

CHRISTCHURCH MARLBOROUGH

9th MAY 2021

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Welcome to this week's worship, whether you are using this worship sheet or joining in the streamed service from the church. We worship knowing that we are coming into the presence of God with the Church family.

Let us spend a few moments in quiet, as we prepare ourselves for worship. Maybe light a candle, or gaze in wonder at what you can see out the window, knowing that God sees you preparing to worship and focusing on him.

Call to Worship

Psalm 98

- ¹ Oh, sing to the LORD a new song,
for He has done marvellous deeds!
His right hand and His holy arm
have accomplished deliverance.
- ² The LORD has made known His salvation;
His righteousness He has revealed in the sight of the nations.
- ³ He has remembered His mercy
and His faithfulness toward the house of Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the deliverance of our God.
- ⁴ Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all the earth;
break out in loud songs and sing praises.
- ⁵ Sing unto the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of melody,
- ⁶ with trumpets and sound of the horn;
make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.
- ⁷ Let the sea roar, and all that fills it,
the world and those who live in it;
- ⁸ let the rivers clap their hands;
let the hills be joyful together
- ⁹ before the LORD,
for He is coming to judge the earth.
With righteousness He will judge the world,
and the peoples with justice.

Song StF 487**You shall go out with joy****Prayer of Adoration & Thanksgiving**

Thank you loving Father God for the opportunity of worship,
for the freedom to be amongst your family
meeting together in your house,
and in the warmth of your embrace

Thank you that in worship we can put aside, the uncertainties
of this world and rest upon the certainties of the Kingdom,
for your promises are not changeable as those of a politician might be
but are immovable and eternal

Thank you that we can bring to the foot of the Cross, all the hurts, fears and
doubts that trouble us, and leave them there, knowing that your strength and
assurance are all that we require.

Thank you that as we draw near in worship, we are transported
from a world of concerns and fears,
to a place where we can be at peace in your presence,
find healing, wholeness and refreshment.

Thank you, God for who you are, the same yesterday, today and forever.
Amen.

Hymn StF 364**O for a thousand tongues to sing****Prayer of Confession**

Dear Heavenly Father, we bow our heads before you and confess that we
sometimes forget that we are yours. We carry on our lives as if there was no
God and so often fall short of being a credible witness to You.

For these things we ask for your forgiveness and we also ask for your strength.
Give us clear minds and open hearts so we may witness to You in our world.
Remind us to be who You would have us be, regardless of what we are doing
or who we are with. Hold us to fast to You and build our relationships with You
and with those You have given us on earth. Amen.

And knowing that we are forgiven – we say together - The Lord's Prayer

Contemporary

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.

Traditional

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Reading

John 15: verses 9-17

⁹ “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹ I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command. ¹⁵ I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶ You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷ This is my command: Love each other.

Hymn StF 242

A new Commandment

Reflection

Jesus’s greatest command, according to John’s Gospel, is that we love one another as He has loved us. When we think about the consequences of such a love, we may have to admit to ourselves, “I’m not sure I could ever love others to the same depth that Jesus loves me.”

Jesus was firmly rooted in the love of God. His actions and teachings had their life-source in God’s love. The secret of the life of Jesus was his close connectedness with God. He was always spending time with the Father, whereas we can find it hard to withdraw from our busy schedules to be with God.

“Remain in my Love”, we hear Jesus speaking to us. Remain! Abide! Stay for a while! And listen... “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you...”, says Jesus in verse 9. You might ask the question, “How, exactly, did Jesus experience His Father’s love?”

We know that the Father gave his son Jesus an infinite sense of belonging and being rooted in his love. “You are my beloved son in whom I am well pleased”, we hear the blessing from the Father, spoken at the time of his baptism.

That is the confirmation that we too can experience through the love of Jesus. “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you...” As we draw on the love of

Jesus, we are the beneficiaries of a love that goes far beyond material things. It is a love that exceeds human understanding. It is a love that cannot be earned... a love that knows no boundaries... A love that we could not get even if we chose it. We did not choose Jesus. Rather, he chose us.

We are chosen for love. There is that wonderful, disturbing phrase that Jesus said in verse 13, "No one has greater love than this to lay down one's life for one's friends".

I heard this remarkable story of a soldier in the First world war, who asked his officer if he could go out into the "No Man's Land" between the trenches to bring back one of his friends who lay seriously wounded.

"You can go," said the officer, "but it's not worth it. Your friend has probably died, and you will throw your own life away." But the man still went. Somehow, he managed to get to his friend, lift him on to his shoulder, and bring him back and the two of them tumbled together and lay in the bottom of the trench.

The officer looked very sympathetically on the would-be rescuer, and then he said, "I told you it wouldn't be worth it. Your friend has died and now you are mortally wounded".

"It was worth it, though, sir," he said. "What do you mean, 'worth it?' I have just said, your friend is dead." "Yes, sir," the soldier answered, "but it was worth it, because when I got to him, he was still alive, and he said to me, 'Jim, I knew you would come.'"

God loves us, each one of us. In a perfect world, we would all love God and love our neighbour as ourselves, at that point all wars and hate would stop.

And I can almost hear you saying that is true, but this far from a perfect world, and you would be right, it is not a perfect world but if we respond to God's love for us then we can begin to make it a perfect world.

Through Jesus God, has chosen us to express acts of love, to be his friends, and to be his hands and feet and voice – in other words to be His people. All we need to do is choose to follow Jesus. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession

Faithful God, your Son Jesus Christ gave us a new commandment, to love one another and so we ask you to teach us how to love our neighbours, that by serving them, we might also serve you.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Creator God, the world so often seems to be a violent and fearful place. Give us the strength to love our enemies and to pray for those who by acts of violence and terrorism desecrate your beautiful creation.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Loving God, help us all to be a part of the healing ministry of your church. Encourage us to constantly pray for those we know who are suffering in body, mind or spirit and we think especially of those suffering from the Coronavirus.

Deepen our love for our neighbours especially those who are weak, help us to console the sorrowful and give hope to the dying.

In a moment of quiet, let us bring before the Lord, all those we know who need to receive the healing touch of the Father.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Merciful God, your love reaches beyond the grave. At the end of our days on earth be with us and with those we love and with those whom we love and have gone before us. We pray now for those who have recently died; give to the departed the perfect joy of your eternal love and to those bereaved by their passing the consolation of Your perfect love.

Lord, in your Mercy: Hear our Prayer

Father God, send us out into the world today mindful that as witnesses and servants, we should make you known in every place we visit and bear witness to the Gospel with acts of faith and hope and love.

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

Blessing

To him who loves us
and has freed us from our sins by his blood,
and has made us to be a kingdom
and priests to serve his God and Father,
to him be glory and power for ever and ever! **Amen.**

MercyMe – I can only imagine

<https://youtu.be/0xwzltqYmII>