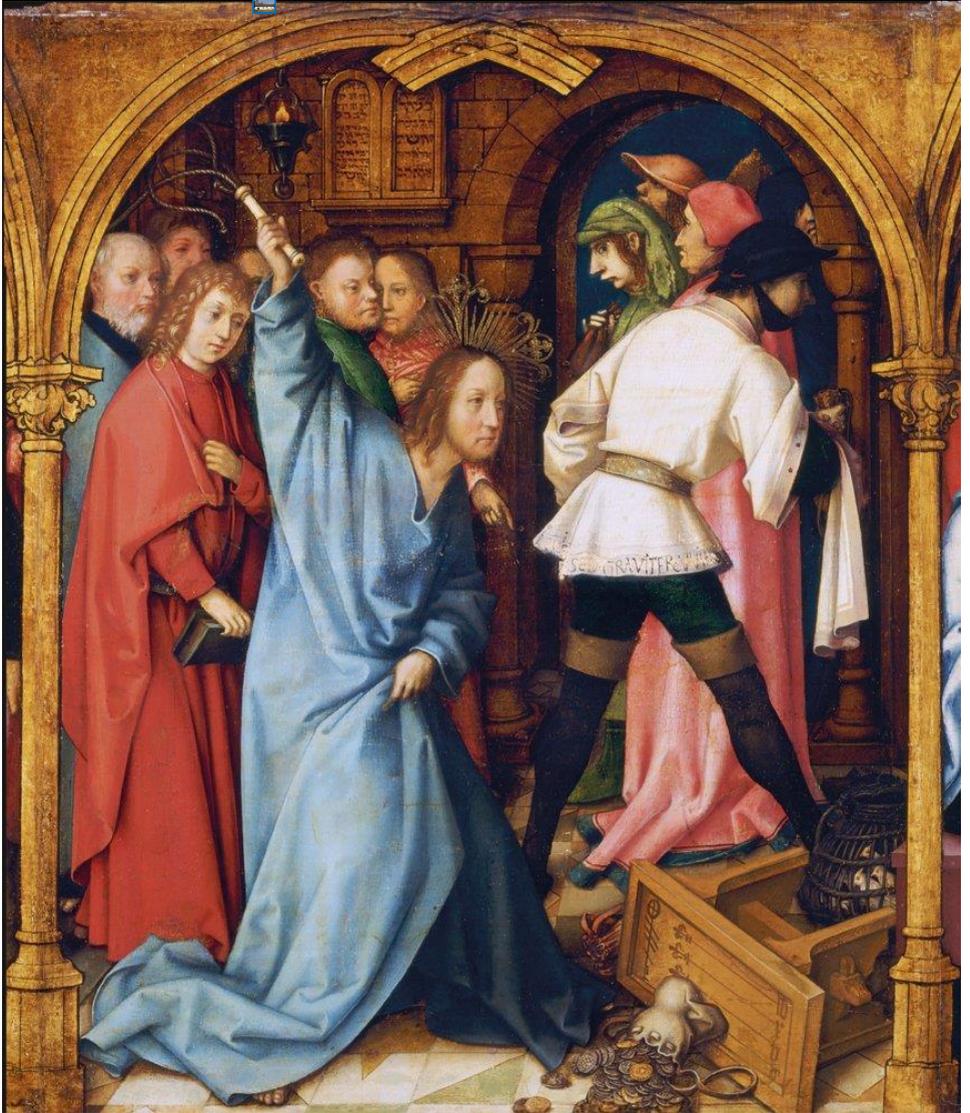




Chet Valley Churches



Holy Communion
Third Sunday of Lent
7th March 2021

The Greeting and Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The Lord be with you, **and also with you.**

The Liturgy of the Candles

We have these Lenten candles to remind us of Christ the light of the World, whose light was taken from the world on the cross.

We extinguish this candle O Lord. For whenever there is suffering, wherever your image is marred by humanity's cruelty and thoughtlessness, the light that you are in the world is dimmed. Help us to fight against suffering and to keep your light shining in your creation.

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

♪ Hymn: *Be Thou My Vision*

**Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
Thou my best thought by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.**

**Be thou my wisdom, Thou my true word;
I ever with thee, Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.**

**Be thou my battle shield, sword for the fight;
Be thou my dignity, Thou my delight,
Thou my soul's shelter, Thou my high tower:
Raise thou me heaven-ward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.**

**Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine inheritance, now and always:
Thou and thou only, first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.**

**High King of heaven, after victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav'n's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

The Prayers of Penitence

Let us confess our sins to Almighty God

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love: fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:
fill us with your Spirit.
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:
fill us with your Spirit.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all
goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he
suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully
grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than
the way of life and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

New Testament Reading: *1 Corinthians 1:18-25*

For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing,
but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I
will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning
I will thwart.'

Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater
of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since,
in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God
decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who
believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we
proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling-block to Jews and foolishness to
Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ
the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser
than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

For the Word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

♪ Hymn: *As the Deer*

**As the deer pants for the water,
So my soul longs after you,
You alone are my heart's desire,
And I long to worship you.**

***You alone are my strength, my shield,
To you alone may my spirit yield,
You alone are my heart's desire,
And I long to worship you.***

**I want you more than gold or silver,
Only you can satisfy,
You alone are the real joy-giver,
And the apple of my eye.**

You alone are my strength...

**You're my friend and you are my brother,
Even though you are a king,
I love you more than any other,
So much more than anything.**

You alone are my strength...

📖 Gospel Reading: *John 2:13-22*

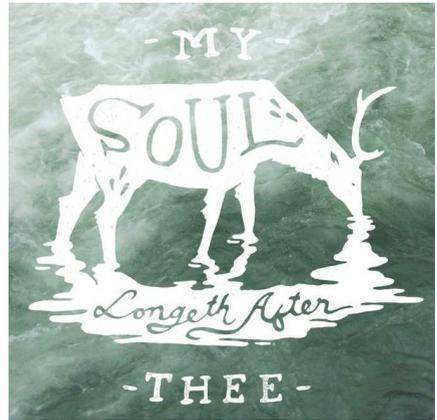
The Lord is a great God. O that today you would listen to his voice.
Harden not your hearts.

Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to you O Lord.

The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found people selling cattle, sheep, and doves, and the money-changers seated at their tables. Making a whip of cords, he drove all of them out of the temple, both the sheep and the cattle. He also poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. He told those who were selling the doves, 'Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father's house a market-place!' His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for your house will consume me.'



The Jews then said to him, 'What sign can you show us for doing this?' Jesus answered them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews then said, 'This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

Talk [Belinda]

'After his resurrection his disciples recalled what he had said and they believed the scripture and the words Jesus had spoken.'

Hindsight is a wonderful thing. Viewed in retrospect, all sorts of things become clear—obvious, even.

'Obviously we should have locked down sooner', we all grumble to ourselves.

'I said at the time they should have done something about _____', we complain.

'We should have seen _____ coming, shouldn't we?' we remark.

The trouble is that it's not always easy to see things clearly as they unfold: small events are overlooked, comments that later are seen to be prophetic are largely ignored on first hearing, the world changing importance of a single incident makes little impression.

Sometimes we expect those in charge to be omniscient, second guessing outcomes and getting it right every time. So we are surprised at the blunders that the disciples made. We cringe at some of their comments and marvel at how very obtuse they can be.

At this point it can be a salutary lesson to remember our own moments of blindness. I recall going on an Ignatian retreat at St Beuno's in North Wales, seeing a small and insignificant man creep in at the back of the room as we all listened to a general introduction to the retreat, and assuming that he was there to take the cases up. He wasn't. He was to be my retreat conductor for the week and was a person of great wisdom and insights. We all too often judge by appearances, make assumptions and time after time fail to see what we should have seen.

It is interesting to read John's account of the money changers in the temple and to see how the disciples heard Jesus words but didn't take their meaning until much later, after his death and resurrection. There must have been a great deal of going over the things that happened in those three years of his ministry in the weeks and months that followed the Ascension, storing up the precious memories, sifting through different accounts and gradually realising the significance of what had been witnessed.

The things that were happening before their eyes were mindboggling. In John's Gospel the temple incident takes place right after the wedding at Cana, when Jesus turned water into wine. They are being swept along on a whirlwind, struggling to comprehend exactly what all these things mean. This passage gives us a valuable insight into their thinking; they are storing things away in their memories, just as we know Mary did. ('Mary stored up all these things and pondered over them.' *Luke 2:19*)

What the disciples saw on this occasion was quite astonishing. The temple just before Passover was a busy place, coins being changed into the currency that was acceptable in the precincts, animals were there ready for sacrifice, there were visitors from near and far, an atmosphere of excitement on the eve of the festival. There was nothing terribly wrong or untoward happening, but into the mix came Jesus, causing a major disturbance, whipping animals, scattering money, making strange statements about rebuilding a temple in three days. Mayhem.

The biggest surprise in all of this is that he wasn't immediately arrested. In the other three Gospels, when this incident is recorded as happening at the end of Jesus' ministry, it is seen as one of the things that led to his death. John places it at the beginning of Jesus' ministry, perhaps to make the point that the next three years are going to turn everything upside down. Nothing will be viewed complacently any more. The things that have been ignored, the sins that have been brushed under the carpet, the valuing of rituals over what really matters; none of these will be left unchallenged. Hold onto your hats, it's going to be a bumpy ride.

I wonder how we would feel about someone coming into Chedgrave's Autumn Fair, or the Open House in Holy Trinity, and throwing over tables, sending raffle tickets flying, upsetting the cake stall? Actually, I don't wonder, I know—we'd be horrified. But then what if we realised that what the trouble maker was doing was showing us that we'd got it all wrong? That we were so intent on getting in the money for ourselves that we'd

forgotten about what really matters, or we were so bound up in making things look good that we'd forgotten about being good? Or that we were so busy going through the motions that we'd forgotten all about real worship? That we were so bound up in our own lives that we were completely blind to the needs of others? What then?

Some people's words and actions can make us feel really uncomfortable or defensive. I'm sure that the onlookers in the temple were pretty indignant and defensive. On the whole we don't want our arrangements overthrown or our assumptions challenged. We can manage very nicely without interference. But sometimes interference is just what we need, to show us where we have been going wrong. Some things, even horrible things like Covid 19, might be showing us where we've gone very wrong indeed.

Some things we may not realise the importance of, or the truth of, until years later. Some things will be poohpoohed at the time they happen or are said. Just think of the derision that greeted some of Prince Charles comments twenty or more years ago, when he talked about the environment and climate change. Jesus' words undermined complacency. They were challenging and they were sometimes frightening. They still are, if we really take them in, rather than taking them at a superficial level.

As we travel on through a second rather strange Lent, what messages are we missing? What is God saying to us in this pandemic? Words of comfort, words of challenge? Who should we be listening to, and whom is it better to ignore? I suspect that it will be several years yet before we can discern all the lessons and can begin to heed the messages that these past 12 months have presented us with. Probably the rest of our lives in fact. In the meantime, we can look to where Jesus' ministry was heading: to the shame of the cross, the abrupt end to such a promising life, the folly of living by truth and integrity rather than looking out for number one. What foolishness, eh?

What foolishness is God calling you to this week?

You'll only find out if you listen.

The Affirmation of Faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,**

**but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.
He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Prayers

Today we're using the word 'Lent' to focus our prayers, taking each letter at a time.



First, the letter **L**.

We pray for our land, the country in which we live, and for countries across the world. Often we are shocked by natural disasters, and yet we are not careful enough of the environment around us. We squander God's generosity by misuse of resources and forget just how precious the world is. We enjoy comfort in our lives, but sometimes at the expense of the natural world. Lord, we pray for all who make decisions, big or small, that affect the future of the world you created.

Secondly, the letter **E**.

E... for *ecclesia*... the church. We pray for the church worldwide, and for those who are leaders within it. We pray for your blessing Lord, as we slowly work our way out of the pandemic, recognising that many people have turned to you in these difficult times. We pray for our own church, wherever that may be, that we might be a light in dark times, and that we might offer the gift of hope and resurrection at Easter.

Now, the letter **N**.

We pray for the National Health service, and all whose role it is to nurse others. We pray especially for family carers, and we pray for those who are ill. We pray for those nearing the end of their lives, that they may know your comfort and strength.

Finally, the letter **T**.

T is for today—whatever it may bring. We pray for ourselves and the community in which we live as we travel through this day. Lord, we need to walk closely with you this day, and every day.

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

The Peace

Since we are justified by faith,
we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
who has given us access to grace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

♪ **Hymn: *Lift High the Cross***

**Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim,
'Till all the world adore his sacred name.**

**Follow the path on which our captain trod,
Our King victorious, Christ, the Son of God.**

**Each new-born soldier of the Crucified
Bears on his brow the seal of him who died.**

**Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
The hosts of God in conqu'ring ranks combine.**

**O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
As thou hast promised, draw men unto thee.**

**Set up thy throne, that Earth's despair may cease
Beneath the shadow of its healing peace.**

Preparation of the Table

Look upon us in mercy not in judgement; draw us from hatred to love; make the frailty of our praise a dwelling place for your glory. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you, **and also with you.**

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.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise, Lord God of truth, for by the breath of your mouth you have spoken your word, and all things have come into being.

You fashioned us in your image and placed us in the garden of your delight. Though we chose the path of rebellion you would not abandon your own. Again and again you drew us into your covenant of grace.

You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace.

As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth, we echo the song of the angels in heaven, evermore praising you and saying:

**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.

Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness.

Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

On the night he gave up himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: 'Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: '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.'

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Trusting in the compassion of God,
as our Saviour has taught us, so we pray:

**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.**

The Breaking of the Bread

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Communion

Prayer after Communion

**Lord Jesus Christ,
we thank you for all the benefits you have won for us,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for us.
Most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother,
may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**



♪ Hymn: At the Name of Jesus

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.

Surely, 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.

The Blessing

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,
to deny yourselves, take up your cross and follow him;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst you and remain with you
and those whom you love, now and always. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.



Cover: 'The Cleansing of the Temple' by Hans Holbein the elder, from the high altarpiece of the Dominican Church in Frankfurt, sixteenth century.