

Sunday 24 April 2021

Low Sunday

(The Second Sunday of Easter)



Sermon and prayers of intercession © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [See what a morning](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

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

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil
and confess our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments
and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for the Second Sunday of Easter

Almighty Father,
you have given your only Son to die for our sins
and to rise again for our justification:
grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness
that we may always serve you
in pureness of living and truth;
through the merits of your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of Acts

They brought disciples and had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, 'We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us.' But Peter and the apostles answered, 'We must obey God rather than any human authority. The God of our ancestors raised up Jesus, whom you had killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Saviour that he might give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses to these things, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.' When they heard this, they were enraged and wanted to kill them. But a Pharisee in the council named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, respected by all the people, stood up and ordered the men to be put outside for a short time. Then he said to them, 'Fellow Israelites, consider carefully what you propose to do to these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody, and a number of men, about four hundred, joined him; but he was killed, and all who

followed him were dispersed and disappeared. After him Judas the Galilean rose up at the time of the census and got people to follow him; he also perished, and all who followed him were scattered. So, in the present case, I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them—in that case you may even be found fighting against God!’ They were convinced by him, and when they had called in the apostles, they had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. As they left the council, they rejoiced that they were considered worthy to suffer dishonour for the sake of the name. *Acts 5:27–41*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Revelation of St John the Divine

John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who is to come, and from the seven spirits who are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and freed us from our sins by his blood, and made us to be a kingdom, priests serving his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Look! He is coming with the clouds; every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and on his account all the tribes of the earth will wail. So it is to be. Amen. ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

Revelation 1:4–8

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Three days

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, ‘Peace be with you.’ After he said this, he showed them

his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.' But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord.' But he said to them, 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.'

A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.' Thomas answered him, 'My Lord and my God!' Jesus said to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. But these are written so that you may come to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing you may have life in his name.

John 20:19-31

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Alleluia! Christ is Risen. He is Risen Indeed. Alleluia!

It's strange when you think about it—the disciples spend the evening of Easter Day behind locked doors. Peter and another disciple have seen the empty tomb. Mary Magdalene has spoken with the risen Christ, and she has told the disciples about it. You'd think they would be off celebrating, announcing to anyone who would listen that Jesus is alive again. Instead, they hide. They act like disciples whose leader is still dead.

On the other hand, protecting themselves makes perfect sense. It was only a couple days before that they were traumatised by the death of their leader on a cross. They know he was apprehended and executed, so they may be too. They wait behind locked doors, as quiet as they can be, fearing every footstep in the street below. This room contains many of the first Christian martyrs, several of them will die, sooner or later, for their connection with Jesus.

It is apparent that fear dominates them. That puts them with so many other people. Those dominated by fear may include people around us every day and even some of us here this morning.

It is now, to his fearful disciples that the risen Christ chooses to appear. He has passed from life through a gruesome death to a life greater than we can imagine. Why here, why now?

It might have been out of anger, disappointment, or a need for revenge. After all, these disciples deserted him. As he hung on the cross, most of them were nowhere to be found. He might have wanted to freeze them with a steely gaze or call them out.

But no. He came back, not concerned for himself, but for them. He senses their fear. And so, he speaks his peace to them. He shows them his wounds, still apparent on his glorified body. Their fear dissolves, and they rejoice to see him alive again.

Then he gives them his peace and tells them their mission. He breathes the Holy Spirit on them and tells them to forgive sins with his authority.

This action is a second creation, an early foretaste of Pentecost, commissioning them for ministry. Their business will be forgiveness, the reconciliation of humanity with God and each other. From this upstairs room, forgiveness is to spread like wildfire. Set free from fear themselves, they are to help set others free.

Is it remarkable that death could not hold Jesus? Yes! Is it remarkable that fear could not hold his disciples? Yes!

So, what's in it for us? Is it the promise of our own resurrection at the end of time, and the reality of reconciliation with God and others here and now? Like the first disciples, we get to experience Jesus risen from the dead, freeing us from fear of the death that will come at life's end, and freeing us from all the other deathly fears that overshadow our lives.

What are the fears that we experience? Maybe things we witness on the News: illnesses without cure, a failing economy, war. Other fears are more personal, more private: a broken relationship, work troubles.

We feel fear when there's no money to pay the mortgage. When our kids are struggling in school. When we come home to find our houses broken into, privacy invaded.

When fear flares up in our hearts, it's easy to forget God, and it's time to remember God.

The disciples forgot for a time, there in that upstairs room. We may forget also, but Christ does not forget us. He comes to us with the reminder, in his feet and hands and side that death, the source of so much fear, has been conquered.

The disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. And can also rejoice, when amid fear, we recognise Christ is here with us. It is not that fear is simply swept away;

rather, fear no longer dominates our lives.

The resurrection stories from the gospels are a bit of a scramble, testifying to how people come to faith in different ways.

- The beloved disciple believes when he sees the empty tomb, but it's not clear what he believes.
- Mary Magdalene believes when the Lord speaks her name, even though, according to Mark's Gospel, her report is not accepted.
- The disciples believe for themselves once Jesus appears alive among them.

People come to faith in different ways. They did then. They do now.

Remember Thomas, know more commonly as 'Doubting Thomas? Earlier in the gospel story, as Jesus prepares to go to Jerusalem to face the cross, Thomas says, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.' There's nothing subtle about Thomas.

So, when he hears from others that Jesus is back. He refuses to believe that Jesus is alive unless he can see and touch the wounds of his crucified leader.

Then one week later, Thomas gets his chance in the upstairs room. Jesus enters and invites Thomas to examine his wounds. We don't hear that he accepts the invitation. We hear instead the boldest statement about Jesus in the Gospel of John, maybe the entire New Testament. 'My Lord and my God!'

Jesus returns to promise us our resurrection. He comes back to reconcile us with God and make us instruments for reconciliation in the world. He comes to break the chains of fear. And we all have different ways of recognising him.

You can meet Jesus in Scripture and in the Sacraments. You can meet him in the love shown to you by other Christians. You can meet him as well in the depths of your heart, and at times you least expect it.

Will you welcome him? Will you trust him? Jesus may come to you when you least expect it.

Jesus often startles us, as he did those disciples in the upstairs room, and one week later, Thomas.

This Easter Season Christ comes to set us free. We can extend to him the chains of fear that hold us, and he will break them by the power of his resurrection.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

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

Prayers of intercession

Almighty God we pray for our churches in East Oldham and ask that our church here in Clarksfield and Waterhead be given a clear vision of what is needed to be both focused and relevant in all that is good and serves your purpose of spreading the Good News to both residents and visitors.

Lord, in your Mercy

All Hear our Prayer

Creator God, we thank you for the beauty of your world: for its wonderful variety and the bounty that it brings forth. Help us all to be good stewards showing love and friendship to all peoples and the enjoying the warmth and light they bring to our lives. Be close to all who in power, ensuring the decisions that they make, day by day, are made for the benefit of all people entrusted to them in their leadership.

Lord, in your Mercy

All Hear our Prayer

Holy God, we bring to you those who are suffering because of illness, stress, overwork, and isolation, drawing especially close to any who are vulnerable and frightened at this time. Grant us refreshment and hope, comfort, and healing, and the peace only you can give.

Lord, in your Mercy

All Hear our Prayer

Faithful God, we pray for those who have recently passed away and are now eternally blessed in your presence and light. We pray for all those known to us personally and all whose anniversaries are around this time.

Lord, in your Mercy

All Hear our Prayer

Faithful God receive our intercessions and thanksgiving on behalf of the church and the world.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.

Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.

Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 See what a morning (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The peace of God which passes all understanding,

keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,

and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Halleluia! (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All 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,

**All 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.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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.**

Breaking of the Bread

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.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord God our Father,
through our Saviour Jesus Christ
you have assured your children of eternal life
and in baptism have made us one with him:
deliver us from the death of sin
and raise us to new life in your love,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.