give you a new commandment that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.' I can't help fearing what 'everyone' thinks about the reaction of the churches to the war in Ukraine. It is another ghastly scar on the body of Christ's church.

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.

As we continue this season of Easter let us pray that our faith will grow and develop. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

As we grieve over the situation in Ukraine, let us pray for the leaders of all Christian Churches; The Pope and the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world; the Patriarchs of the Orthodox Churches in Greece, Russia and Ukraine; the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Anglican Communion; The World Council of Churches. May they have the wisdom and courage to bring reconciliation, peace and harmony to the peoples of Ukraine and Russia. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

We pray for Michael our new Bishop as he prepares to come among us. May he be filled with the Spirit and speak with understanding and authority. *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. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Let us pray for all our Somerset County and Parish Councillors giving thanks for their care of our community. *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.*

We pray for those who mourn the death of loved ones..... may they find peace. *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.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and for evermore. Amen.

The Collect

All: Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life; give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the father. **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