



Chet Valley Churches



Morning Worship
for Fifth Sunday of Easter
2nd May 2021

Greeting and Welcome

Welcome to our Morning Worship on this the 5th Sunday of Easter as we come together to worship and praise God, to ask forgiveness of our sins and to hear the Good News of Jesus.

**Lord, direct our thoughts, teach us to pray,
lift up our hearts to worship you in Spirit and in truth,
through Jesus Christ. Amen.**

♪ Hymn: *New Every Morning*

**New every morning is the love
Our wakening and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life, and power, and thought.**

**New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.**

**If on our daily course our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.**

**The trivial round, the common task,
Would furnish all we ought to ask,
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.**

**Only, O Lord, in thy dear love
Fit us for perfect rest above;
And help us this and every day
To live more nearly as we pray.**

Psalm of Adoration

O come, let us sing to the LORD;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!

**Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!**

For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

**In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.**

The sea is his, for he made it,
and the dry land, which his hands have formed.

**O come, let us worship and bow down,
let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker!**

For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand. (Psalm 95. 1-7)

To you, loving God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be all glory, honour and praise now and for ever. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession and Declaration of Forgiveness

Every day we need to seek God's forgiveness as we acknowledge and confess those events and thoughts which separate us from God and from each other.

**O Lord our God, enthroned on high,
filling the whole earth with your glory:
Holy, holy, holy is your Name.**

**Our eyes have seen the King, the Lord almighty;
but our lips are unclean.**

**We cry to you in our sinfulness
to take our guilt away,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

May Almighty God, who sent His son into the world to save sinners, bring us pardon and peace, now and for ever. **Amen.**

God offers us the strength and power to live for Him through his Holy Spirit. So let us hold on firmly to the hope we profess, because we can trust God to keep his promise.

Collect, the Prayer of the Day

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen.**

First Reading: Acts 8:26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this: 'Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.'

The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?' He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

For the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Hymn: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

**Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heav'n to earth come down:
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,
All thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
Pure, unbounded love thou art;**

**Visit us with thy salvation,
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.**

**Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Nevermore thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray and praise thee without ceasing,
Glory in thy perfect love.**



**Finish, then, thy new creation;
Pure and spotless let us be:
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
'Til in heav'n we take our place,
'Til we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

📖 Epistle: *1 John 4:7-21*

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do

with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.

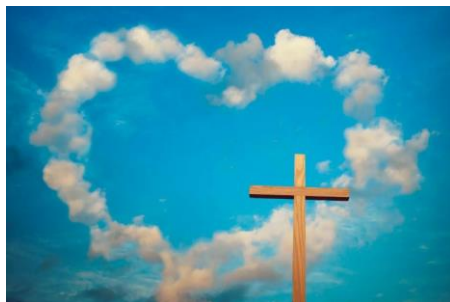
For the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

♪ Hymn: *O the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus*

**O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Vast, unmeasured, boundless, free;
Rolling as a mighty ocean
In its fullness over me.
Underneath me, all around me,
Is the current of his love;
Leading onward, leading homeward,
To my glorious rest above.**

**O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Spread his praise from shore to shore,
He who loves us, ever loves us,
Changes never, nevermore;
He who died to save his loved ones,
Intercedes for them above.
He who called them his own people
Watches over them in love.**

**O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
Love of every love the best;
Vast the ocean of his blessing,
Sweet the haven of his rest.
O the deep, deep love of Jesus!
For my heaven of heavens is he.
This my everlasting glory:
Jesus' mighty love for me.**



📖 Gospel Reading: *John 15:1-8*

'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to

make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

For the word of the Lord, **thanks be to God.**

Talk [Rev David]

Which came first: the chicken or the egg? Well, I've ordered both from Amazon so when they've arrived I'll let you know...

Often we find ourselves wondering the answer to that dilemma. In particular we might find ourselves struggling to decide whether it is 'being' or 'doing' that is the most important. Does 'being' depend on the space created by 'doing'? Or is it 'doing' that relies on 'being' having taken place? Are things done out of love, or is it love that comes through the doing?

Today's readings give us an insight into this question and in many ways provide us with an answer; that both being and doing are co-dependent.

Martin Luther, it is said, called the letter of James an epistle of straw for in it the writer extols the need to put faith into action. Something which seemed to say that we could be saved by our own efforts or that more than "faith" was required to be put right with God. However as one reads today's passages from the letter and Gospel of John we are left in no doubt that it isn't an either / or situation: not word or deed; faith *or* action; being *or* doing; but rather word *and* deed; faith *and* action; being *and* doing which we are called to demonstrate. Love is the answer and the thread that weaves its way throughout these passages. Like a perfume it permeates the weft and weave of the tapestry of our lives.

If we re-read those verses from I John 4 we cannot fail to notice that the love in question requires a response. A response to God who is Love and a response to those around us as fellow brothers and sisters. God the Father

showed us His love by sending his Son as the Saviour of the world (1 John 4.14). We show our love for God by loving our brothers and sisters (1 John 4. 21).

To enable us to do that we must allow ourselves to abide in God's love. To dwell. In my earlier years I used to work for a company which meant I travelled across the British Isles requiring me to use hotels when away from home. For the first couple of times I did this in Scotland I answered the question "Where do you stay?" completely incorrectly. I'd name a hotel or guest house when what they were asking of me was where did I live. That use of the word 'stay' is much nearer the meaning meant by abide than the transient nature of stopping overnight somewhere. When John talks of us needing to abide in God's love, or abiding in the vine he is telling us that to benefit from the situation we must reside completely there. It should be our permanent address.

Only by abiding in the vine can we benefit from the nutrients which come from God. Recognising also that by so doing—and using the metaphor chosen by Jesus—we need to produce fruit to benefit from that residence. The production of "fruit" is what takes us to the first of our readings today. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian official is an encounter which, on the face of it, appears serendipitous yet it becomes evident that it is the result of the Holy Spirit's prompting. Philip is clearly abiding in God so as to be in tune with this prompting. He hears the official reading from the book of the prophet Isaiah and asks a basic question, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He's then invited by the official into the chariot to explain. This conversation leads to a baptism. What a response? I imagine most of us hearing or reading this would say—that's OK for Philip (or someone else), but I couldn't do that. And yes, the story recounted here clearly shows Philip's willingness to preach whenever he's given half a chance—we just need to look at the last verse of chapter 8: "...Philip found himself in Azotus, and as he was passing through the region (since he was there), he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea." (Acts 8.40). But when we know God's love for us, when we abide in it and wish to share it with others, then we too can find the words or actions to demonstrate it. And we must remember that neither word nor actions are any more relevant nor important than the other since love isn't abstract. Out of love comes the activity and through it all God acts lovingly towards us.

Affirmation of Faith

**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

The Peace of God

We are all one in Christ Jesus. We belong to Him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

Let us greet one another with a sign of God's peace.

♪ Hymn: Bless the Lord O My Soul (10,000 Reasons)

Bless the Lord oh my soul...

Oh my soul, worship his holy name.

Sing like never before, Oh my soul.

I'll worship your holy name.

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning.

It's time to sing your song again.

Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,

Let me be singing when the evening comes.

Bless the Lord oh my soul...f

You're rich in love and you're slow to anger.

Your name is great and your heart is kind.

For all your goodness I will keep on singing.

Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.

Bless the Lord oh my soul...

And on that day when my strength is failing;

The end draws near and my time has come.

Still my soul will sing your praise unending,

Ten thousand years and then forevermore.

Bless the Lord oh my soul...

Prayers of Intercession

Let us pray. We pray to God the Son who is present with us to eternity.

Jesus, Lord of life, **in your mercy hear us.**

Jesus, light of the world, bring the light and peace of your gospel to the nations.

Jesus, Lord of life, **in your mercy hear us.**

Jesus, bread of life, give food to those who are hungry and nourish us all with your word.

Jesus, Lord of life, **in your mercy hear us.**

Jesus, our way, our truth, our life, be with us and all who follow you in the way. deepen our appreciation of your truth and fill us with your life.

Jesus, Lord of life, **in your mercy hear us.**

Jesus, Good Shepherd who gave your life for the sheep, recover the straggler, bind up the injured, strengthen the sick and lead the healthy and strong to new pastures.

Jesus, Lord of life, **in your mercy hear us.**

Jesus, the resurrection and the life, we give you thanks for all who have lived, whom we have loved but see no longer. Raise us, with all who have believed in you, to eternal life.

Jesus, Lord of life, **in your mercy hear us,
and accept these our prayers. Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Jesus taught us to call God our Father, and so in faith and trust 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.**

♪ Hymn: You're the Word of God the Father

**You're the Word of God the Father,
From before the world began;
Every star and every planet
Has been fashioned by your hand.**

**All creation holds together
By the power of your voice:
Let the skies declare your glory,
Let the land and seas rejoice!**

*You're the author of creation,
You're the Lord of every man;
And your cry of love rings out
Across the lands.*

**Yet you left the gaze of angels,
Came to seek and save the lost,
And exchanged the joy of heaven
For the anguish of a cross.**



**With a prayer you fed the hungry,
With a word you stilled the sea.
Yet how silently you suffered
That the guilty may go free.**

You're the author of creation...

**With a shout you rose victorious,
Wresting victory from the grave,
And ascended into heaven
Leading captives in your wake.**

**Now you stand before the Father
Interceding for your own.
From each tribe and tongue and nation
You are leading sinners home.**

You're the author of creation...

Blessing & Dismissal

God, who through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the victory, give us joy and peace in our faith; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you, and those whom you love now and always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia!

In the name of Christ.
Alleluia, alleluia!

