



**Chet Valley Churches**



**Holy Communion for Passion Sunday**

**21<sup>st</sup> March 2021**

## The Greeting and Welcome

We meet in the presence of God who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain and heals our wounds.

Lord, direct our thoughts and teach us to pray.

**Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## 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.

It symbolises how your son, the light of the world whom we follow in faith, was put to death on the cross for our salvation. May the cross and passion of our Lord be a light to us in the world, no matter how dark our paths may be.

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

♪ **Hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty**

**Praise to the Lord,  
The Almighty, the King of creation;  
O my soul, praise him,  
For he is thy health and salvation:  
Come ye who hear,  
Brothers and sisters draw near,  
Praise him in glad adoration.**

**Praise to the Lord,  
Who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth,  
Shelters thee under his wings,  
Yea, so gently sustaineth:  
Hast thou not seen  
All that is needful hath been  
Granted in what he ordaineth?**

**Praise to the Lord,  
Who doth prosper thy work, and defend thee;  
Surely his goodness and mercy**



**Here daily attend thee;  
Ponder anew  
All the Almighty can do,  
He who with love doth befriend thee.**

**Praise to the Lord!  
O let all that is in me adore him!  
All that hath life and breath  
Come now with praises before him!  
Let the Amen  
Sound from his people again:  
Gladly for ay we adore him.**

## **The Prayers of Penitence**

Let us confess our sins to Almighty God.  
O God, we come to you in sorrow for our sins.

For turning away from your will for our lives;  
Lord, forgive us: **save us and help us.**

For behaving just as we wish, without thinking of you;  
Lord, forgive us: **save us and help us.**

For failing you by what we do, and think and say;  
Lord, forgive us: **save us and help us.**

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you  
by temptations in the world about us;  
Lord, forgive us: **save us and help us.**

For living as we were ashamed to belong to your Son;  
Lord, forgive us: **save us and help us.**

The almighty and merciful Lord grant us pardon and forgiveness  
of all our sins time for amendment of life,  
and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## **The Prayer of the Day**

Most merciful God, who by the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, delivered and saved the world: grant that by faith in him who suffered on the cross we may triumph in the power of his victory; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. **Amen.**

## **New Testament Reading: Hebrews 5. 5-10**

Christ did not glorify himself in becoming a high priest, but was appointed by the one who said to him, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'; as he says also in another place, 'You are a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchizedek.'

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him, having been designated by God a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.

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

 **Song: Only by Grace Can We Enter**

**Only by grace can we enter,  
Only by grace can we stand;  
Not by our human endeavour,  
But by the blood of the Lamb.**

**Into your presence you call us,  
You call us to come.  
Into your presence you draw us,  
Now by your grace we come,  
Now by your grace we come.**

**Lord, if you mark our transgressions,  
Who would stand?  
Thanks to your grace we are cleansed  
By the blood of the Lamb.**

## **Gospel Reading: John 12.20-33**

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.**

Now among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and said to him, 'Sir, we wish to see Jesus.' Philip went and told Andrew; then Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. Jesus answered them, 'The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. Those who love their life lose it, and those who hate their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honour.'

'Now my soul is troubled. And what should I say—"Father, save me from this hour"? No, it is for this reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.' Then a voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' The crowd standing there heard it and said that it was thunder. Others said, 'An angel has spoken to him.' Jesus answered, 'This voice has come for your sake, not for mine. Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.' He said this to indicate the kind of death he was to die.

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

### **Talk [Rev Ros]**

This is the time of year when the gardeners among us start to think about sowing seeds. Indeed, you may have already sown some. Seeds are miracles. Some so tiny that you can hardly see them. Some so big like coconuts that you can hold them in your hands. Within each is the requirement to grow into a specific plant. Tomato seed will grow into tomatoes and not radishes. Each has the potential to grow into a plant but unless the seeds are released from their hermetically sealed package and placed on or into soil or compost and given the right conditions of warmth and water, they won't grow. They have to be buried before new life springs up. Jesus knew this and chose the illustration of the grain of wheat falling into the ground and dying in order to bring life in abundance. "Unless, a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies; it remains just a single grain, but if it dies it bears much fruit".

The trigger for this teaching was a request made by some Greeks to see Jesus. They had come to worship at the Passover. This was not uncommon

because there were non-Jews who were what we might call God fearing. At some point they had seen or heard Jesus, perhaps as he rode into Jerusalem on the first Palm Sunday. As Greeks they would have been allowed to visit the Temple in the court of the Gentiles and may be witnessed Jesus throwing the stall holders, the animals and the money changers out. Perhaps they heard him say that the Temple is a house of prayer for all nations and wanted to talk to him about this. Whatever the reason, they wanted to see Jesus face to face. They don't feel confident enough to seek him out by themselves so they approach Philip. He's not sure about this so he goes to Andrew and you can imagine them saying, "I'm not sure about this. Do you think Jesus wants to see them? Well let's ask him". I don't think they took the Greeks with them. I think they went to ask Jesus and instead of him saying, "Yes, of course", or "No I've too much going on", Jesus says, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified" and then talks about wheat dying in order to bring new life.

It seems that this is a sign that now is the time for the gospel of salvation to go out beyond Jerusalem. Up until now when Jesus has done things that upset the religious leaders they didn't arrest him because his hour had not yet come, but now with the request of the Greeks to see him, he says, "Now is the hour, now is the time."

Time for what? To issue a call to arms? To rise up against the Roman occupation? To establish his kingdom? Well yes, but not in the way they all imagine. Hence Jesus explains with the image of the wheat dying. Because his hour was to go to the cross to be lifted up in order to draw all people to him. The Son of Man was a messianic title. Now is the time to bring glory to himself and to Israel. Not by leading an armed rebellion but by facing the horror of the cross. By dying and rising again he will bring people of every race to himself.

Just before this passage of scripture that we're concentrating on, John writes about the crowd who had witnessed the raising of Lazarus going with Jesus into Jerusalem carrying palms. Crowds from Jerusalem went out to meet him. The Pharisees said to one another, "You see, you can do nothing. The world has gone after him." They don't realize how true this is, because by being lifted up, the whole world has the opportunity to go after him, to follow him.

The crowds round Jesus hear a voice from Heaven, not for Jesus' benefit but for the bystanders. Some hear it as thunder. Some might remember

hearing it at his baptism and at the transfiguration affirming that Jesus is the beloved Son who had already been glorified and will be glorified again but by being lifted up on a cross.

This causes consternation among the crowd, as well it might. How can it be that the Son of Man, the Messiah, who will live for ever be lifted up? The crucified Messiah was a stumbling block to most Jews. What they fail to understand is that Jesus, by offering himself, became a high priest, called by God, who in offering himself actually made the sacrificial system redundant. On Good Friday, at the point of his death, the veil, the heavy curtain that separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple, was torn from top to bottom. The Holy of Holies could be entered only by the High Priest and by him only on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement, after he had offered sacrifices for his own sin. Jesus was sinless and when the veil was torn the way was open to God, there was no more need for sacrifices, although they continued to be offered until the Temple was destroyed by the Romans. For those who came to believe Jesus was the Messiah, what he did by dying and rising again was enough.

When Jesus talked about being lifted up, he probably had in mind the time when the Israelites were bitten by snakes when they were in the wilderness. Moses lifted up a bronze serpent so that those who had been bitten by snakes, simply by looking at it could be healed. Earlier in John's gospel, he records Jesus saying, "And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up that whoever believes in him may have eternal life." A greater one than Moses was offering so much more than healing in this life; by being lifted up and by dying like the wheat seed he was offering life in abundance for eternity.

## **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**

We are nearing the end of this year's journey through Lent. This week is Passion Sunday, and in another week we will have the joy of Palm Sunday followed immediately by the solemnity of Holy Week. So, as a focus for our prayers, I'm thinking about endings. Some endings are personal, some corporate, some national or international.

Let's start by praying for those whose task it is to steer their country out of the worldwide mess caused by Covid. We pray for governments and individuals as they work towards ending the restrictions that have affected all of us.

Lord of the world, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for churches everywhere as they too seek a way forward, knowing that the church of the future cannot be quite the same as the church of the past. We pray for decision makers at all levels, and for congregations everywhere coming to terms with all that has ended and all that might begin.

Lord of the church, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for communities, where people are beginning to see the possibility of an end to all the limitations on community life. We pray for those who want to re-start everything, and those who would prefer not to.

Lord of society, **hear our prayer.**

And as we pray for communities, we pray especially for people whose experience of endings has included the death of a friend or family member.

Lord of eternity, **hear our prayer.**

Finally we pray for ourselves, wherever we are, and whatever our needs or circumstances may be.

Lord of our lives, **hear our prayer. Amen.**

## **The Peace**

Once we were far off, but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**♪ Hymn: *I Am the Bread of Life***

**I am the bread of life.  
You who come to me shall not hunger;  
And who believe in me shall not thirst.  
No one can come to me  
Unless the Father beckons.**

**And I will raise you up,  
And I will raise you up,  
And I will raise you up,  
On the last day.**

**The bread that I will give  
Is my flesh for the life of the world,  
And you who eat of this bread:  
You shall live for ever,  
You shall live for ever.**

**Unless you eat  
Of the flesh of the Son of Man,  
And drink of his blood,  
And drink of his blood,  
You shall not have life within you.**

**I am the Resurrection,  
I am the Life.  
You who believe in me,  
Even if you die,  
You shall live forever.**

**Yes, Lord, I believe  
That you are the Christ,  
The Son of God who has come  
Into the world.**

**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 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 right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation; in your love you made us for yourself. When we turned away you did not reject us, but came to meet us in your Son.

**You embraced us as your children  
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life that we might live in him and he in us.

**He opened his arms of love upon the cross  
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

On the night he was betrayed, at supper with his friends he took bread, and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to them, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:  
his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave you thanks, and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins; do this in remembrance of me.

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:  
his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory, send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**As we eat and drink these holy gifts  
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world we offer you this sacrifice of praise and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.**

## **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.**

## **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: *There's a Wideness in God's Mercy***

**There's a wideness in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea;  
There's a kindness in his justice  
Which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows  
Are more felt than up in heaven;  
There is no place where earth's failings  
Have such kindly judgement given.**

**For the love of God is broader  
Than the measure of man's mind;  
And the heart of the Eternal  
Is most wonderfully kind.  
But we make his love too narrow  
By false limits of our own;  
And we magnify his strictness  
With a zeal he will not own.**

**There is plentiful redemption  
In the blood that has been shed;  
There is joy for all the members  
In the sorrows of the Head.  
There is grace enough for thousands  
Of new worlds as great as this;  
There is room for fresh creations  
In that upper home of bliss.**

**If our love were but more simple,  
We should take him at his word;  
And our lives would be all gladness  
In the joy of Christ our Lord.**

## **The Blessing**

Christ crucified draw you to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith, a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven; 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.**

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

