



Service for the 4th Sunday after Trinity, 5th July 2020

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

INTROIT: "I adore Thee" – John Stainer (from a recording made in 2016)

I adore Thee, I adore Thee!
Thankful at Thy feet to be;
I have heard Thy accent thrilling,
Lo! I come, for Thou art willing
Me to pardon, even me.

I adore Thee, I adore Thee!
Born of woman, yet divine.
Stained with sins I kneel before Thee,
Sweetest Jesu, I implore Thee,
Make me ever, only Thine.

Welcome to worship this Sunday morning. On the first Sunday morning of the month we would usually meet together in church to worship God and to share Communion. We are still not able to meet together at church so you are invited to worship together in your home and share communion.

In a moment I suggest that you pause the video and prepare bread and wine or fruit juice and place it beside your favourite chair and prepare for worship. Imagine the dear faces of your loved ones and members of the congregation around you.

We begin our worship this morning with a prayer written by Donald Hilton. Let us pray.

Loving God, open our eyes to the beauty of your holiness,
Open our ears to the message of your word,
Open our minds to the challenge of your truth,
Open our hearts to the power of your love,
Open our lives to the coming of your Spirit,
That we may truly worship you, now and forever. **Amen.**

HYMN: What a friend we have in Jesus

1 What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!
What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!
O what peace we often forfeit,
O what needless pain we bear,
all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

2 Have we trials and temptations?
Is there trouble anywhere?
We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?
Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

3 Are we weak and heavy laden,
burdened with a load of care?
Jesus is our only refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!
Do your friends despise, forsake you?
Take it to the Lord in prayer!
In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

Joseph Scriven

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

A prayer from the URC Prayer Handbook written by John Proctor.
I invite you to join in the response: **Praise to Jesus, who comes to meet us.**

Let us pray

Praise to Jesus, who comes to meet us

Not tangled in complication,
not above our minds or beyond our powers,
but opening our hearts, as a child's,
to discover the gentle wisdom that guards our living.

Praise to Jesus, who comes to meet us

Not to burden us, damage us or weary us,
not to crush us, clash with us or compel us;
but to take our hand, as a friend's
and to refresh us in the work we do with him.

Praise to Jesus, who comes to meet us

Not to lock us up in religion, but to bring us the reality of God
in the midst of our living, and to beckon us forward,
as disciples, embraced and energised by heaven.

Praise to Jesus, who comes to meet us. Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER – a modern version

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.**

SCRIPTURE READINGS:

I Corinthians 12: 12-20

¹² Christ is like a single body, which has many parts; it is still one body, even though it is made up of different parts. ¹³ In the same way, all of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether slaves or free, have been baptized into the one body by the same Spirit, and we have all been given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ For the body itself is not made up of only one part, but of many parts. ¹⁵ If the foot were to say, "Because I am not a hand, I don't belong to the body," that would not keep it from being a part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear were to say, "Because I am not an eye, I don't belong to the body," that would not keep it from being a part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell?

¹⁸ As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wanted it to be.

¹⁹ There would not be a body if it were all only one part! ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts but one body.

St Matthew 11: 25-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said, "Father, Lord of heaven and earth! I thank you because you have shown to the unlearned what you have hidden from the wise and learned. ²⁶ Yes, Father, this was how you were pleased to have it happen.

²⁷ "My Father has given me all things. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸ "Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.

²⁹ Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. ³⁰ For the yoke I will give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light."

Thanks be for these readings from the Holy Word.

REFLECTION

During the pandemic I have joined my daughters, on-line, in a Laughing Yoga course! I know it sounds a bit strange but it has been fun and we have certainly been laughing. One of the things we had to imagine was that our whole body was smiling, even our little toe! Have you ever tried to make your little toe smile?! Andrea sent me a card she had drawn of a foot with the little toe having a smiley face, and I wanted to show it to you now.

Believe it or not, this funny little drawing reminded me of the reading we have heard today from Paul's letter to the Corinthians. There would not be a body if there were only one part. Even the little toe has its part to play!

Even though we cannot come together physically at the moment, as the body of Christ, we are still very much one body, bound together in our common faith and hope and love.

I recently heard a friend saying how much she had missed communion during lockdown. Her church has not had a communion service in any way during lockdown, as the congregation have not been able to come together and break bread and share together. This gave me pause for thought, as I have shared communion services during lockdown, either as a paper version or as a video version. It seemed to me that even though we cannot be physically together at the moment, we are still one body who can share this precious meal across time and space.

In these abnormal times I believe the body of the church should express its 'oneness' in a different way. What would Jesus do? I believe that Jesus would have a special care for the lonely and the isolated, the people who are unwell and anxious, and for those who are missing the fellowship of the church. Jesus said,

"Come to me, all you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and put it on you, and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit; and you will find rest. For the yoke I give you is easy, and the load I will put on you is light."

I believe that the church should offer the comfort and healing which we are able to in these extraordinary times and that, surely, in sharing communion, we are able to offer that ultimate, comfort and healing and oneness.

The URC has produced a paper about "Virtual Communion". The final words of the paper read - "Communion is a sacrament for the time in-between. Between the earthly life of Jesus and his coming in glory. As it turns distance into presence, so in these strange days it may turn isolation into companionship and in places of anxiety and detachment it will quicken and renew our faith."

Dear Friends, we are one body united in Jesus. We are each a part of the body, unique and loved. We come now, at Jesus' invitation, to share in communion. Although we are scattered, we are united, one in his love.

HYMN: Christ from whom all blessings flow

1. Christ, from whom all blessings flow,
perfecting the saints below,
hear us, who thy nature share,
who thy mystic body are.

2. Join us, in one spirit join,
let us still receive of thine;
still for more on thee we call,
thou who fillest all in all.

3. Closer knit to thee, our Head,
nourished, Lord, by thee, and fed;
let us daily growth receive,
more in Jesus Christ believe.

4. Never from thy service move,
needful to each other prove;
use the grace on each bestowed,
tempered by the art of God.

5. Love, like death, has all destroyed,
rendered all distinctions void;
names and sects and parties fall;
thou, O Christ, art all in all!

Charles Wesley

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

Even as our physical buildings are still closed, our churches, as communities of faith, are still very much open. We are aware of how many blessings we have been given and in response to such bountiful gifts, we respond with our own gifts - our gifts of time and talents and treasure. We still give our money - by a bank transfer or by putting aside our 'collection' until we can meet again. Let us dedicate our gifts to God...

Bountiful God, accept the gifts we bring, our time and talents and treasures, our money and bread and wine, that they may be used in your service.

Amen.

ANTHEM: "His yoke is easy" from *Messiah* – G F Handel (from a recording made in 1999)

His yoke is easy, His burthen is light.

HOLY COMMUNION

All across the world this morning, Christians will be remembering the Last Supper of Jesus. Many will be like us, staying home, unable to meet together. So many will be longing for the time we can come together physically to share in this precious meal. Whatever our circumstances, wherever we are, we are united by this time of remembrance with our Lord. We will remember his love for us and his humility, his courage and sacrifice. We will remember that he was lonely and abandoned, betrayed and denied by his friends. In spite of this, he was faithful and obedient to the end, he died a cruel death because he loved each one of us so much. Through his death we are given new life.

Across time and space he invites us now, whoever we are, to share at His table. Let us remind ourselves what happened at the Last Supper...

On the night that he was betrayed, as they were sitting at a meal,
Jesus took a piece of bread, blessed and broke it. He gave it to the disciples saying,
"This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me."
Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said,
"This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death.
Drink this, all of you, to remember me."

Let us offer our prayer of thanksgiving, as Jesus did. *Let us pray.*

Creator God, we thank you for the wonders of your world and sounds that give us joy.
The laughter of friends and voices singing; bird song and the hum of bees;
water trickling in a pool and summer breezes stirring the leaves.
Jesus, our Saviour, we thank you that you are always with us, our companion and friend,
listening to our inmost thoughts, healing our brokenness, touching our hearts with joy and
hope and love.
Gracious Spirit, we thank you that you guide us through the bleak places, you lead us in the
paths of peace, you inspire us with new insights and bring us to God's grace.
Thank you God for bread to break and wine to share. **Amen.**

Across time and space, we are united as one body. Wherever we are we come together in
this communion meal. Jesus commanded us to do this in memory of Him. We come as
companions to share His feast.

On the night that he was betrayed, as they were sitting at a meal,
Jesus took a piece of bread, blessed it and broke it. He gave it to the disciples saying,
"This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me."
Later, after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said,
"This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood.
Drink this, all of you, to remember me."

So now, with Christians everywhere, take the bread and the wine, as Jesus did.
Eat, drink and remember. God comes to you in bread broken and wine poured.

Silence

Holy Jesus, we have been nourished and blessed, comforted and healed as we have shared in your feast. May we offer your blessings and healing, your comfort and nourishment to those we are in contact with in the coming week.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

God of all goodness; as our country starts to come out of lockdown, we pray for people who are facing changes in their lives; for plans that have had to be altered, new challenges to face, unexpected difficulties, the comfort of familiar routines that have gone.

We pray for parents with young families, continuing to face the challenges of home schooling, especially those who are working from home; for teachers delivering distance learning and preparing for schools to open; for children missing the routines of school and the companionship of friends; for children who have fallen behind in their learning and are anxious about what the future holds.

We pray for young adults in an uncertain time. For students who have missed out on exams; who are unsure about their plans for gap years, college places, new courses, the prospect of virtual lectures. For school leavers who worry about employment when so many people have been made redundant. For young adults who have lost their jobs and struggle to live on Universal Credit.

We pray for people who have been ill during the pandemic with Covid-19 and other health issues; for people who struggle with physical and mental frailty and issues of ageing; for people who have been isolated in their homes for months and are anxious about the thought of going out. We pray for people who have lost loved ones during the last few months and who are grieving.

We pray for people who are returning to work, wary of viral transmission in their work place, concerned about job security and the economic situation. We pray for people who have been made redundant, for people who can only cope with the help of food banks and school meal vouchers.

We pray for ourselves as we consider how our church will open up; as we think about new patterns of ministry in the future; new visions and dreams of how to serve you as your body in the world. We pray for each other, friends and disciples, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you;
the Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you,
and give you peace. **Amen.**