

The Camel-Allen Churches

Worship at Home



Sunday 12th July 2020 – Trinity 5

Opening Acclamation & prayer

Wherever we are we worship...

As the family of God in our Father's presence: we offer him praise and thanksgiving, we hear and receive his holy word, we bring before him the needs of the world, we ask his forgiveness of our sins, and seek his grace, that through his Son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves to his service.

Hymn: *(we say or sing)*

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,
Your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
At the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe,
Be there at our labours and give us, we pray,
Your strength in our hearts, Lord,
At the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
Your hands swift to welcome, Your arms to embrace.
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,
Your love in our hearts, Lord,
At the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm,
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,
At the end of the day.

Confession

Let us bring to mind our sin, our failure to value the love of others
and our failure to love as Christ has loved us.

Your love gives us life:
we fail to live as your children.

Lord have mercy
Lord, have mercy.

You call us to do good:
we seek our own good.
Christ, have mercy
Christ, have mercy.

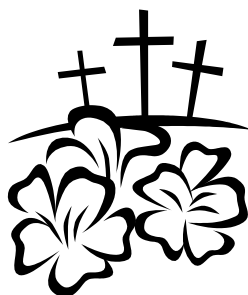
You hear us when we cry for help:
we ignore the cries of others.
Lord have mercy

Lord, have mercy.

Receiving God's forgiveness...

May the God of love and power,
forgive *us* and free *us* from our sins
heal and strengthen *us* by his Spirit,
and raise *us* to new life in Christ our Lord.

Amen



The Collect for the fifth Sunday after Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God,
by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church
is governed and sanctified:
hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people,
that in their vocation and ministry
they may serve you in holiness and truth
to the glory of your name;
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Ephesians 1 (Good News Bible)

1 From Paul, who by God's will is an apostle of Christ Jesus—To God's people in Ephesus, who are faithful in their life in union with Christ Jesus: 2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

3 Let us give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! For in our union with Christ he has blessed us by giving us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly world. 4 Even before the world was made, God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him.

Because of his love 5 God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his children—this was his pleasure and purpose. 6 Let us praise God for his glorious grace, for the free gift he gave us in his dear Son! 7 For by the blood of Christ we are set free, that is, our sins are forgiven. How great is the grace of God, 8 which he gave to us in such large measure!

In all his wisdom and insight 9 God did what he had purposed, and made known to us the secret plan he had already decided to complete by means of Christ. 10 This plan, which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth, with Christ as head.

11 All things are done according to God's plan and decision; and God chose us to be his own people in union with Christ because of his own purpose, based on what he had decided from the very

beginning. ¹² Let us, then, who were the first to hope in Christ, praise God's glory!

¹³ And you also became God's people when you heard the true message, the Good News that brought you salvation. You believed in Christ, and God put his stamp of ownership on you by giving you the Holy Spirit he had promised. ¹⁴ The Spirit is the guarantee that we shall receive what God has promised his people, and this assures us that God will give complete freedom to those who are his. Let us praise his glory!

Paul's Prayer

¹⁵ For this reason, ever since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people, ¹⁶ I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you. I remember you in my prayers ¹⁷ and ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him. ¹⁸ I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his people, ¹⁹ and how very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength ²⁰ which he used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. ²¹ Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he has a title superior to all titles of authority in this world and in the next. ²² God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. ²³ The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere.



Gospel Reading Matthew 6.1-6

Reflection

I want to reflect this morning on something we have been reminded of powerfully during this time when we have not been able to meet: and that is what is, or rather, who is the church?

We have been reminded that beautiful and beloved though our buildings are, they are not the reality of the Church, which is the *people* of God. Our buildings have been closed for months, but the church has not. We have continued to worship, to pray to serve and to witness to the Lord Jesus Christ throughout this time. We have found new ways of doing these things. And yes, we have missed seeing one another and meeting together face to face, but some of these new ways have proved very effective. Many more people have been connecting with the church via the internet than ever come to the buildings on Sunday's. Even this simple little printed service sent out each week has been requested and used by people who never normally come through the doors and it has re-connected us with those who, for health reasons unconnected with Coronavirus, are no longer able to attend. As we begin to meet again we must not get so busy and pre-occupied with what suits us in these buildings, that we have no time energy or headspace for those outside, who are still reaching out for God but who connect with him out of choice or necessity in different ways. They are God's people too.

Ephesians chapter 1 above, reminds us repeatedly that we are the **people of God**, the people **chosen** to be his through Jesus Christ. That we are **made God's children**. That the church is **the body of Christ** - people, family, body – these are all dynamic images not static ones. We can grow, change, develop, love. In the next whole structure is joined together and **grows into a holy temple** in the

Lord; ²²in whom you also are built together spiritually* into a **dwelling-place for God**. The church, ie the people, are described as the temple of the Holy Spirit – the place where God dwells – that is in *us*, not the building.

So what use our buildings? Well of course they provide for us a useful base – we need somewhere to meet and we all like to have a place where we feel at home. Of course some churches meet successfully in local schools and halls and don't have the weight and worry of upkeep. The advantage of the buildings we have inherited is that, dedicated as they are to the worship of God, they act as signposts to remind people of his presence and prayed-in as they have been through the generations, they can be so called 'thin places' where the presence of the holy is more tangible and so they can become a gateway into God's presence. If our buildings are *not* these things: signposts, reminders, holy places of peace and prayer: gateways into God's presence, then it is time to close them down or hand them over to English Heritage, like ruined castles or disused stately homes, interesting only as historical curiosities!

Church is community then, not place, nor event. We continue to be church whether we can meet together, or not. Whether we can gather in a building called a church or not. We still belong together.

We are the church – God's people exploring and deepening our relationship with God, alongside one-another, face to face, side by side, at home alone, phone to phone, by Zoom, Youtube and facebook and yes, in our buildings too.

Former Archbishop Rowen Williams wrote this...

'The church is the community of the followers of Christ.... Church is what happens when people encounter Jesus and commit themselves

to sustaining and deepening that encounter in their encounter with each other'

What will you do this week to deepen your encounter with Jesus?



Hymn

BIND US TOGETHER, Lord,
Bind us together
With cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord,
Bind us together,
Bind us together with love.

There is only one God,
There is only one King;
There is only one Body,
That is why we sing:

Made for the glory of God,
Purchased by His precious Son;
Born with the right to be clean,
For Jesus the victory has won.

You are the family of God,
You are the promise divine;
You are God's chosen desire,
You are the glorious new wine.

Affirmation of faith

Let us affirm our common faith in Jesus Christ.

**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 heart 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**

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray

For a swift end to COVID-19. For those infected and those who have been exposed; **grant them strength, healing, and protection.**

For their loved ones and carers;
grant them peace, comfort, and endurance.

For physicians, nurses, technicians, researchers, administrators, and all other healthcare employees around the world;
grant them strength by your life-giving Spirit, wisdom, and resources to do the work before them

For those leading the nations;
grant them sound minds, courage, and humility

For those returning to work, for businesses opening up again
grant them protection and wisdom.

For those who have become unemployed or underemployed during this pandemic; **grant them comfort, and financial provision.**

For parents and families;
grant them wisdom, patience and joy.

For children;
grant them protection from fear.

For those for whom home is not a safe haven;
grant them refuge.

For those who are alone;
grant them a sense of your nearness and love.

For all making decisions during this time of uncertainty and fear;
grant them your peace.

For your church throughout the world and here in our churches
Help us to stand firm in who we are in Christ Jesus: your people; your children; your body and help us to live your way of love day by day.

And for all the prayers we cannot voice because we do not have the words or the understanding;
Lord, hear our prayer. Amen.

O God, your unfailing providence sustains the world we live in;
grant that we may never forget that our common life depends upon you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Hymn

The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ her Lord;
she is his new creation,
by water and the word:
from heaven he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation,
yet one o'er all the earth,
her charter of salvation,
one Lord, one faith, one birth;
one holy Name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
men see her sore oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed;
yet saints their watch are keeping,
their cry goes up, "How long?"
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

Mid toil and tribulation,
and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation
of peace for evermore;
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blessed,

and the great Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
with God, the Three in one,
and mystic sweet communion
with those whose rest is won.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we
like them, the meek and lowly,
on high may dwell with thee.

Blessing

May God the Father from whom every family
In earth and heaven receives its name
strengthen us with his Spirit in our inner being,
so that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith;

And the blessing of God Almighty:
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
Be amongst us and remain with us always. Amen

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