

Saturday 29 June 2024

Saints Peter and Paul



From the
Communion of saints
tapestry by John Nava

Peter is often called the 'Prince of the Apostles' after the way Jesus commissioned him, re-naming him, from 'Simon' to 'Cephas', which was the Aramaic form of the Greek word *Petros* ('Peter') meaning 'rock'; Jesus said that on Peter 'the rock' he would build his Church.

In fact, both Peter and Paul came to be seen as having different roles to play within the leadership of the Church: Peter in witnessing to Christ's Lordship and Paul in helping to understand its meaning for Jesus' followers through his inspired letters and other writings.

Peter and Paul have been jointly remembered on this day since the earliest days of the Church because it was regarded as the anniversary of their joint martyrdom in Rome in about 64 AD.

Sermon © the Revd Denise Owen.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

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

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

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

The Introduction

HYMN 1 Lord's Prayer
Lord's Prayer
Lord's Prayer

(traditional words)

(modern words)

(Charlotte Church version)

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.

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.

Jesus said to his apostles,

'You are my friends if you obey my commands.'

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.

Kyrie Confession

Lord Jesus, in your love you invite us to be your friends:

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, in your joy you choose us to go out and bear fruit:

Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, in your power you send us to be your faithful witnesses:

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

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

All Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

The Collect for Saints Peter and Paul

Almighty God,
whose blessed apostles Peter and Paul
glorified you in their death as in their life:
grant that your Church,
inspired by their teaching and example,
and made one by your Spirit,
may ever stand firm upon the one foundation,
Jesus Christ your Son 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 the Prophet Zechariah

The angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. He asked me, 'What do you see?' I answered, 'I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left.'

I asked the angel who talked with me, 'What are these, my lord?' He answered, 'Do you not know what these are?' 'No, my lord,' I replied. So he said to me, 'This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty.

The seven eyes of the Lord that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone in the hand of Zerubbabel?' Then I asked the angel, 'What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?' Again I asked him, 'What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil? He replied, "Do you not know what these are?" No, my lord, I said. So he said, 'These are the two who are anointed to serve the Lord of all the earth.'

Zechariah 4:1-6a, 10b-end

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles

About that time King Herod laid violent hands upon some who belonged to the church. He had James, the brother of John, killed with the sword. After he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to arrest Peter also (this was during the festival of Unleavened Bread). When he had seized him, he put him in prison and handed him over to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending to bring him out to the people after the Passover. While Peter was kept in prison, the church prayed fervently to God for him.

The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison. Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He tapped Peter on the side and woke him, saying, 'Get up quickly,'

and the chains fell off his wrists. The angel said to him, 'Fasten your belt and put on your sandals.' He did so. Then he said to him, 'Wrap your cloak around you and follow me.' Peter went out and followed him; he did not realise that what was happening with the angel's help was real; he thought he was seeing a vision. After they had passed the first and the second guard, they came before the iron gate leading into the city. It opened for them of its own accord, and they went outside and walked along a lane, when suddenly the angel left him. *Acts 12:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 I dream of a Church

(the song starts after 48 seconds)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

When Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessèd are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it.

'I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.'

Matthew 16:13-19

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

'But who do you say that I am?' This may be the most important question Jesus asked of his disciples, and continues to ask of us. Who do we, you and me, say that Jesus is? I assume we'd all say with Peter as in this Gospel passage, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' We might also say, 'You are my Saviour, the Christ,' or we might go further and say, 'You are my friend and my Lord.' I suggest that there are any number of ways of answering that question all of them true, and all of them rich with meaning and great significance. We note that it's famously the impetuous Apostle Peter who jumps in to answer Jesus and in this version is told that he will be the rock on which the Church will be built.

Today is the feast day of Saints Peter and Paul and we give thanks for these two men who are towering figures in the Church. In the Church the end of June is called 'Petertide' and is traditionally the time of year when ordinations take place. At ordination, women and men are ordained into the Apostolic Tradition of the Church. Deacons and priests promise to teach only the faith that has been passed down from those original apostles, and the bishop who lays hands on the ordinands is understood to have had hands laid on them by people who have had hands laid on them, etc, going all the way back in a physical chain to those first disciples. Those who are ordained are understood to be 'set apart' for a particular kind of ministry in the Church, and again Petertide is that time of year when we give thanks for those serving as ordained ministers.

However, that 'set apartness' is more accurately understood as belonging to all the people of God. We are 'set apart' or given a new dignity through baptism, and baptism is the foundation of all ministries both ordained and lay. One of the most beautiful phrases from the baptism liturgy is 'You have been clothed with Christ' taken from St Paul's Letter to the Galatians. Being 'clothed' with Christ is a lovely image of the all-enveloping nature of baptism, and the all-encompassing understanding of faith taught by Peter and Paul, the faith that we have inherited as described above.

I return now to that most important of all questions, 'But who do you say that I am?' Yes, those answers I suggested above are perfectly valid and true, but do they go far enough? For Peter and Paul just saying those words, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God,' was only the beginning, because for both of these men their lives and way of seeing the world changed completely, and through their teaching the world itself was changed. They both understood that, perhaps, the most important element of their ministries was to tell others what God had done through Christ. This they both

did with commitment and fervour from the moment they made the confession of faith, and this decision led to them both being martyred, most probably in Rome.

But this ministry is not one reserved for great saints, or bishops or priests or deacons it is a ministry in which all the baptised can and should share; both ordained and lay are called to spread the Good News of Jesus, and tell others what God has done just as Peter and Paul did.

It would be easy to say that SS Peter and Paul were special, different because they had access to Christ in ways that we don't, but of course this would be wrong. Both Peter and Paul were baptised just as we are, and they both had the assurance of the indwelling and empowering of the Holy Spirit just as we do. In addition, they were both faced with that question 'Who do you say that I am?' and both answered it honestly, and knowing what the implications of that answer were. For the rest of their lives they tried to encourage other people to think about that question; to tell people the stories of Jesus that enabled people to answer that question; and to live lives that demonstrated the truth of that question and its answer.

I would suggest that that is still the task of the Church today. The Great Commission which Jesus gave to his disciples, which began with the first disciples, and which Peter and Paul dedicated their lives to, continues today and it continues through us, all of us. The great privilege of the Christian life is that we are given the task of passing it on to others in the best way we can. For most of us this will be on a personal, one-to-one level. We speak to our families, friends, and work colleagues in a sensitive and appropriate way of who we say that Jesus is. We speak of our faith with confidence and integrity, and we continue to reflect on who Jesus is and what God has done for us. We live lives that are 'set apart' in that we don't conform to the expectations of the world and the current Zeitgeist, but live according to the Christian values and Spirit inspired hope taught by Jesus, Peter and Paul and those who followed.

Clearly we are highly unlikely to ever emulate the deeds of SS Peter and Paul, but we do join with them in our duty to speak of the faith, to invite people to church, to serve our communities, and to be faithful followers of Christ.

'But who do you say that [Jesus] is?' today. Amen

Prayers of intercession

Encouraged by our fellowship with all the saints,
let us make our prayers to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.
Father, your Son called men and women to leave the past behind
them and to follow him as his disciples in the way of the cross.
Look with mercy upon those whom he calls today, marks with the cross
and makes his disciples within the Church ...
Lord, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Your Son told his disciples not to be afraid and at Easter breathed on
them his gift of peace. Look with mercy upon the world into which
he sent them out, and give it that peace for which it longs ...
Lord, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Your Son formed around him a company who were no longer
servants but friends, and he called all those who obeyed him his
brother and sister and mother. Look with mercy upon our families
and our friends and upon the communities in which we share ...
Lord, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Your Son sent out disciples to preach and heal the sick.
Look with mercy on all those who yearn to hear the good news of salvation,
and renew among your people the gifts of healing ...
Lord, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Your Son promised to those who followed him that they would sit
on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel and would share the
banquet of the kingdom. According to your promise, look with
mercy on those who have walked with Christ in this life and now
have passed through death ...
Lord, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

Almighty God,
you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
with Jesus Christ himself as the chief cornerstone:
so join us together in unity of spirit by their doctrine,
that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

We are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God, through Christ our Lord, who came and preached peace to those who were far off and those who were near.

Ephesians 2.19,17

The peace of the Lord be always with you:

All And also with you.

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

**HYMN 3 Father in Heaven
Father in Heaven
Father in Heaven**

(Enya version)
(Wellspring version)
(instrumental version)

The Dismissal

God, who has prepared for you a city with eternal foundations,
bring you, with Peter and Paul and all the saints,
to the eternal and triumphant joy of that city;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen

HYMN4 What wondrous love is this

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

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

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.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy
that we should always sing of your glory,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
For you are the hope of the nations,
the builder of the city that is to come.
Your love made visible in Jesus Christ
brings home the lost,
restores the sinner and gives dignity to the despised.
In his face your light shines out,
flooding lives with goodness and truth,
gathering into one in your kingdom
a divided and broken humanity.
Therefore with all who can give voice in your creation
we glorify your name,
for ever 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 Saints Peter and Paul, 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.**

Prayer after Communion

Almighty God,
who on the day of Pentecost
sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,
filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:
by the power of the same Spirit
strengthen us to witness to your truth
and to draw everyone to the fire of your love;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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.