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Service for the 5th Sunday of Easter, 2nd May 2021

A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Enter his gate with thanksgiving and his courts with praise! (Psalm 100: 4)

HYMN: Praise to the Lord

If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.

1 Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation;
O my soul, praise Him, for he is thy health and salvation:
Come ye who hear,
Brothers and sisters, draw near,
Praise him in glad adoration.

2 Praise to the Lord, who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth:
Bears thee on eagle-wings, and through all troubles sustaineth.
Hast thou not seen
All that is needful hath been
Granted in what he ordaineth?

3 Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper thy way and defend thee;
Surely his goodness and mercy shall ever attend thee;
Ponder anew
What the Almighty can do,
Who with his love doth befriend thee.

4 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore him!
All that hath life and breath come now with praises before him!
Let the "Amen"
Sound from his people again:
Gladly for aye we adore him!

Joachim Neander

PRAYER

Let us pray

Dear Father, thank you for being here among us, wherever we are now.

We have come together to worship and give thanks for your unfailing love, care and mercy towards us.

We praise you for revealing that love in the person of Jesus Christ.

We take this opportunity, as a company of your people, to acknowledge all that you have blessed us with in knowing Him.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

**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.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS

John 1: 43-49

⁴³ The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come with me!" (⁴⁴ Philip was from Bethsaida, the town where Andrew and Peter lived.) ⁴⁵ Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one whom Moses wrote about in the book of the Law and whom the prophets also wrote about. He is Jesus son of Joseph, from Nazareth."

⁴⁶ "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Nathanael asked.
"Come and see," answered Philip.

⁴⁷ When Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, he said about him, "Here is a real Israelite; there is nothing false in him!"

⁴⁸ Nathanael asked him, "How do you know me?"
Jesus answered, "I saw you when you were under the fig tree before Philip called you."

⁴⁹ "Teacher," answered Nathanael, "you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

Acts 8: 4-8

⁴ The believers who were scattered went everywhere, preaching the message. ⁵ Philip went to the principal city in Samaria and preached the Messiah to the people there. ⁶ The crowds paid close attention to what Philip said, as they listened to him and saw the miracles that he performed. ⁷ Evil spirits came out from many people with a loud cry, and many paralyzed and lame people were healed. ⁸ So there was great joy in that city.

HYMN: O Jesus, I have promised

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 O Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
Be thou forever near me,
My Master and my friend;
I shall not fear the battle
If thou art by my side,
Nor wander from the pathway
If thou wilt be my guide.

2 O let me feel thee near me!
The world is ever near:
I see the sights that dazzle,
The tempting sounds I hear.
My foes are ever near me,
Around me and within;
But, Jesus, draw thou nearer,
And shield my soul from sin.

3 O let me hear thee speaking
In accents clear and still,
Above the storms of passion,
The murmurs of self-will.
O speak to reassure me,
To hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

4 O Jesus, thou hast promised
To all who follow thee
That where thou art in glory
There shall thy servant be.
And, Jesus, I have promised
To serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
My Master and my friend.

J E Bode

ADDRESS: *Mr Colin Hale*

There are many notable characters in the Bible, heroes and villains. I would like to draw your attention to someone who might not be the first person you would think of: that is Philip. We know he came from the fishing village of Bethsaida, as did Andrew and Peter, and that it was Jesus who sought him out. In not just a chance encounter, Jesus says two words: "Follow me".

Philip goes straight to find his friend Nathaniel, to introduce him to Jesus. Philip doesn't argue or try to persuade Nathaniel, he just says "Come and see". When Jesus comes into our lives, we too want others to know him.

The next meeting with Philip is at the feeding of the five thousand, when Jesus asks him where to buy bread for the crowd. Philip answers it would take too much money. Even as Christians, we are not immune to the problems of life, but we have a Saviour who is more than able to help.

Much later, we meet Philip again. Jesus is talking to his disciples about leaving them and that he is the only way to the Father. Philip says "Show us the Father and that will be enough for us". Jesus is sad because of Philip's lack of knowledge of Jesus after all the time spent with him. How well do we know Jesus? Not just about him, but really know him, because to know him is to know the Father – as Philip was told.

But the name Philip is not finished yet. Having learned about Philip the Apostle, we now meet Philip the Evangelist – not the same man. In the book of Acts, Jesus has ascended and the church is beginning to organise itself. A dispute arises among them concerning care of widows, especially those of a Greek background. So seven men are chosen to oversee the care of such widows who are in need. Philip is one of those chosen. But that's not the end. Philip heeds the words of Jesus "to go into all the world and preach the good news", so we see him in – of all places – Samaria, not only preaching but doing miracles and healing the sick.

Another adventure happens when an angel tells him to go to the desert fifty miles away – no explanation, but off he goes. Does he wonder "why I am here in the middle of a desert"? Do we wonder why when unforeseen things happen to us? Then he meets an Ethiopian official of the treasury. The Ethiopian has been to worship and is now on his return trip, reading from Isaiah chapter 53. Philip draws near to the chariot and hears him reading, as it was usual to read aloud. "Do you understand what you're reading?" he asked. Philip explains the passage is about Jesus and the man puts his trust in Jesus and asks to be baptised. Immediately after this, Philip is taken away by the Spirit and the Ethiopian goes on his way rejoicing in his new born faith.

Meanwhile, Philip travels around preaching until he settles in Caesarea for twenty years. We know that his family put their trust in Jesus too: it is recorded that four of his daughters prophesied. There could be no greater legacy than to know that your loved ones are saved for all eternity.

Two different Philips. We don't know if they knew each other, but they both put their trust in Jesus and are enjoying being with him.

Amen.

PRAYERS of intercession

Let us pray

Dear Father, we thank you that we can bring all our joys, sorrows, expectations, burdens – in fact all that is going on in our lives- and share them with you.

We pray for help in these uncertain days and pray for all who have faced bereavement, that they will find you the God of all comfort and consolation.

We remember all who serve in the NHS and all care workers.

We thank God for the vaccines and those who enable us to receive them.

We thank you for all who have given time and talents to help in times of need.

Most of all, we thank you that you promised never to leave or forsake us.

We pray for India and ask that it will receive all the help and relief needed to bring an end to the awful suffering of its people.

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers.

Amen.

HYMN: Forth in thy name

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Forth in thy name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue;
thee, only thee, resolved to know,
in all I think or speak or do.

2 The task thy wisdom hath assigned
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
in all my works thy presence find,
and prove thy good and perfect will.

3 Thee may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes my inmost substance see,
and labour on at thy command,
and offer all my works to thee.

4 Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
and every moment watch and pray,
and still to things eternal look,
and hasten to thy glorious day;

5 For thee delightfully employ
whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given,
and run my course with even joy,
and closely walk with thee to heaven.

Charles Wesley

BLESSING

The blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with each one of us, now and for evermore.

Amen.