

Morning Service

24th May 2020

You may wish to light a candle.

Introduction – Rev Anne Taylor

Welcome to our online service – I know there are people joining us for worship from both near and far and wherever you are we hope that our time together will help you feel the joy and peace that comes from worshipping together. For the younger members of the family there is Sunday Club at Home and you can find all the activities and cartoon links on our website each week. If you have any prayer requests or you would like a phone call please do contact us. Let us worship together.

Opening Sentences

The Lord be with you

And also with you.

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Hymn O worship the king

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQygFycpvBA>

The Collect

Risen, ascended Lord, as we rejoice at your triumph, fill your Church on earth with power and compassion, that all who are estranged by sin may find forgiveness and know your peace, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Bible Readings

Epistle – Acts 1: 6-14

read by Peter Shaw

The Ascension of Jesus

So when they had come together, they asked him, 'Lord, is this the time when you will restore the kingdom to Israel?' He replied, 'It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.' When he had said this, as they were watching, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. While he was going and they were gazing up towards heaven, suddenly two men in white robes stood by them. They said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up towards heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.'

Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey away. When they had entered the city, they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter, and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.

Gospel – John 17: 1-11

read by Tricia Shaw

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

After Jesus had spoken these words, he looked up to heaven and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son so that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all people, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. So now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.

'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one.

Sermon – Rev Anne Taylor – see below

Hymn – Angel voices ever singing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-nFEjJKuDe4>

Prayers

by Sue Gillam

Heavenly Father, You promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray to You in faith.

Bless and guide Elizabeth, our Queen. Guide all our leaders, both at national government level, and in our community, to make wise decisions for our common good.

We give thanks for the dedication and bravery of our doctors and nurses, paramedics and fire service, police, hospital porters and cleaners, Carers, both in our Care Homes and Nursing Homes and in the community. We also remember all refuse collectors, public transport staff, farmers and food distribution workers, delivery drivers and shop workers. Help us Lord to be grateful for all that we still have and to be mindful of, and appreciate the beauty of the world around us; birdsong, the vibrant colours of nature and the amusing antics of domestic pets and wildlife.

God of Love, be present in every heart and home to cherish, re-assure and comfort us. Your son instructed us to love one another: help us to remember this in our daily lives, to look around us and offer help and friendship to our neighbours. In our cycle of prayer, we remember especially today the residents of Wrigleys Close, Green Lane, The Paddock and Canterbury Close.

We remember our family members who live in other parts of this country, or far away. We pray that they will stay safe and well and feel both YOUR love for them and OUR love, reaching out across the miles. Give them strength and resolve to weather the enforced separation until we can meet again.

We pray for all who are sick in body, mind or spirit. In their adversity, give them courage and strength, and hope that things will get better. We remember especially to-day Amanda, Barbara, Graeme, Mike and Sheila.

God of Life, we commend to You those whose earthly lives have ended and remember those who grieve for them. We remember those whom WE have known and loved and lost and we give thanks for their example, inspiration and support. Shine your light upon them and keep them safe in Heaven. To-day we remember especially Paul Birkbeck, David Perkin, Doreen Rimmer, Joan Trappe and Catherine Pope and those whose Anniversary of death falls at this time.

Lord, in all our journeys
When we are weary, strengthen us
When we are afraid, comfort us
When we are alone, remind us of Your presence
And when travelling is done
Unite us with those we love, and with You
Life's beginning and journey's end.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.'
Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.
The peace of the Lord be always with you
And also with you

Taking of the Bread and Wine

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this bread to set before you,
which earth has given and human hands have made.
It will become for us the bread of life.

All: **Blessed be God forever.**

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
through your goodness we have this wine to set before you,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands.
It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All: **Blessed be God forever.**

Eucharistic Prayer E

The Lord is here.

All: **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right,
it is our duty and our joy,
at all times and in all places
to give you thanks and praise,
holy Father, heavenly King,
almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.



And now we give you thanks
because, after his most glorious resurrection,
he appeared to his disciples,
and in their sight ascended into heaven to prepare a place for us;
that where he is, thither we might also ascend,
and reign with him in glory.

Therefore with angels and archangels,
and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever praising you and saying:

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

All: Great is the mystery of faith:
**Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Peter all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Wherever you may be let us pray together with confidence as our Saviour has taught 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in the one bread.

Prayer after Communion

God of our pilgrimage, you have led us to the living water: refresh and sustain us as we go forward on our journey, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Blessing

May the Spirit, who set the Church on fire upon the day of Pentecost, bring the world alive with the love of the risen Christ. And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and all who you care for this day and always. **Amen.**

Hymn O for a thousand tongues to sing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-dEfvz6Vms&list=PLYIrv69prgqxV5J9hsQU5xVrUfbZorvoR&index=51>

SERMON – Rev Anne Taylor
The Sea & Its Tides Sun after Ascension 24/5/20

I love everything about the sea. From the salty smell, to the sand, the shells, the sense of freedom, even a soaking wet sandy dog. I love the idea of sailing but I was not blessed with sea legs and just about manage the ferry across the Irish Sea. I do enjoy a walk by the sea, whatever the weather, whatever the time of year. The sea seems to instil a sense of peace and timelessness. Even if the waves are crashing on to the shore, you know it will not always be like that. There will come a day when all will be calm. It seems to say, difficult times, testing times, times when everything seems to be crashing upon us, these times will pass. A few weeks ago I mentioned Julian of Norwich, the medieval mystic. She wrote something similar, “All will be well. All manner of things will be well.” There will be days of calm and rest and peace.

One of the things about the sea is the tide with its regular rhythm of ebb and flow.

And in a sense there is a rhythm of ebb and flow in in our 2 readings this morning.

After Jesus ascended, the disciples returned to Jerusalem, to the Upper Room in which they had celebrated the Last Supper with Jesus; the Upper Room where Jesus had appeared to them after the Resurrection; the Upper Room in which in 10 days’ time, the Holy Spirit would descend upon them and fill them with the presence of the Risen Jesus.

In his Gospel Luke records Jesus telling the disciples to stay in the city and to wait for the renewing of the Holy Spirit. And as they waited, as we heard in our epistle, they constantly devoted themselves to prayer. Their prayer was a preparation for the active ministry that awaited them after Pentecost.

And that became the rhythm of their lives. Just as the tides are regular in the rhythm of coming in and out so there should be a similar rhythm to our lives as Christians.

There is a time for prayer, reflection, for quietness and rest. As Isaiah says, “In returning and rest you shall be saved. In quietness and trust shall be your strength”. (30:15)

In another chapter he writes, “Those who wait on the Lord will renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings like eagles. They shall run and not be weary. They shall walk and not faint.” (40:31).

So the disciples waited prayerfully after Jesus’ ascension – waited for the equipping and empowering of the Holy Spirit which was to come on the Feast of Pentecost, 10 days later.

But the gift of the Holy Spirit was not an end in itself. Rather it was a means to an end – to strengthen them to go out and be the church, to minister in the name of Jesus and to draw all people to the knowledge and love of God.

Their waiting was not about withdrawing from life, but about witnessing to Jesus in the rough and tumble, in the trials and testings, in the ups and downs of life.

And that second element of the Christian life is reflected in our Gospel this morning. Jesus says, “And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world.” And later in the chapter he says “I have sent them into the world.”

Their waiting in the Upper Room was for a purpose. The Holy Spirit was given to them to enable them to serve.

Their waiting, their withdrawal was not to be a permanent state but only that they could better witness to God's love as shown in Jesus.

And that is to be the ebb and flow of our lives too – waiting on God in order to witness to the world.

The great doctor, explorer and missionary, David Livingstone was a man of faith and prayer. He set out for Africa in search of the source of the Nile. Nobody heard anything from him for 4 years and people were anxious. A reporter for the New York Herald, a man called Henry Stanley, was sent out to find out whether Livingstone was alive or dead. He eventually found him in modern day Tanzania, near Lake Tanganyika and greeted him with the immortal words, "Dr. Livingstone, I presume." Stanley spent some time with David Livingstone and later wrote, "If I had been with him any longer, I would have been compelled to be a Christian – and he never spoke about it at all."

Could the same be said about us?

Just last week a friend sent me the letter the new Archbishop of Armagh sent to church members. Like Nathan going to St. Giles, there was no big service of induction, no introductory sermon setting out hopes and dreams, no speeches of welcome and expectation. Added to that, General Synod had been cancelled due to the coronavirus. So he sent a letter to say what he wanted by way of introduction.

In it he spoke about "pastoral evangelisation". He said that what we were about was not a "competition for souls" but rather what he wanted church members to show in their lives was a "caring, patient, even perhaps quiet drawing of people to Jesus" by looking after and looking out for others in their need, whether physical or spiritual.

To paraphrase Ralph Waldo Emerson, we need to be aware that what we are speaks more loudly than what we say.

And I know from personal experience that more people have found God because of pastoral care than gimmicky campaigns.

And that is within all our reaches.

The ebb and flow of the Christian life is Prayer and Action.

There is a time for waiting and a time for working
There is a time for seeking and a time for serving
A time to be fed and a time to feed others.

It's what Jesus himself did – going apart to be with God before being a part of people's lives and ministering to them.

We're lucky to be living beside the sea. Let's learn the lessons of the tide as we seek to be effective witnesses to God's love in Jesus.