

# Chet Valley Churches



# Holy Communion Seventh Sunday of Trinity

31<sup>st</sup> July 2022

## Welcome

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

🎵 **Hymn:** *Thou whose Almighty Word*

**Thou whose almighty word chaos and darkness heard,  
And took their flight;  
Hear us, we humbly pray, and where the gospel day  
Sheds not its glorious ray let there be light.**

**Thou who didst come to bring on thy redeeming wing  
Healing and sight,  
Health to the sick in mind, sight to the inly blind,  
O now to all mankind let there be light.**

**Spirit of truth and love, life-giving, holy Dove,  
Speed forth thy flight;  
Move on the water's face, bearing the lamp of grace,  
And in earth's darkest place let there be light.**

**Blessèd and holy Three, glorious Trinity,  
Wisdom, Love, Might,  
Boundless as ocean's tide rolling in fullest pride,  
Through the world far and wide let there be light.**

## Confession

We have wandered from your paths, yet your truth leads us home.  
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

We have failed to live as your children, yet your love restores us.  
Christ, have mercy. **Christ, have mercy.**

We are disfigured by our sin, yet your power heals us.  
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

## Prayer for forgiveness

May almighty God have mercy upon us, forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



## ♪ Anderson Gloria

Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Lord God, Heavenly King, peace you bring to us;  
We worship you, we give you thanks,  
We sing our song of praise.

Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Jesus, Saviour of all, Lord God, Lamb of God,  
You take away our sins, O Lord, have mercy on us all.

Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo.

At the Father's right hand, Lord receive our prayer,  
For you alone are the Holy One, and you alone are the Lord.

Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo.

Glory, Father and Son, glory, Holy Spirit,  
To you we raise our hands up high, we glorify your name.

Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo;  
Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo.

## 🙏 The Collect: *Prayer for the Day*

Generous God, you give us gifts and make them grow:  
though our faith is small as mustard seed,  
make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

## 📖 Old Testament Reading: *Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23*

“Vanity of vanities,” says the Teacher, “vanity of vanities! All is vanity.”

“I, the Teacher, when king over Israel in Jerusalem, applied my mind to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven; it is an unhappy business that God has given to human beings to be busy with.

“I saw all the deeds that are done under the sun; and see, all is vanity and a chasing after wind.

“I hated all my toil in which I had toiled under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to those who come after me—and who knows whether they will be wise or foolish? Yet they will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. So I turned and gave my heart up to despair concerning all the toil of my labours under the sun, because sometimes one who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave all to be enjoyed by another who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. What do mortals get from all the toil and strain with which they toil under the sun? For all their days are full of pain, and their work is a vexation; even at night their minds do not rest. This also is vanity.”

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

### **New Testament Reading: *Colossians 3:1-11***

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

### **Hymn: *Seek Ye First***

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,  
And all these things shall be added unto you.  
Allelu, alleluia.**

**Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word  
That proceeds from the mouth of God.  
Allelu, alleluia.**

**Ask and it shall be given unto you; seek and ye shall find;  
Knock and the door shall be opened unto you.  
Allelu, alleluia.**

### **Gospel: Luke 12:13-21**

Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”

Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.”

And he told them this parable: The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’

Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’

But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’

“This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God.”

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

### **Sermon [Belinda]**

The writer of Ecclesiastes was clearly having a bad day when he wrote the passage we heard this morning. Like the Eeyore of the Old Testament he inexorably seeks out the negative in any situation and can see no positive aspect to human activity. The sort of person who makes you feel slightly worse after a social encounter. Not the sort of chap you’d want to invite round for a relaxing evening.

Even so, perhaps there are times when some of us feel almost as grim as this: the times mid-pandemic when it seemed to be never-ending, or the

times when we hear yet another terrifying statistic about the extent to which human activity has damaged our planet or sent another species of animal hurtling towards extinction. Sometimes we do feel that all is futility, when it seems impossible to counteract what is happening in the world and when the things we value most are being trashed. These past few months of turbulent political activity have left many of us feeling that the bedrock of our society is being shaken with a terrible seismic force, and that integrity, truth and justice—the things we have always assumed to be essential to our democracy—are now ‘unfashionable’. What chance do we have to alter anything in this downward slide towards oblivion?

Well, I believe we do have a choice today. We can agree with the Speaker that it is all a waste of time, that all our activities are pointless, no matter how well intentioned, and that giving in to despair is the only rational thing to do. Or we could look for some alternative views, and see if we can squeeze a little positivity back into our attitudes.

Last weekend I looked at my runner beans. They are very pretty with their scarlet flowers, but with the excessively dry weather that we have been experiencing the flowers were just not setting. So, there were flowers for a few days and then nothing. It’s not what you plant beans for. Like many gardeners my attitude to my garden in these past couple of weeks has been pretty despairing, and to begin with I was ready to give up on the runner beans. I tried something else instead, probably based on listening to *Gardeners’ Question Time*. I went out and sprayed the flowers, morning and evening, muttering to myself about how in this extraordinary weather this was never going to work... but it has! I can see a number of tiny beans taking shape.

It’s a small victory against the overwhelming effects of the devastating heat and dryness, but it shows that my efforts with beans are not an exercise in futility. There is a glimmer of hope for the gardens—is there any for our struggling spirits, at a time of uncertainty and upheaval?

Jesus’ parable about the man who built himself bigger and bigger barns to store all of his grain seems to be about the futility of human endeavour too: what’s it all about? Working harder and harder, getting more and more stuff, and then dying before beginning to enjoy the fruits of our labours? Is that what human existence is for?

Jesus warns his listeners about greed, the sort of greed that can blind us to what really matters. The sort of greed that, even when we have more than

enough already, goes on wanting more and more. It's a sort of addiction and we see it in many forms today—in countries and in individuals. On a national level it is most dangerous, leading to encroaching on what rightfully belongs to others, as we have seen this year in the continuing attacks on Ukraine. On an individual level it can be more subtle, but nevertheless leads to trampling over the needs of others, becoming oblivious to the effect of our actions and more and more inward looking. In George Elliot's book about the miser, Silas Marner, it is a little baby girl who rescues him from his self-imposed isolation, an isolation brought on by his obsession with money. Who will rescue us if we get stuck in this blind alley?

We are a very rich nation, compared with the majority of the rest of the world's countries. We have all sorts of defences which cushion us from much that is happening in the world. One of the shocks we have sustained this year is the realisation that we are not immune to climate change or a war 1500 miles away, coming hot on the heels of the realisation that a virus which started in a distant place has had a devastating effect on us. None of our wealth as a country has been able to stop those harsh realities. Greed in this context is even more dangerous, making us assume that our needs are paramount and that other, lesser countries will just have to wait their turn. What is God saying to us about our attitude to the poorer countries, when we have cuts in the Overseas Aid budget at a time when there is the greatest need?

What is he saying to us as Christians about our own individual attitudes to the wealth that is ours? In the parable the rich man imagines his future life of ease, with time to eat drink and be merry, no pressures to worry about, his money keeping him well insulated against any troubles. Of course we all want to provide for our old age and ensure that we will be able to have a pleasant lifestyle, but sometimes we can become so hidebound by thinking of our own future comforts that we ignore the needs of others. We even assume our own superiority because of what we have. It is an unconscious arrogance, but we have been warned: the man who piled up treasure for himself remained a pauper in the sight of God.

When I visited Malawi, fascinating as it was, I found it very difficult to know how to reconcile my way of life, which I don't think of as particularly luxurious, with the way of life of a Malawian teacher who has to get up early to get the fire going to cook the nsima for breakfast, who works in a

school that has the majority of the classes sitting outside on the bare earth, who writes examples in chalk on the soil, using pebbles as counters and who then goes home in the afternoon to cultivate her patch of soil to grow the maize for the nsima, without which she and her family will go hungry. I don't think I know yet how I should have responded in that situation, or whether my visit did any good or any harm. It's a problem for those of us in the prosperous part of the world. And yes, in this country too there are people living hand to mouth. What do we do? Fill our barns a bit more and raise our drawbridges to make sure no one else can get in?

If we are to put on the new nature that Paul wrote to the Colossians about, what should it look like? To start with, we need to lower our defences. We need to make sure that we are listening to God and to other people, not just shored up in our own little safe place. We need to ask God in prayer about how much we should keep for ourselves and how much we should give away. We need to ask God to make us aware of the needs of other people that are staring us in the face. Perhaps we also need to bear in mind that wealth is not just to do with cash—our wealth, our security is to do with the things that make life enjoyable—our family and friends, our pets, our gardens, our pastimes, and we need to thank God every day for all of those things. If we begin to see those things as gifts that we have received, rather than a birth right that makes us better than others, maybe we will be a little more grateful and a bit less peevish. Maybe, when we begin to say thank you, we will begin to enjoy them more.

In the next part of the letter to the Colossians, in Chapter 3 verse 14, St Paul gets to the heart of the issue: 'Finally and to bind everything together and to complete the whole, there must be love.'

That is what transforms greed into generosity, changes the negative to the positive and changes futility into promise.

### **Creed: We Say What We Believe**

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**



**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

## **Prayers**

Lord, we pray for your world which struggles to live justly and in peace. We pray for those who have to walk long distances to get water, for those who struggle to find food. We remember those whose lives are cut short by disease or violence, or who have fled their homes in fear. We pray for those who are ill and for those who care for them. At this time of fires we pray for the safety of the firefighters. Give them the strength they need. We remember those who have lost everything to the flames.

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

Lord, we pray for your Church gathering all around the world in tiny churches and great cathedrals, to praise you, to hear your holy word, and to meet you in bread and wine. We pray for our church leaders, that they may be directed by your Spirit. We pray too for all church council members and thank you for the time they give to your work.

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

We pray for our communities, for the places where we live and work. We ask your blessing upon our schools, our care homes and hospitals. We pray for those who provide services for us in shops and businesses. We pray for members of our emergency services. Be with them in all that they do, especially in difficult situations.

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

We pray for ourselves. You know our needs Lord, you know if we are happy or sad. We pray that you will be with each of us, in whatever circumstance we find ourselves in. Guide us and strengthen us and fill us with your love.

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

## **The Peace**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
since as members of one body you are called to peace.  
The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

## ♪ Hymn: *Thou Art the Way*

**Thou art the Way: by thee alone from sin and death we flee;  
And they who would the Father seek  
Must seek him, Lord, by thee.**

**Thou art the Truth: thy word alone true wisdom can impart;  
Thou only canst inform the mind and purify the heart.**

**Thou art the Life: the rending tomb  
Proclaims thy conquering arm;  
And those who put their trust in thee  
Nor death nor hell shall harm.**

**Thou art the Way, the Truth, the Life:  
Grant us that Way to know,  
That Truth to keep, that Life to win, whose joys eternal flow.**

## **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.**

Father, you made the world and love your creation. You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.

And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels 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, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness; grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit, and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who in the same night that he was betrayed, 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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

And so, Father, calling to mind his death on the cross, his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world; rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking for his coming in glory, we celebrate this memorial of our redemption. As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, we bring before you this bread and this cup and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people and gather into one in your kingdom all who share this one bread and one cup, so that we, in the company of all the saints, may praise and glorify you for ever, through 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**

As our Saviour 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 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.**

## **The Blessing**

Christ, who has nourished us with himself the living bread, make you one  
in praise and love, and raise you up at the last day;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## **The Dismissal**

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

## **Hymn: Praise to the Lord**

**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.**