

4th Sunday of Trinity 2020

First Sunday worship after lifting of restrictions on public worship

Welcome

Welcome everyone to our website worship. Many of you will know that Christ Church and St. Christopher are both open this morning, where there will be a celebration of the Eucharist. We appreciate that not everyone is able to join us physically but we hope that, nevertheless, you continue to feel part of our church community and we look forward to welcoming you back at some point.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

Today's Collect

Gracious Father, by the obedience of Jesus
you brought salvation to our wayward world:
draw us into harmony with your will, that we may find all things restored in him,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Gospel Reading

At that time Jesus said, ¹⁶'To what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another, ¹⁷"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn." ¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, "He has a demon"; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.

²⁵I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. ²⁷All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

For the word of God in scripture

For the word of God among us

For the word of God within us

We give thanks.

Reflection

You can please all of the people some of the time. You can please some of the people all of the time, but you can't please all of the people all of the time. I don't know who first said that, but those words came to mind when I read this morning's gospel.

For me, it's wonderful to be able to get back in church on Sunday morning and I hope that for those of you not able to do that this week, you will be able to be with us again soon.

But even though we are back in our churches on Sunday morning I'm under no illusion that I can please all of you all of the time - because, let's be honest, even our Lord himself couldn't do that!

Nevertheless, even though our Sunday worship is a slimmed down, both here on our website and 'live' in our church buildings', even though it may appear to some to be a kind of low fat, I can't believe it's not Jesus, type of service, we are trying our best and my thanks go to everyone who has worked hard through this time of lockdown to provide some continuity in our worship and to help get our buildings ready for today.

It would be wonderful if we could have in our churches today rousing hymns, lots of people involved 'up front', and of course, wine and cake afterwards but that's not to be - but surely it is enough that we can meet together at all. Surely we should rejoice that we are here today, albeit via a computer screen -giving thanks to God for the love of our church community.

Surely it should be enough that, once again, some of us can hold out our hands to the God who comes to us in word and sacrament, and in the lives of those around us, and receive the bread of Holy Communion.

Let's resist the temptation to be like those we heard about in this morning's gospel who had the tendency to grumble and groan on the sidelines rather than join in with joy and delight to all that Jesus was offering.

Our gospel reminds us that John the Baptist came to point the way to the glorious new future. Jesus, the Messiah, had arrived, but his generation, rather than getting up and celebrating, sat around complaining that others wouldn't do as they were told - they wouldn't dance when the music played, nor mourn when they wailed. They criticised John for eating and drinking too little and they criticised Jesus for eating and drinking too much.

In short, they were only happy when they were miserable! And let's be honest there are times in all our lives when we are a bit like that - grumpy young and old men and grumpy young and old women

It's a reminder that it's all too easy to miss the good news of the kingdom of God, not because it's missing but because we are too busy carping and complaining and grumbling to see it. That was the case in Jesus' day, and it's been the case ever since.

So let's not think too much today about what we are missing by not being in church physically, or indeed what's missing in the liturgy this morning. Let's not say "Ooh, it's not like it was" Rather, let's give thanks to God for the opportunity, once again to gather as his community, albeit in different places - the optimists and the pessimists, the glass half fulls and the glass half empties, the worried and the hopeful, the joyful and the sorrowing - all will form this wonderful thing we call the body of Christ. To all of you, listening at home, you are part of the body, and we miss you this morning. Come back soon!

This time of lockdown has taken its toll, and will continue to do so, so it's good to hear Jesus' words at the end of today's gospel:

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

May all of us know the rest and the peace that is God's gift to us, in the days ahead.

Prayers of Intercession

Come, Lord, come to us, that we may find rest and peace in you.

Come, Lord, come to us, that we may love you and proclaim your saving power.

We give thanks for all who labour for the coming in of your kingdom of love.

We pray for those who are dispirited by the greatness of the task facing them.

For all who are wearied by their work,

for those without human support,

for all who work in lonely and dangerous places.

We come with our tiredness and our weariness and ask for your rest and refreshment.

Lord, in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who have lost the joy and pleasure of living,

for the bored, the cynical, and all who are jaded with life.

We remember all who are overworked and stressed.

We pray for the anxious and those with heavy hearts,

for all who cannot relax and enjoy being themselves.

May they find rest and refreshment in you.

Lord, in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

We pray that our homes may be places of peace and calm.

We pray for families where there is tension, for relationships at the point of breaking. And for those whose lives have become dull and lacking in purpose. Bless them with rest and refreshment.

Lord, in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are over-anxious, for the despairing, for those who are no longer able to cope on their own.

And we bring to you our own burdens and needs, longing for your rest.

Lord, in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

We give thanks for those who are at rest, for those whose suffering is over and are restored and renewed in your kingdom. We pray for the souls of John Meager and Paul Knott who died recently, and among those whose anniversaries fall at this time we remember Michael Phillips, Henry P. Dodd, Marie Black and Alexander Smith.

May they and all the departed know the rest and refreshment of your presence.

Lord, in your mercy;

Hear our prayer.

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 prayer

Where the world is unwelcoming, may we offer friendship

Where words of love are dismissed, may we speak as prophets.

Where people thirst for justice, may we bring the water of life.

Where people are weary from carrying heavy burdens, may they find rest.

And may we seek no reward but to serve the God who sends us.

May you stay safe in the Way of Christ,

and may you be blessed by his Spirit this day and always.

Amen.

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you,

The Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you

The Lord look kindly on you, and give you is peace

And the blessing.....

Let us go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where thy body lay.

Refrain:

Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory thou o'er death hast won.

Lo, Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly he greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth, death hath lost its sting:

Refrain

No more we doubt thee, glorious Prince of Life;
life is naught without thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors through thy deathless love;
bring us safe through Jordan to thy home above:

Refrain