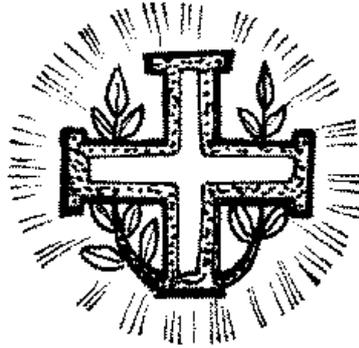


THIRD SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY 2020



Words of welcome

Today we hear Jesus telling us to offer welcome and hospitality to all we meet. We pray for the grace to see God in all people, and to welcome them as God welcomes us.

A Celtic Rune of Hospitality

We saw a stranger yesterday,
We put food in the eating place
drink in the drinking place,
music in the listening place
And, with the sacred name of the triune God,
he blessed us and our house,
our cattle and our dear ones.
As the lark says in her song:
Often, often, often, goes Christ in the stranger's guise.

We welcome Christ today
In friend and in stranger

We worship Christ today
In word and in deed

We honour Christ today
In love given and in love received

Thanks be to God

Today's Collect

God our saviour, look on this wounded world
in pity and in power;
hold us fast to your promises of peace
won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

A reading from Matthew's gospel

⁴⁰Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple - truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

For the word of God in scripture
For the word of God among us
For the word of God within us
Thanks be to God

Reflection

Matthew chapter 10 started with Jesus sending out the Twelve disciples on a mission. As he gave them his authority they became his apostles and were given power to heal diseases and illness. Their task was to proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Their mission was firstly to the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus gave them clear instructions and warnings of what to expect. There was much work to be done and they would not always be popular. Yet the fact that the message of God's love spread eventually to the whole world shows that their obedience to Jesus bore much fruit.

After the Spirit came upon them at Pentecost the message went out from Jerusalem in ever-widening circles.

Today we have simply read the last three verses of chapter 10.

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. These are encouraging words.

I began writing this reflection in the very peaceful surroundings of Christ Church open for private prayer on the feast day of the Birthday of St John the Baptist, that great prophet who was the doorway between the Old Testament and the New. He preached the message of repentance and the message of being ready in our hearts to welcome our Saviour.

John the Baptist's extended family were expecting that he would be called Zechariah after his father but Elizabeth and Zechariah were clear that he was to be John, the name given to him by the Angel. Zechariah had been on his own personal retreat, unable to speak for nine months so he would have mastered the art of listening to God speak to him.

Several people in the scriptures are given new names because of the work or mission entrusted to them:

Abram becomes Abraham, the receiver of the covenant with God and the father of many nations.

- Simon becomes Peter the Rock on which Jesus will build the church.
- Saul becomes Paul – the Apostle to the Gentiles.
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I don't suppose many of us may be called to listen, without speaking, for several months as Zechariah was, yet we all have the opportunity to carve out a space each day when we can

pray, read some scripture, and give our Lord the opportunity to fill us with his Spirit.

I remember one speaker when asked about our need of the Holy Spirit said that he felt like a sieve who leaked. He was sure that he needed God to refresh and renew him each day and for that reason he prayed daily for the Spirit to fill him.

Some words we would have heard today had we been celebrating the Eucharist in church:

*O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear.
Amen.*

Prayers

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ Jesus we make our prayers to God our loving Father.

God of welcome we remember those who have welcomed us and shown us glimpses of your love. We pray for your church as we prepare to open our buildings, making them places of welcome and hospitality. Guide our leaders and those with decisions to make, especially in our own Diocese. We pray for David, Mark and Mark our bishops, Karen our Archdeacon, Rachel our Area Dean and our church community here at Christ Church and St. Christopher's

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We remember those who we have failed to welcome. Those we have rejected or written off as hopeless causes. Those we find difficult, and those who find us difficult. We pray for patience, tolerance and compassion as we seek to show your love to all we meet.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We remember the leaders of the nations and all who seek to make the world a safer, cleaner and fairer place. Those who work for justice and peace; those who seek to combat climate change; those who work for equality; those who seek to make the world a kinder, more welcoming place. Through their lives may others find your welcome.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

We remember the welcoming love you show us – a love that forgives us and heals us and offers us a new beginning. We pray for your grace and courage as we emerge into a different world and a different church. Help us to recognise you alongside us on our journey.

We pray for all those whose lives have been changed through this period of lockdown and all those experiencing new beginnings of their own – especially those preparing to be

married, those expecting a new baby and new parents – praying for Vivian, Kelechi, Nnaemeka and Chimamaka, and Ruta, Kris, Rozally and Alma.

Lord, hear us.

Lord. graciously hear us.

We remember those from whom we've been separated during this time of lockdown – our families, friends, neighbours and church communities, those we have, in the past, taken for granted and we give you thanks for all that you give us in those we love.

Lord, hear us.

Lord. graciously hear us.

We remember those who are sick at this time. All those who suffer in body, mind and spirit and pray that as Jesus suffered pain in his body and healed it in others, they may find their peace in him this day.

Lord, hear us.

Lord. graciously hear us.

We remember those who have died and give thanks that your love offers to welcome us home. We pray for the souls of Brenda Platt and John Meager who died recently, and among those whose anniversaries fall at this time we remember Robert Charnock, Ben Mansfield, Ethel Draper, Jean McBride, Rupert Sternberg and Charles Campbell.

Lord, hear us.

Lord. graciously hear us.

We join all our prayers together in the prayer that Jesus gave us.

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.

Closing words and Blessing

O God,

whose beauty is beyond our imagining

and whose power we cannot comprehend:

Show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,

And shield us from knowing more than we can bear

Until we may look upon you without fear;

Through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

As the poor widow welcomed Elijah

Let us be open to the richness and miracle in meeting

As Abraham and Sarah welcomed passing strangers

Let us entertain the possibility of angels in disguise

Let us open our eyes, our hands, our hearts

That we may recognise in our neighbour the divine presence of Christ

The blessing Martha's welcome,

The blessing of Mary's listening

The blessing of action,

The blessing of reflection,

The blessing of God who is in each of these and each one of us,
be with us all.

May God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit bless, preserve us and keep us this
day and for evermore. Amen.

Let us go in the peace of Christ

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

**There's a wideness in God's mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There's a kindness in His justice,
Which is more than liberty.
There is no place where earth's sorrows
Are more felt than up in Heaven;
There is no place where earth's failings
Have such kindly judgment given.**

**For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
But we make His love too narrow
By false limits of our own;
And we magnify His strictness
With a zeal He will not own.**

**There is plentiful redemption
In the blood that has been shed;
There is joy for all the members
In the sorrows of the Head.
There is grace enough for thousands
Of new worlds as great as this;
There is room for fresh creations
In that upper home of bliss.**

**If our love were but more simple,
We should take Him at His word;
And our lives would be all gladness
In the joy of Christ our Lord.**

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