



Sunday 10 May 2020

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Love divine all loves excelling](#) (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, confessing our sins in penitence and faith,
firmly resolve 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 version of the 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 Fifth Sunday of Easter

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.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 'Look,' he said, 'I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'

The Jews covered their ears and, with a loud shout, all rushed together against him. Then they dragged him out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. As they were stoning Stephen, he

prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.'

When he had said this, he died. *Acts 7:55–60*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the First Letter of St Peter

Like newborn infants, long for the pure, spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good. Come to him, a living stone, though rejected by mortals yet chosen and precious in God's sight, and like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: 'See, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious; and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.' To you then who believe, he is precious; but for those who do not believe, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the very head of the corner', and 'A stone that makes them stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.'

They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. *1 Peter 2:2–10*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Now the green blade riseth (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.

Jesus said, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house there are many dwelling-places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. And you know the way to the place where I am going.'

Thomas said to him, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?'

Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.'

Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.'

John 14:1-14

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

This government lockdown has been very strange for all of us. The biggest change for me has been that I have found myself spending time focusing on things that I often take for granted. I have begun to think about *basic things* like food shopping and travelling in a new light.

In today's reading we are invited to think about Jesus in a new light. The first Easter has happened and Jesus is no longer present in the same way that He was just a few weeks earlier, and the Apostles are having to explain what has happened in new ways.

St Peter starts with something basic—a building. There are few things more fundamental than a home (and in those days they would have been basic buildings).

Thankfully, most people understand what it is to live in a building, it is a part of our human life that we often take for granted but shelter is a basic need. However, if you want to build a home, then you have to think from the ground up. You have to think about foundations and then you have to think about the Cornerstone.

The Cornerstone is the most important stone in a building as it gives strength to the structure: it holds everything up and everything together. No wonder then, that St Peter, and before him, Isaiah, liken Jesus to a Cornerstone. It doesn't sound very complementary to be likened to a stone though, does it? If St Peter was trying to encourage people to join him then perhaps he could have used a different image? Who wants to be a stone? Who wants to be something so basic? But St Peter goes further and talks about 'living stones'.

What St Peter was trying to say is that if Jesus is the Cornerstone then He is the basis of everything and so we must join together, and 'build' upon Him. As the body of Christ, we must mortar ourselves into something strong, something protective, something that will support us as we live: a building, a Church! The first Easter has just happened and now St Peter is inviting us to build upon it and become a 'Holy Priesthood' and a 'Spiritual House'.

And in the Gospel reading for today Jesus mentions another building. Jesus tells us that His Father has a building—a house with many dwelling places and that He is preparing the way and will lead us to this house.

What does this mean? Are we to think about Heaven as like Earth, with houses and dwelling places? It is quite hard not to think this way, actually, because this life is all that we have to go on and so if we are thinking about another life, another place, we are naturally going to add in elements that are fundamental to our lives now.

Why then, just a few lines later, does Jesus go on to tell us that The Father *dwells* in Him! All of this talk of buildings and dwelling places is confusing but it is pointing to one thing. God. Jesus is showing us what life will be like *when we dwell* with God.

At Easter, there are other clues as to what life will be like with God. Easter is a time when the natural world starts to sing about God. The trees are in blossom and the early bulbs are abundantly flowering; the birds are everywhere, darting about preparing for chicks. And this time of lockdown is allowing us to see and to hear all of this, if we just slow down and take the time.

But what has nature got to do with buildings and dwellings?

I find that I smile when I see a beautiful flower without even realising I am doing it, and I love to watch the birds, and to hear their songs. Why? What makes me feel

this way? Have you ever found that you feel better after a walk surrounded by nature, or that certain music makes you feel joyful? That is God *dwelling in us*. Joy and Peace and Love are what God has promised us, and what Jesus brings us in the Easter story. God will live in us, in each of us. He will make His home in us ... if we let Him!

The Cornerstone laid down the foundation for new life in God. The humble Cornerstone, often ignored, unappreciated, passed by in our preoccupations with everyday demands, has allowed us to build a strong Church upon Him. The life we each have in God: the joy, the peace, the love, even the pain and frustration we experience, is all because, at Easter, Jesus invited us to dwell with God. *Right here and now, and forever more*. We can choose to ignore the Cornerstone and go ahead and make our dwelling built on a foundation of our own design. However, if we choose to dwell with God then Jesus tells us that

‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you know me, you will know my Father also.’

So, I am choosing to go back to basics this Easter. I am choosing to get to know the Cornerstone afresh because I want to have a life filled with joy and love and peace—these things that we are promised when we dwell with God—and if I want to know God then I must focus completely on getting to know Jesus. St Stephen did it and the Bible is filled with people who have lived with God.

But let us not forget two things: Firstly, St Peter tells us that we must become ‘living stones’. Present tense. And second, the joy and love and peace that we feel now—it is because *God is in us now*. Present tense.

The life we live is in the present tense: we must always have one eye on the future but we must pay attention, real attention, to the life we are living today. Jesus brought us salvation and He has told us that we are to dwell in God’s house. Future tense. But we must, until that time, learn to dwell with Christ here and now.

You may be finding life difficult at the moment, you may be missing loved ones and worried about the future. Life can be painful and each of us, during our lives, will know dark times. But Jesus doesn’t shy away from difficulty, He understands pain and grief and sorrow. Jesus is the Cornerstone. He is the strength, the foundation, and the one person we can trust entirely to be with us through all times, good and bad.

Life provides opportunities for us to get to know God on many levels but we have to slow down and focus upon the basics if we are to find them. During this lockdown I am going to look out of my window and spend some time just watching the birds and the

clouds go by. It might rain and blow a gale but I will choose, even if only for a few moments, to *dwell with God* and wonder at creation and be thankful because that's the thing about living: we have basic physical needs like shelter, food and water, but even when we find ourselves confined by a disease, *especially* when we find ourselves confined by something out of our control, *we can choose to dwell with God*. We can open our hearts and our minds and let God in, and right then and there, we will find all of the freedom and life we need.

As we live our lives in lockdown we're invited to build our relationship with Christ. As Living Stones we can each of us, start building from the ground up and, although I may not build a skyscraper, one thing that I do know is that I will definitely enjoy the view!

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

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

Lord, Heavenly Father

Easter is the time when we learn again to grow our life in you. Just as we see the world around us spring forth riches, help us to love abundantly and to serve each other, bringing forth joy and peace.

You came to dwell with us to show us that you are, 'The way, and the truth, and the life.' Help us to know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, so that we may know You also. Give us grace to hear Your voice and to trust and to follow You, and You only.

Lord, in Your mercy

All hear our prayer

Lord Jesus Christ

You are truly the Cornerstone on which we can build our faith. Humble and overlooked yet strong enough to bear the weight of our sin. Help us to mortar ourselves into a Church worthy of Your name. A Church united by a love for peace and justice and truth.

We pray for those around the world who cannot openly worship you; for those whose faith is weakening; and for those who have lost their way. Strengthen us in Your Holy Spirit that we might become a 'Holy Priesthood' called to dwell in Your Spiritual House.

Lord, in Your mercy

All hear our prayer

Lord Holy Spirit

Inspire in us, hearts to become 'Living Stones' building upon the faith of the Apostles and working as disciples of Christ in this broken world. Help us to serve each other and so to serve our Heavenly Father.

During this time of restriction and isolation, help us to overcome the urge for self-preservation, and to reach out to others, to share what we have, and to rediscover the joys to be found in caring for, and communicating with, those in need. Live in us so that we can live in Christ and hear His voice, and follow Him: for where He is, there our Father is also.

Lord, in Your mercy

All hear our prayer

Lord Heavenly Father

During this time of uncertainty, help us to dwell in the present and to rediscover Your beautiful creation. As we begin again to notice the sounds of the natural world in our newly quietened streets, help us to remember our responsibilities to cherish and nurture the whole world for You have created a world of colour and light and beauty, filled with plants and animals of amazing complexities.

We have had a taste of limited resources and so we remember those who struggle every day to find what they need to thrive and to grow. May our lifestyles change to limit the damage caused to the world and to those who are affected by our daily decisions.

We pray for those who are ill, and for those who are caring for the sick. Strengthen them and encourage them during these difficult times. We pray especially for all those who have loved ones in hospital or care homes who are ill and whom they cannot visit.

We pray for the lonely and the isolated, that they find comfort in Your presence and hope in Your love and we pray especially for ...

We pray for those who have died. We pray for ...

Comfort their loved ones in the knowledge

Lord, in Your mercy

All hear our prayer

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you. Alleluia!

HYMN 3 [Longing for light we wait](#) (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God the Father, by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.

All Amen.

God the Son, who in bursting the grave has won a glorious victory,
give you joy as you share the Easter faith.

All Amen.

God the Holy Spirit, whom the risen Lord breathed into his disciples,
empower you and fill you with Christ's peace.

All Amen.

And the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 As the deer pants

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

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 St Barnabas and 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

Eternal God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:
grant us to walk in his way,
to rejoice in his truth,
and to share his risen life;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

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.**