

Church at Home

The Fifth Sunday after Trinity



Before the Service

Welcome to our Church at Home service on the Fifth Sunday after Trinity. We are delighted that the Rt Revd Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham, is giving the address today and that Revd Catherine Butt, Vicar of the Water Eaton benefice, Bletchley is presiding. We are deeply grateful for the rich and varied contributions from across the Diocese: Twyford, Bletchley, Reading, Wokingham, Tilehurst, Gerrard's Cross, Oxford.

Today's service celebrates our new curates. Canon Dr Grant Bayliss, the Diocesan Canon Precentor, shares his reflection on their journey and calling:

'We are delighted to have three of our new curates involved in today's service. Cara, Polly and Ross are among the 23 who begin serving in their parishes and benefices in very different circumstances than they could ever have imagined when they were selected for training and ordination. Ordinarily they would have been ordained deacon at Christ Church last weekend but since the heart of ordination is the laying on of hands by the bishop with prayer from the assembled congregation, the services needed to be postponed until Michaelmas (26–27 September). So Bishop Steven authorised them as lay workers and commissioned them in a moving online service last weekend.

This week the new curates have started their ministries. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and traditions. Some are moving into new parishes, others discovering new ministries where they are. All are a rich blessing to the church and bring a wealth of gifts. When they were selected for ordination and a lifetime of ministry, they each knew that God is a God of surprises and over the years he would call them, like Peter, into unexpected places to work with the Spirit in ways they could not yet imagine. COVID-19 has made that a reality from the start. We pray for them, for all that they will learn in their curacies, for all that they will teach us – Angela Brennan, Carol Cooper, Polly Falconer, Jackie Fountain, Sarah Mortimer, Cara Smart, Phyl Sopp, James Forward, Samson Kuponyi, Peter Landry, Gareth Morley, Ross Mungavin, Kate Pellereau, Jo Allen, David Benskin, Steve Short, Benji Tyler, Annette Wade, Sorrel Wood, Susy Brouard, Claire Browes, Judy Harvey and Will Stuart-Lee.'

The Gathering

The Greeting

President In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen**

President The Lord be with you

All **And also with you.**

Revd Catherine Butt, Vicar of Water Eaton benefice, Bletchley, welcomes the congregation.

President Let us pray.

Faithful one, whose word is life:
come with saving power
to free our praise,
inspire our prayer
and shape our lives
for the kingdom of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Hymn

Join in singing our opening hymn with Lizzie and Duncan Steele from St Mary's, Twyford:

O Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
be thou forever near me,
my Master and my Friend;
I shall not fear the battle
if thou art by my side,
nor wander from the pathway
if thou wilt be my guide.

O Jesus, thou hast promised
to all who follow thee,
that where thou art in glory
there shall thy servant be;
and, Jesus, I have promised
to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow,
my Master and my Friend.

O let me feel thee near me!
The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle,
the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me,
around me and within;
but Jesus, draw thou nearer,
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking
in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion,
the murmurs of self will.
O speak to reassure me,
to hasten or control;
O speak and make me listen,
Thou guardian of my soul.

Prayer of Penitence

President Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

All **Lord our God,
in our sin we have avoided your call.
Our love for you is like a morning cloud,
like the dew that goes away early.
Have mercy on us;
deliver us from judgement;
bind up our wounds and revive us;
in Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

Absolution

President May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord

All **Amen**

The Collect

President Let us pray.

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All **Amen**

The Liturgy of the Word

The Reading

Isaiah 55.10–13

Read by Ross Mungavin, Curate at Gerrards Cross and Fulmer

Thus says the Lord: as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it. For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.

Reader This is the word of the Lord
All **Thanks be to God.**

Psalm 65.8–13

Read by Ayo Adu, Ordinand from St Frideswide's, Water Eaton

Those who live at earth's farthest bounds
are awed by your signs;
you make the gateways of the morning and the evening
shout for joy.
You visit the earth and water it,
you greatly enrich it;
the river of God is full of water;
you provide the people with grain,
for so you have prepared it.
You water its furrows abundantly,
settling its ridges,
softening it with showers,

and blessing its growth.
You crown the year with your bounty;
your wagon tracks overflow with richness.
The pastures of the wilderness overflow,
the hills gird themselves with joy,
the meadows clothe themselves with flocks,
the valleys deck themselves with grain,
they shout and sing together for joy.

Gradual Hymn

Join with Ian Butt from St Frideswide's, Water Eaton as we sing:

Speak, O Lord, as we come to you
To receive the food of your Holy Word
Take your truth, plant it deep in us
Shape and fashion us in your likeness

That the light of Christ might be seen today
In our acts of love and our deeds of faith
Speak, O Lord, and fulfil in us
All your purposes for your glory

Teach us, Lord, full obedience,
Holy reverence, true humility.
Test our thoughts and our attitudes
In the radiance of your purity

Cause our faith to rise, cause our eyes to see
Your majestic love and authority
Words of pow'r that can never fail
Let their truth prevail over unbelief

Speak, O Lord, and renew our minds
Help us grasp the heights of your plans for us
Truths unchanged from the dawn of time
That will echo down through eternity

And by grace we'll stand on your promises
And by faith we'll walk as you walk with us
Speak, O Lord, till your Church is built
And the earth is filled with your glory.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 13.1–9, 18–23

Read by Polly Falconer, Curate of St George's, Reading

Reader The Lord be with you
All **And also with you.**

Reader Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
All **Glorify to you, O Lord.**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Let anyone with ears listen!"

"Hear then the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on the path. As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away. As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

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

The Address

The Rt Revd Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham

We keep a moment of silent reflection

The Creed

President Let us declare our faith in God
All **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 of Intercession

Led by Cara Smart, Curate of St Paul's, Wokingham

Reader With love in our hearts for God and one another, let us pray.

Loving God, we pray for your church as we start to navigate how we can worship together, both online and offline. As we start to meet together again physically, we give thanks for all who are giving their time in helping to make decisions, cleaning the church, deciding and sharing guidelines and enabling people to come and pray once more inside the buildings that have held our memories safe. We pray for inclusive hearts and minds which will help us make sure that all are welcome and able to worship together still, and for the generosity to sow seeds of love, mercy, compassion, justice, hope and joy.

All Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Reader Generous God, we pray for all those who have been and still are affected by coronavirus, for the medical staff and carers who have cared and nursed people with very little respite, for those who are still suffering the after effects of the virus and are finding it hard to cope with the feeling of exhaustion and fatigue. We pray for those who have been able to enjoy the relaxation of lockdown, for those who are tentatively starting to see their friends and loved ones, and for those who are still shielding and may be more anxious than before. Help us to respond with understanding.

All Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Reader Compassionate God, we give thanks for our schools, for all the teachers, staff and governors who have continued to have their children's best interests at heart, providing online teaching and resources as well as helping the children feel safe and secure. We pray that they may enjoy the summer holidays and be able to rest and find refreshment. We pray for the families

exhausted from balancing home-schooling, employment, illness, redundancy and other concerns, and for the families that will struggle over the holidays, giving thanks for the continuation of free school meals over summer, whilst realising that we also need to keep campaigning and fighting for equality that comes with the eradication of poverty, that we may glimpse the kingdom of God.

All Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Reader Creator God, we pray for the energy to continue campaigning for our planet and the climate crisis. Help us to take what we have learnt about pollution and CO₂ damage during the various world-wide lockdowns and give us courage to change our unhealthy and damaging habits. We pray for our leaders, politicians and all those in power, to recognise and call out where we need to change and how. We pray for the ability to come together as a whole world, to understand our interconnectedness and be strengthened by the hope that change can come.

All Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

President 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
All **and also with you.**

We know that Christians have shared a sign of peace since the very earliest days of the Church. In these times, it may seem strange to 'share the peace'. But peace is from the heart and from God. God's peace in the Spirit moves among us and unites us, physically distanced yet one in the Body of Christ.

Preparation of the Table Taking of the Bread and Wine

Hymn

Join in as we sing with Keble College Choir, directed by Gavin Plumley:

O Thou who camest from above,
the pure celestial fire to impart
kindle a flame of sacred love
on the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for thy glory burn
with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return,
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
to work and speak and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire,
and still stir up thy gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,
my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal,
and make my sacrifice complete.

President Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power,
the glory, the splendour, and the majesty;
for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.
All things come from you,
and of your own do we give you.

The Eucharistic Prayer

President The Lord is here
All **His Spirit is with us.**

President Lift up your hearts.
All **We lift them to the Lord.**

President Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

President It is always right to give you thanks, God our Creator,
loving and faithful, holy and strong.
You made us and the whole universe,
and filled your world with life.

You sent your Son to live among us,
Jesus our Saviour, Mary's child.
He suffered on the cross;
he died to save us from our sins;
he rose in glory from the dead.

You send your Spirit
to bring new life to the world,
and clothe us with power from on high.

And so we join the angels
to celebrate and sing:

All

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

Father, on the night before he died,
Jesus shared a meal with his friends.
He took the bread and thanked you.
He broke it, and gave it to them, saying:
Take and eat;
this is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.

After the meal,
Jesus took the cup of wine.
He thanked you,
and gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you.
This is my blood,
the new promise of God's unfailing love.
Do this to remember me.

Jesus Christ has died.

All

Jesus Christ has died.

Jesus Christ is risen.

All

Jesus Christ is risen.

Jesus Christ will come again.

All

Jesus Christ will come again.

Father, as we bring this bread and wine,
and remember his death and resurrection,
send your Holy Spirit,
that we who share these gifts
may be fed by Christ's body
and his blood.

Pour your Spirit on us
that we may love one another,
work for the healing of the earth,
and share the good news of Jesus,
as we wait for his coming in glory.

For honour and praise belong to you, Father,
with Jesus your Son, and the Holy Spirit:
one God, for ever and ever.

All

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

*Led by Edith Grindley from St Frideswide's, Water Eaton,
with British Sign Language*

All

**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 Bread

President

We break this bread
To share in the body of Christ.

All

**Though we are many, we are one body
Because we all share in one bread.**

Invitation to Communion

President Blessed be God,
by whose grace creation is renewed,
by whose love heaven is opened,
by whose mercy we offer our sacrifice of praise.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

We are invited to make a spiritual communion with God. There are no special words or prayers for this. All the Church has ever thought necessary is true desire, lively faith and genuine love. So you are invited to come honestly before God the way you know how. You may like to close your eyes, or to look at a picture; to pause the recording; to keep silence, or share in this next hymn.

Hymn

Join in singing this new hymn, written and sung by Ian Butt from St Frideswide's, Water Eaton:

Holy Spirit, come and cleanse my heart
Forgive me all my sin
Please take my life, take every part
Direct my thoughts as each day starts
May Jesus dwell within
Lord Jesus, dwell within.

Holy Spirit, come and comfort me
When I can't see God's face
When life is tough, when grief abounds
May Jesus' reassurance sound
The peace of your embrace
My peace in your embrace.

Holy Spirit, come and give your gifts
Release them from above
My eyes will rise, my gaze will lift
As doubt, despair and trouble shift
And I reflect his love,
May I reflect his love.

Holy Spirit, help me hear your words
Of love and life for all
Renew, restore, empower, release
Your gifts of faith and perfect peace
So to follow Jesus' call
To follow Jesus' call.

Holy Spirit, come and flood your Church
With compassion so profound
As we show our community
Our God, the Holy Trinity
In whom all life is found
Abundant life is found.

President Grant, O Lord, we beseech you,
that the course of this world may be so peaceably ordered
by your governance,
that your Church may joyfully serve you in all godly quietness;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

Hymn

*Join in singing 'Living Hope', led by the worship team of Greyfriars, Reading:
Pete Willmot, Mark Chevassut, Adam Dimmick, Bex Dodson, Harvey Jessop
and Andy Miller.*

How great the chasm that lay between us
How high the mountain I could not climb
In desperation, I turned to heaven
And spoke your name into the night.
Then through the darkness, your loving-kindness
Tore through the shadows of my soul
The work is finished, the end is written
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Who could imagine so great a mercy?
What heart could fathom such boundless grace?
The God of ages stepped down from glory
To wear my sin and bear my shame.

The cross has spoken, I am forgiven
The King of kings calls me his own
Beautiful Saviour, I'm yours forever
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in Your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope.

Then came the morning that sealed the promise
Your buried body began to breathe
Out of the silence, the Roaring Lion
Declared the grave has no claim on me (x2)
Jesus, yours is the victory!

Hallelujah, praise the One who set me free
Hallelujah, death has lost its grip on me
You have broken every chain
There's salvation in your name
Jesus Christ, my living hope. (x2)

Jesus Christ, my living hope
Oh God, you are my living hope.

O praise the name of the Lord our God
O praise his name for evermore
For endless days we will sing your praise
O Lord, O Lord our God. (x2)

The Dismissal

President In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose
and to praise your name:
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen**

President May Christ dwell in our hearts by faith
that we may be rooted and grounded in love
and bring forth the fruit of the Spirit;
And the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with us and remain with us always.

All **Amen**

President We go in peace, to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ, Amen**

With special thanks to all those who contributed to this service, including:

The Rt Revd Alan Wilson, Bishop of Buckingham; Revd Catherine Butt, Vicar of St Frideswide's, Water Eaton; Ian Butt, Ayo Audu and Edith Grindley, also from St Frideswide's; Canon Dr Grant Bayliss, from Christ Church Cathedral; the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral Oxford; Cara Smart, Curate of St Paul's, Wokingham; Ross Mungavin, Curate of Gerrards Cross and Fulmer; Polly Falconer, Curate of St George's, Reading; Lizzie and Duncan Steele from St Mary's, Twyford; the worship team from Greyfriars, Reading, including Pete Willmot, Mark Chevassut, Adam Dimmick, Bex Dodson, Harvey Jessop and Andy Miller; the choir of Keble College, Oxford.

Amazing Grace Trad., arr. S. Grahl (b. 1979) Recorded by choristers and clerks in their homes during June 2020. Sound editing by William Anderson and Christopher Murphy. Video editing by Thomas Rayner. 'O Thou who camest from above' performed by the choir of Keble College, Oxford. Recording taken from the *Complete New English Hymnal* and used with the kind permission of Priory Records.

This service was produced by lead liturgist, Revd Darren McFarland; Revd Charlotte Bannister-Parker, Associate Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford; and Steven Buckley, Director of Communications; with the help of Ruth Hamilton-Jones, Internal Communications Officer and Mark Robinson of Digital Creative. Cover images: Shutterstock 39653596 and Susanne Jutzeler, suju-foto. Images used in the broadcast are licensed under creative commons or are the contributor's own.

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Living is Christ and dying is gain

Almost two thousand years ago, a man we know as Paul sat down in his prison cell and wrote a short letter to his friends in a place called Philippi. Listen to the latest episode of *Reflections for a Church in Lockdown*.

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