



Heacham Parish Church

Heacham Parish Church on-line

Sunday 9th August 2020

Hilary on piano, Shona on clarinet and Colin on viola play Be still for the presence of the Lord.

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you and also with you

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God

This is the day that the Lord has made.
Let us rejoice and be glad in it

Jesus said: 'Take courage, it is I. Don't be afraid.'

Our God is a powerful God,
who does things way beyond our understanding.
But we have no need to fear,
for we know we are safe in God's presence.

Let us come to our God now.
Let us bow down and worship.
Amen.

Lord Jesus,
sometimes we are not sure if we can hear your
voice or not.

Please help us to listen carefully for you.
Help us to know when it is your voice we can
hear.

Help us not to be afraid of stepping out in faith.
Help us to know you are always near, holding
our hand.

Amen.

Song: Be Still for the presence of the Lord
sung and played by Colin, Rosie, Shona, Judith,
Lynda, Lesley and Hilary

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here;
Come bow before Him now
With reverence and fear.
In Him no sin is found,
We stand on holy ground
Be still, for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour He is crowned.

How awesome is the sight,
Our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord
Is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace.
No work too hard for Him,
In faith receive from Him
Be still, for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place.

Bible Reading: Matthew 14 : 22-33
read by Fran Goodwin

A Reflection from Simon Wilson

Jesus walking on the water is an iconic and pivotal moment in his ministry on earth. It is a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy and like the feeding of the 5000 explored last week, proof to his disciples then and us now that Jesus is not just a gifted and charismatic Rabbi, preacher and leader but truly the long-awaited Messiah. Everything changes as the narrative continues.

The people sent home, with full stomachs and heads full of what had just transpired, the disciples instructed to get back in their boat and head to the other side of the Lake, Jesus withdrew to the mountain to pray.

Night fell and a storm blew up. The disciples, despite several of them being experienced fishermen, were in trouble-far from land facing strong winds and heavy waves. Panic would have been beginning to set in. However, Jesus had sent them out and was not going to abandon them. Then, as now, if his people are caught in a struggle he wants to be alongside them. He never sends us out on mission without keeping an eye on us. Whatever Jesus commands, God makes possible through the Holy Spirit

At first, the traumatised disciples do not recognise the ghostly figure coming towards them as being Jesus. How could it be? How often do we not notice God coming to help us, often in the most unexpected of ways, despite our praying for such an intervention? A Holy Ghost that appears when we most need but least expect.

As so often he does, Peter wants to do the wrong thing for the right reason. An act of

courage or the foolishness of faith? He realises that only the call of Jesus makes the impossible possible. His short walk is indeed a triumph of faith, his first miracle-an astounding experiment but it unravels. Always reminds me of those cartoons when a character walks off a cliff but only when they look down do they start to crash down to earth. Peter stepped out in faith, his eyes fixed on Jesus-his calling and destination, but at some point looks down and starts to falter. "Save me, Lord" he yells and immediately Jesus' hand is there, holding him up, saving him. You see, proof is never quite enough to prevent doubt, it is faith which is the key component of the formula.

An important lesson emerges- Peter needed to sink in order to take the next step of faith in Jesus. Those who ask for miracles and receive them, soon forget them; but those who suffer for Christ's sake will never forget-their wounds will always remind them.

They reach the safety of the boat-the wind stills and the storm clears. As it does a new revelation emerges in the minds of the disciples. They are truly in the presence of the Son of God. Only one response possible- they bow down and worship. What begins as a cry for help, ends

when we find ourselves doing the unreal and the impossible. When just for a moment we manage to rise above the noise of the wind, the confusion of the waves and the chaos of the storm, we find the light of Jesus in the darkness and feel his hand stretched out to steady us. It is no coincidence that the boat became a symbol of the early church.

We live in unsettling times. You are listening to these words when I am not in the same place, but we are joined together in worship before God. Still living in the now and the not yet. Still not clear what lies before us as individuals and as church and community. As we take tentative steps towards a new reality. Jesus gives us the space to walk, to experience new sensations but with the grace to catch us and pull us back to safety when we flounder.

So I close with a prayer I often find myself turning to—that attributed to the Breton fishermen: “Dear God, be good to me. The sea is so wide and my boat is so small. Amen.”

Song: Seek ye first sung and played by Hilary, Lesley, Steph and Penny

Seek ye first the kingdom of God,
And His righteousness,
And all these things, shall be added onto you,
Alleu, alleuia

Man shall not live by bread alone,
But by every word
That proceeds from the mouth of God
Alleu, Alleuia

Ask and it shall be given unto you,
Seek and ye shall find.
Knock and the door shall be opened onto you.
Alleu, Alleuia

Prayers of intercession led by Karen and
Terry Brown

Gracious God, we offer You praise and thanks
for Your unfailing love and faithfulness,
through Your Son, Jesus Christ.

Grant us grace to pray now in spirit and in truth.
Through the power of Your Holy Spirit.
Give us courage to step out in faith to meet You,
and confidence to follow where You lead.

For You are our God, and we are Your people,
called by Your name.

In the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

Prayer of Confession

Dear God, you call us to step out in faith, to place our lives in Your hands, and to wholeheartedly commit to following You. We confess that we find this difficult to do. It is not always easy to follow where You lead—to turn away from our own personal wants and desires, to let go of our safety nets and trust that You will provide for us in all things. Forgive us when we doubt You, God. Increase our faith.

Open our eyes to see past our own interests and concerns, to Your broader vision for us and for our world.

In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

God, we ask that you convict our national and local leaders to act wisely as we learn more about the coronavirus pandemic, setting aside any political interests. We pray that you will grant them vigilance as this issue continues to evolve. We pray for wisdom for our NHS leaders as they advise the politicians and also for the scientists leading the research into finding an appropriate vaccine and treatments. We ask too

that you will help us to trust that you are in control and have appointed our leaders for such a time as this. **Amen.**

Heavenly Father, we pray that those who are currently infected with COVID-19 will experience your healing power. We lift up the vulnerable in our communities – the elderly, for those who have undergone or are undergoing treatment for cancer, for those with diabetes, or who suffer from asthma, heart disease or any other health concerns. Please place your hedge of protection around them. Ease the fears and worries of those who are infected or at higher risk of infection, surround them with your love and fill them with your peace. **Amen.**

A prayer for medical personnel and caretakers. Dear Jesus, we ask that you provide rest for those who are working in our hospitals, clinics, surgeries and care homes. Give them wisdom as they care for both those who are infected with this virus and for people impacted by other health concerns. Protect them from becoming ill themselves and ease their anxieties as they seek to care also for their own loved ones during this time. Amen.

During this time of adversity and scattering from this virus, we ask You to help us remain focused on you.

May our church continue to disciple, minister to those in need, and, most of all, may the gospel of good news continue to be spread. We thank You, Lord, for the reports that online worship services and the preaching of Your Word are being listened to by a larger number of people than those who'd normally hear it during a typical church service.

We lift our church leaders to You, Lord, your shepherds for each local body who are remaining faithful and working hard to adapt to leading in different ways during these difficult times. Please give them the desire to seek you, giving them wisdom and energy. Grow their passion for their church and provide them with rest.

We pray for the financial health of our churches. Lord, Your Word assures us that You'll meet all needs so we pray that You meet and sustain not only the financial needs of our churches but also the needs of those we serve.

And finally, we pray for ourselves the body of Christ. We pray that we remain united and may we long to be together corporately as one body.

Father grant us endurance, patience, greater faith, dependence, and trust in You. Thank you for being with us and helping us through this difficult time. Thank you that, like Peter, you are carrying us through our uncertainty of deep waters. Through all of this, may we remain confident Your Church will survive and thrive. May we earnestly seek you. Please, sovereign God, strengthen your Church!
We ask all of these things in Your precious Son's name. **Amen!**

We pray together the Lord 's Prayer lead by June Beaumont

Final Prayer

Peter only knew life as a fisherman.
But he got out of the boat and followed you,
Lord.
Help us to hear your voice,
get out of our boats and follow you.
In the week ahead, keep us focused on your
way,
looking ahead and trusting you. **Amen.**

Blessing

May the Lord bless you and keep you, may he make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you, may he look kindly on you and give you

peace. And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you and those you love always.

All Amen.

Shona plays In Christ Alone (one of Alicia's favourite hymns)

HEACHAM PARISH CHURCH online service will be on YouTube from 8am on Sunday morning

www.youtube.com/channel/UCefWbBrE77u7MPpdjWtwzow

Church Open for private prayer

Saturday afternoons 2-4pm and Wed 10-12noon.

For those without access to the internet:

The telephone worship service: Daily Hope, offers music, prayers and reflections as well as full worship services from the Church of England at the end of a telephone line.

The line – which is available 24 hours a day on 0800 804 8044. This is a freephone service.

Also The Diocesan weekly podcast Sunday Hope can be listened to via your phone by calling 01603 537577- calls for this are charged at a local rate.