



**Reflections & Prayers
for Sunday 9 May 2021
Easter 6**



Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Happy Easter! Yes, it is still Easter... the 6th Sunday of Easter.

The central message of the scriptures throughout this Eastertide season is a message about love, a proclamation of love. Jesus talks about this with his disciples, telling them: "Love one another as I have loved you."

Contents

Reading for this Sunday	p. 2
Reflection	p. 2-4
Prayers	p. 4-5
Parish Prayers	p. 5-6
Church Opening times	p. 6

Readings for this Sunday

You may want to find your Bible and read the lessons set for this week:

Acts 10:44- end

Psalms 98

1 John 5.1-6

John 15: 9-17 Love one another, as I have loved you.

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Reflection from the Revd Kathleen Davie Awbrey.

My mother was one of the best preachers I have known. Our reflection this morning is from a sermon she preached at her last parish in North Carolina, and I am happy to be able to share it with you. Lauryn

The central message of the scriptures throughout this Eastertide, and today, is a message about love, a proclamation of love. Over and over we are told, God loves us. We need to understand this, absorb it, internalize it, make it part of us, our own selves, our skin, hair eyes, our very breath!

We learn the depth of God's love for all humanity, the truth of it, from knowing Jesus Christ. We see love throughout his life, in his relationships with others, and through his laying down of his life for us – for all of humanity – at Golgotha.

We use the word 'love' a lot, maybe too much. "I love pizza!" "I love my new car!" "I just love..." ... pick a subject. That's okay, as long as we understand that that kind of expression has nothing to do with real love. Those uses of the word do reflect emotion: we like, we love. There is a sense of affection, of sentiment. It can refer to sexual attraction, romantic feelings, sensory pleasures. It can refer to trust, to loyalty, to conversation, to making connections with one another – our spouse, our children, our friends, our parents, our pets. We love them, specifically, especially.

In a religious framework, we may use the word 'love' little too glibly. Love another, God is love. We think of love as a warm feeling, a kind of warm fuzzy tolerance. Well... yes... but... Christian love is not quite that easy! Love is not a warm puppy!

Love requires decision, dedication, and deliberate choices. In the Gospel, the word 'love' means specific actions: action for others on their behalf, for their benefit. This might carry good feelings, might carry strong emotions – but then again might not.

When we are baptized, we promise a whole that has to do with living out love. We promise to see and serve Christ in all persons, to love our neighbours as ourselves, and to stand bravely against the powers of evil and darkness. These are hard promises to keep! This is not an easy road, a comfortable path.

Jesus has told us, "you are not my servants, but you are my friends." So we are in a reciprocal relationship: our brother Jesus has given us so much, and so we try to give back, to follow him, because that's what he asks us to do. Because God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, loves us, we try to love others.

And within living out that love, we discover God in new ways. God is practical, God is down to earth. God is concerned with our hearts and minds and souls, with our motivations and our concrete actions. We may not have warm, glowing feelings – but we can decide to do things for our others, caring actions, right actions for the good of others.

Christianity, early on, proclaimed that God is a God who cares and loves, and that is made plain to us through Jesus. The first Christians struggled to live that out. They were re-shaped and reformed by their relationship with Jesus, and re-shaped and reformed by the Resurrection, and then by their own baptism. Those first Christians were moved by the Spirit to act generously to help other people, people they didn't really know, people toward

whom they certainly did not have warm fuzzy feelings. They made a decision, a deliberate choice to help others.

Re-shaped and reformed by the Resurrection. Take a deep breath and think about how you have been re-shaped and reformed by the Resurrection of our Lord. How have you been challenged? Converted? How close are we to becoming friends of God?

“No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer.” Rejoice and give thanks for the love we have been given. We pray that we may be given the grace and the strength to learn to be servants with Christ, to serve him with joyful and generous hearts. **Amen.**

Prayers

A collect for this week

Lord of all power and might,
the author and giver of all good things:
Graft in our hearts the love of your Name;
increase in us true religion;
nourish us with all goodness;
and bring forth in us the fruit of good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Prayers for others and for ourselves

We pray for strength to follow Jesus.
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

Jesus said: ‘Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.’
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

Jesus said: ‘Unless you change and become humble like little children,
you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.’
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

Jesus said: ‘Happy are the humble; they will receive what God has promised.’
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Be merciful as your Father is merciful; love your enemies and do good to them.'
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Love one another, as I love you; there is no greater love than this,
to lay down your life for your friends.'
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Go to people everywhere and make them my disciples,
and I will be with you always, to the end of time.'
Saviour, we hear your call. Help us to follow.

God of mercy,
you know us and love us
and hear our prayer:
keep us in the eternal fellowship of
Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

A blessing for today:

You are chosen and appointed to go and bear fruit;
love one another, for you are infinitely loved.
Abide in Christ's love, that his joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
The gift of the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon you: lift up your voice and rejoice.
And the blessing of our generous God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you and
cherish you, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Parish Prayers for the week ahead

In the Anglican Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	The Anglican Church of Kenya
Monday	The Diocese of Bunbury – The Anglican Church of Australia
Tuesday	The Diocese of Bungoma – The Anglican Church of Kenya
Wednesday	The Diocese of Bunyoro-Kitara – The Church of the Province of Uganda
Thursday	The Diocese of Busan – The Anglican Church of Korea
Friday	The Diocese of Busoga – The Church of the Province of Uganda
Saturday	The Diocese of Central Busoga – The Church of the Province of Uganda

In our Diocesan Cycle of Prayer:

Sunday	Parish of Ardeley (Deanery of Buntingford)
Monday	Parish of Ashwell (Deanery of Buntingford)
Tuesday	Parish of Aspenden (Deanery of Buntingford)
Wednesday	Parish of Baldock (Deanery of Buntingford)
Thursday	Parish of Barkway (Deanery of Buntingford)
Friday	Parish of Barley (Deanery of Buntingford)
Saturday	Parish of Benington (Deanery of Buntingford)

For the homes and families in:

Sunday	Burywick, Camberley Place
Monday	Chaucer Close, The Chowns
Tuesday	Churchfield, Coleswood Road
Wednesday	Collens Road, Cosne Mews
Thursday	Crabtree Lane, Cranbourne Drive
Friday	Cravells Road, Croftwell
Saturday	Cross Lane, Dark Lane

The Sick:

Amy, Claire, Sue, Christine, Hermione, Karen, Chris, John and all whose names are entered on our St Luke's Cell Prayer List.

For the recently deceased:

Lorna McGown

On their year's mind:

Dennis Marsh, Alan Gardner, James Pestell, John Colegate, Susan East, Rosina Boon, Don Jarman.

Church Opening times

Other services / in Church congregation

- Evening Prayer on Wednesdays at 5.00pm
- Sunday 9.30am Parish Eucharist

Private Prayer

- Saturday opening (in addition to Sunday), 11.00am – 4.00pm

A reminder... of this phone service:

Daily Hope – dial 0800 804 8044 for prayer, reflection, music and worship services from the Church of England. A weekly service is available from 9 am every Sunday.

Church at home:

We are delighted to produce each week these printed papers. If you would prefer not to receive these papers each week, please let Julie in the parish office know. If you are aware of others in the parish who would also value the opportunity to worship at home in this way, do please contact a member of the Ministry team or Julie (Parish Office Tel: 01582 712776).

