

Morning Service

Sunday 2nd August 2020

You may wish to light a candle.

Introduction

Welcome to our online service as we worship together both near and far. A warm welcome to those who may be joining us for the first time and we hope this gives a flavour of who we are in St Peter's and do encourage others to join us online. We welcome those joining us from Ireland, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and across England.

St Peter's is open each Sunday and Wednesday from 10am to 12noon and you are welcome to drop in. We have a short said Eucharist on Sunday at 9.30am.

Wherever you are we hope that our time together will help you feel the joy and peace that comes from worshipping together.

Opening Sentences

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
and also with you.

Our first hymn is that wonderful anthem by John Rutter For the beauty of the earth. It is well known so do please sing along and let your neighbours hear the joy that we have in the world around us. Then Nick & Ros Philpott will read our lessons and after the sermon Simon will lead us in prayer.

Hymn For the Beauty of the Earth - John Rutter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xIBkpAm3fhw>

The Collect

Almighty Lord and everlasting God, we beseech you to direct, sanctify and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of your laws and the works of your commandments; that through your most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Bible Readings

Epistle – Romans 9:1-5

read by Nick Philpott

God's Election of Israel

I am speaking the truth in Christ—I am not lying; my conscience confirms it by the Holy Spirit—I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my own people, my kindred according to the flesh. They are Israelites, and to them belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Messiah, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.

Gospel – Matthew 14:13-21

read by Ros Philpott

Feeding the Five Thousand

Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, 'This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves.' Jesus said to them, 'They need not go away; you give them something to eat.' They replied, 'We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish.' And he said, 'Bring them here to me.' Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven,

and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Sermon – Rev Anne Taylor

Hymn God is love, His the care <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZF1mK0cxP0>

Prayers

by Simon Macaulay

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ, let us pray to the Father.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of God's Church, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

For peace and justice for all those who live in fear of war and oppression,

For all those who are hungry and in need, remembering the work of the Southport Foodbank,

For all who are homeless, and for the persecuted, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

For Paul our bishop, and the clergy and people of our diocese, For our Deanery, especially remembering the parish of St Luke Formby and their new vicar, Matt Davies, For our parish, particularly the residents of Old Town Lane, Rymers Green, Piercefield Road and Freshfield Road, let us pray to the Lord. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

For the leaders of this and every nation, and all those in authority, that they may exercise their responsibilities with wisdom and compassion, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

For all those who are sick in body mind and spirit, especially Barbara, Eileen, Graeme and Nicky, For those who are in hospital or housebound, and all those who live in nursing homes,

remembering especially all those in Halycon House and Woodlands Care home, let us pray to the Lord. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Remembering with thanks those who have gone before us in faith, among them Jane Milles, and in our year's mind John Williams, in communion with St Peter and all the Saints, let us pray to the Lord. Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Be with us, Lord, in all our prayers, and direct our way toward the attainment of salvation, that among the changes and chances of this mortal life, we may always be defended by your gracious help, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Peace

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace.

If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

And also with you

Taking of the Bread and Wine

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should always sing of your glory, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,



through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord:
And now we give you thanks that,
though the heaven of heavens cannot contain you,
and your glory is in all the world,
yet you chose to hallow our homes for your worship at this time,
and in them you pour forth gifts of grace
upon your faithful people.
And so, with the saints and angels around your throne
we join to glorify your name, for ever praising you.

**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.**

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.
We proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Jesus Christ is Lord:
**Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**
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 and 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.
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

Lord God, your Son left the riches of heaven and became poor for our sake: when we prosper save us from pride, when we are needy save us from despair, that we may trust in you alone; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home.

Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory. May we bring life and hope to others; and we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world. Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn Guide me, O thou Great Redeemer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkVT8O5E1rM>

The Blessing

We finish our service today with that wonderful Irish blessing –

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall soft upon your fields.
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be with you and all whom you love this day and always. **Amen.**

FEEDING OF THE 5000

Bread is a basic of most of our diets – whether garlic, crusty, bagels, wheaten. Toasted, fried, making a sandwich. Covered in butter. We love it. In the introduction of a book on baking bread, the authors have this to say:-

“In France and Italy where we come from, a meal is not a meal without bread...It is said that the table is not laid until there is bread set out on it. Bread is used to eat *with* as much as it is eaten – a piece of bread is a secondary fork and then used to wipe the plate clean of every last morsel. My father, like others in his generation, still makes the sign of the cross with the tip of his knife on the base of a loaf before cutting it.”

Bread is basic to life and therefore it's not surprising that in the Bible bread is overlaid with a great deal of spiritual significance.

It is a sign of hospitality and sharing. When 3 angels from God visited Abraham to tell him that he and Sarah would have a much longed for son, Abraham told them to rest under a tree and then said, “Let me bring a little bread that you may refresh yourselves.” And then rushed into the tent to tell Sarah to get baking!

But that aside, bread acted like a cup of tea today when someone calls.

Remember also the parable Jesus told about a man at midnight asking his neighbour for some bread because guests had unexpectedly arrived.

And in the Old Testament bread was used in the ceremony of ordaining priests. It was part of the offering to God, part of the sacrifice that was laid down as a requirement.

And every Sabbath, the priests in the Temple would set 12 loaves of bread before the Ark of the Covenant as a thanksgiving for God's care and provision for his people. A provision that was dramatically demonstrated by the manna God gave the Israelites as they journeyed through the wilderness.

These examples of the use of bread in the Old Testament help us to look, perhaps with fresh eyes, at today's Gospel – the miracle of the feeding of the 5000.

In choosing stories and incidents to put into their accounts of Jesus' ministry, the four Gospel writers choose different events to suit their purposes.

For example, only Matthew and Luke tell about the birth of Jesus. Only John recounts the raising of Lazarus. The famous Sermon on the Mount is found in only 2 Gospels, and in Luke it's only half the length that it is in Matthew.

But the one incident that all 4 Gospels include is the Feeding of the 5000.

It was too important to leave out, especially as we begin to understand it in the light of the other bread stories and references in the Bible.

Many today interpret the Feeding of the 5000 as a miracle of sharing, of showing hospitality to one another, even to the stranger.

As in Matthew's account, the disciples shared what they had – 5 loaves and 2 fish – others began to share the food they must have brought along, because they had all followed Jesus to a deserted place away from the towns, and most must have brought some food in their pockets.

It was a miracle of sharing.

As one writer (Jean Vanier) says of this miracle – “It's not just multiplying food but creating and building a caring community where people are concerned for one another, not just for themselves. And isn't that just what the church should be?”

And then there is the idea of bread being a symbol of God's love and care for us.

Both Matthew and Mark also record another separate feeding of 4000 people. And it's not just an unfortunate repetition but included for a specific purpose.

Today's incident took place in Jewish territory west of Galilee and the 12 baskets left over are symbolic of the 12 tribes of Israel. The feeding of the 4000 took place in Gentile territory and the 7 baskets of leftovers represent the 7 Gentile districts of the region.

What Matthew and Mark are saying is that God's love and care extends to all people. God is colour blind and is not concerned with status. He reaches out to the 'who-so-ever'. He makes no distinctions in the offering of his love – and neither should the church. And then there is the spiritual significance of bread.

Let's think for a moment of the early Christians who gathered together to read and hear the Gospel. How would the Feeding of the 5000 strike them?

As Matthew tells the story, Jesus took the loaves, then he blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples.

Doesn't that mirror what Jesus did at the Last Supper, and wouldn't it have mirrored their own celebration of the Eucharist as it does our celebrations of the sacrament still today?

In his Gospel account of the Feeding of the 5000, John records Jesus going on to tell the people, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."

The bread is the token of his living presence given to each of us as we share in Communion, given freely and unconditionally to all who stretch out their hands.

And just as in the Feeding of both the 5000 and the 4000 there is more than enough. God's love is generous, abundant and overflowing. I love the quote from Martyn Percy which says that "God has only one weakness – his heart is too soft."

At the heart of this miracle, at the heart of the whole Gospel, is a God whose love is overflowing and overwhelming. As the hymn writer puts it,

"Thou O Christ art all I want
More than all in thee I find."

That's why this miracle is recorded in all 4 Gospels. It shows a caring God, who asks us to share and care as well.

As the priests put a thank-offering of bread in the Temple every Sabbath, bread is a reminder to us to be thankful – thankful for all that Jesus has done for us, and for his presence in our daily lives. Thankful for all that we can do for others,

And bread points us to the Eucharist where we receive God's love and offer ourselves to be used in service and the service of others.

It's like the baker, making the sign of the cross on the loaf before cutting it – hallowing all of life with Jesus, the Bread of Life.