

Traditional Home service Sunday 27th September Trinity 16

OPENING PRAYER

O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PRAYER OF PENITENCE

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.

PRAISE

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ. Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

Let us sing to God with thankful hearts. Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

HYMN 1 (see page 2)

READINGS - Hebrews 10:19-25
Luke 4:14-21

TALK

CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Spend some time praying for our nation, our community and our families.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.

HYMN 2 (see page 2)

CONCLUSION

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. Amen.

HYMNS TO USE

21 Charles Wesley.

AND CAN IT BE that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.

Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

32 Caroline Maria Noel.

AT THE NAME OF JESUS

Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the mighty Word.

Humbled for a season,
To receive a name
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom He came;
Faithfully He bore it
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious,
When from death He passed.

Bore it up triumphant
With its human light,
Through all ranks of creatures
To the central height,
To the throne of Godhead,
To the Father's breast,
Filled it with the glory
Of that perfect rest.

In your hearts enthrone Him;
There let Him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true;
Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation's hour,
Let His will enfold you
In its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again,
With His Father's glory,
With His angel-train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now.

Sunday 27th Sep - Revd Adrian Morton

Hebrews 10:19-25; Luke 4:14-21

Are we coming or going...?

On Wednesday I did my midweek musing about gathering again on Sunday morning for worship.

And more details are in the newsletter about that.

So I wanted to speak into all that this morning.

Why should we be doing that now, particularly as it seems we are in a second wave of this pandemic.

Or shouldn't we be thinking about what the new normal is for church.

Should church be changing to the extent that maybe we don't need to gather together maybe. Or maybe we don't need our buildings etc...

During the summer Louise and I watched the online offerings from both New Wine and Rivercamp.

And to be honest I was really hoping that these national leaders would be saying something about the future of the church.

How this pandemic is changing the nature of church.

What is to be the new normal, what are the new opportunities etc...

But none of them did.

I suppose it left me a bit frustrated.

Why aren't these national leaders speaking on this...

Then more recently I felt I had one of those spiritual 'Der' moments!

Why don't I ask God myself about it!!

Obvious really!

Why am I relying so heavily on others.

Its tempting though isn't it, particularly with all the online input we can have access to, from people all across the world.

To try and rely on what others are saying. Rather than what you feel the Lord is saying to you.

And we don't quite opt out of our responsibility. More we just get a bit lazy...

So I started to ask, Lord, what are you saying? Should we be gathering again on a Sunday...

I felt him say to me, 'What's on your heart?'

"I've given you a new heart..."

"So what's on your heart..."

My reply was, "Well, Lord, I think I want to gather on a Sunday."

If I look back at how I believe the Lord has led me in the past.

More often than not He has just placed things on my heart.

And then I just have an inner conviction, an inner desire to go that way.

And it's the same with gathering on a Sunday. It just feels a right way to go...

And it may be the government in the next days or weeks bring in further restrictions that mean we can't.

But that's ok, we won't be able to.

That's about submitting to those in authority.

But until that time, I think we need to plan to.

You know, I used to watch the news every night during lockdown.

I'm watching it less often now.

And of course we need to keep informed.

But I felt I was allowing the media to dictate how I was starting to think.

Whereas, for Christians, we should be allowing the word of God to dictate what we think.

The word of God is still relevant to us.

Why should we be allowing a pandemic to overly shape the nature of church?

And again, I'm not saying we ignore government restrictions.

That's not right.. and we need to keep safe.

But when I look through Scripture, it seems clear that gathering for worship is part of what God's people have always done.

From the early days in the tabernacle, then the temple, synagogue.

And it was when the people gathered, the manifest presence of God made itself known among them.

And yes, we of course can experience the presence of God individually, in one or two's, but I believe we experience it even stronger when groups of believers, who are open to the Spirit come together to worship Him.

In the Luke 4 reading that wasn't read out, but is one of the readings I set for today.

It tells us Jesus went into the synagogue... then it says..

"As was his custom."

Jesus regularly went to church!!!

And I know we are living under a new covenant and not the old one.

And how we worship has therefore changed.

Fortunately, because I would have never fancied cutting up bits of animals.

So the nature or form of worship has changed. But the call to worship has made it through the cross.

And I believe the call to gather together to worship is still there.

The early church gathered together to worship, to break bread together, to hear the apostles teaching.

The epistles we have in the New Testament are written in order to be read out to the gathered church.

In that Hebrews reading, it says “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another...”

I don't know how the church might be changed by this pandemic.

But I believe we have to keep the Word of God as our primary guide.

I quite like Louise's picture she shared last week about how she felt the Lord has been speaking to her.

Being outside in the dark and it taking time for your eyes to adjust before you see one star, and then eventually many stars.

Well I wonder whether we are still in the dark about this.

And our eyes are adjusting...

It may be we will have to start thinking about meeting in groups of 6.

Or worshipping together more in homes?

I'm up for anything... to be honest!

But what ever we do, I still think there will be a need to gather all together, in some way to primarily worship Him.

The way we live our our faith has, I believe, always been about being sent out into the world.

Thats clear, Jesus said “Go into all the world..” We are called to be salt and light wherever we are.

To bring the kingdom to bear in our neighbourhoods, our workplaces, our friendship groups.

To be hope bearers, peace givers, reconcilers etc..

And maybe this is a season where going out is to be prioritised.

We should be doing more of that where we can.

But equally, our faith is also about 'Come and see...'

Come and see this Jesus...

And a gathered group of believers authentically worshipping, gives that place where 'Come and see' can be realised...

Come and experience a worshipping community. Come and experience a people to belong to, a people to be accountable to, a people to serve, a people to love.

And yes, it may sometimes feel awkward, yes we may hate rota's, (I do!) yes it isn't often quite what we hoped for... but it is the bride of Christ, a people of all different ages and personalities, a people precious to Him.

At Matthew and Jules' wedding last Saturday at Wollaston, I was struck by what someone said to me after the service.

The service was limited to 30, all but a few of us wore masks, we had worship videos playing.. that we weren't allowed to sing to...

And a lady came up to me afterwards, I don't think a Christian, and she told me she had never seen music videos in a church before.

I explained we normally have a worship group, but we sing the same kind of songs..

And then she told me that they had made her really emotional, even though she didn't know them.

It was reminder to me, that when you bring people into an atmosphere of worship, the Spirit meets with people.

And we've seen that over the years.

So as we finish...

You may be feeling that you don't know whether you are Coming or Going in this season!

Well, when it comes to our life of faith... however that may look like in the future.

I think we'll still need both.

To go into all the world be be kingdom bringers.

And also to come and worship together.

Amen.