

Our Sunday Service Together

May 29th 2022

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 97 *We say the psalm aloud*

The Lord is king: let the earth rejoice; et the multitude of the isles be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of his throne.
Fire goes before him and burns up his enemies on every side.
His lightnings lit up the world; the earth saw it and trembled.
The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declared his righteousness, and all the peoples have seen his glory.
Confounded be all who worship carved images and delight in mere idols.
Bow down before him, all you gods.
Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of your judgements, O Lord.
For you, Lord, are most high over all the earth; you are exalted far above all gods.
The Lord loves those who hate evil; he preserves the lives of his faithful and delivers them from the hand of the wicked.
Light has sprung up for the righteous and joy for the true of heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, and give thanks to his holy name.
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 Acts 16.16-34

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling.¹⁷ While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, 'These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation.'¹⁸ She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, 'I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.' And it came out that very hour.

¹⁹ But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market-place before the authorities. When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, 'These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews²¹ and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.'²² The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods.²³ After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.²⁴ Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. ²⁶ Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.²⁷ When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped.²⁸ But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.'²⁹ The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.³⁰ Then he brought them outside and said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'³¹ They answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'³² They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.³³ At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay.³⁴ He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

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 17.20-26

²⁰ 'I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹ that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, ²³ I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. ²⁴ Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

²⁵ 'Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.'

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

This week we held a re-enactment of the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in the church in Ilchester with the primary school. My role was to usher all about and hold the words and microphone for the Archbishop of Canterbury. Listening to all the prayers said for the queen I could not help but listen carefully as the Archbishop prayed "*The Lord give you faithful Parliaments and quiet Realms; sure defence against all enemies; fruitful lands and a prosperous industry; wise counsellors and upright magistrates; leaders of integrity in learning and labour; a devout, learned and useful clergy; honest peaceable and dutiful citizens. Amen.*"

After the earth tremor in Philippi we read that the gates of the prison came open and the jailer naturally expects the prisoners to take their opportunity and run. Rather than face a tortuous death at the hands of his masters the jailer decided to draw his sword and dispatch himself, but then...

Then he notices that Paul and Silas, and the other prisoners were all there. No attempt had been made to escape. Paul and Silas knew they were innocent of all charges and chose to wait for justice to be seen to be done. This raises a question for the jailer and it opens other doors, for revelation of Christ, for proclamation of the gospel, for lives to be set truly free from the prison of sin and death.

Here, laid before the jailer was a revelation that Christian ways are different from those of the world. What makes the difference is integrity to the love of God in Jesus Christ for the entire world. It is the way outsiders are dignified, it is how the unloved are cared for, how injustice is challenged, how the needs of a world dying for the lack of the truly liberating love of God in Christ are sought out and ministered to.

We do not need to be in jail, or to have earthquakes, or to be midnight hymn singers to reveal the difference

Christ makes to a human life, we simply have to live with integrity to the love shown to us in Christ. When people see this, doors are opened and the possibility for folks to be rescued from the prisons of life becomes a reality.

'Leaders of integrity in learning and labour'. Integrity matters in leadership, all aspects of life. It especially matters in relation to our common walk in the gospel.

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*

Let us pray to God the Father, who has reconciled all things to himself in Christ:

For peace among the nations, that God may rid the world of violence and let peoples grow in justice and harmony; for Israel and Palestine, Syria, The Yemen, Afghanistan, Ukraine.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

For those who serve in public office, that they may work for the common good. For all seeking to lead this nation; for the Queen and her ministers especially as post Covid times and war in Europe bring great financial problems to this land. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

As we approach the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II we pray for community gatherings and celebrations, for thanksgiving and for reflection for the past 70 years as a nation. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

For Christian people everywhere, that we may joyfully proclaim and live our faith in Jesus Christ; help us to know and understand this time, this generation and to offer ourselves and welcome those you would send to see your kingdom come and will done. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

For those who suffer from hunger, sickness or loneliness, that the presence of Christ may bring them health and wholeness; for those in need of foodbanks, for refugees, for those isolated from family and friends through Covid measures, for those in need of operations and for those nearing to death. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

For those facing death at this time and for the bereaved, especially the family of James White whose funeral will be in Limington on 2nd June. Also John Webb's family following his sister's death this past week. *Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God. Amen

The Collect

All: O God the King of glory, you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us
and exalt us to the place where our Saviour Christ is gone before,
who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. 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