

The Camel-Allen Churches

Worship at Home



Sunday 2nd May 2021 - Easter 5

Opening Acclamation & prayer

Alleluia. Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Do you see this place?

Here God dwells among the people.

**God will make a home among us
and we shall be God's people.**

God is the beginning and the end
and is making the whole creation new

Let us worship together!

Hymn:

1 Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices raise:
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the cross a victim,
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory,
now is risen from the dead.

2 Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance
at his second coming yield;
then the golden ears of harvest
will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine,
from the furrows of the grave.

3 Christ is risen, we are risen;
shed upon us heav'nly grace,
rain, and dew, and gleams of glory
from the brightness of thy face;
that we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel-hands be gathered,
and be ever, Lord, with thee.

4 Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;
alleluias to the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
alleluia to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity;
alleluia, alleluia,
to the Triune Majesty.

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

All Lord, have mercy.

You call us to do good:
we seek our own good.

Christ, have mercy

All Christ, have mercy.

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

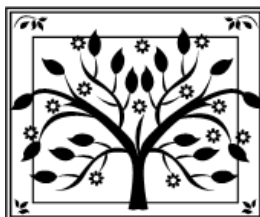
Lord have mercy

All Lord, have mercy.

Receiving God's forgiveness...

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

Amen



The Collect *We spend a moment In silent prayer and say the special prayer for this 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**



LISTENING FOR GOD'S WORD

Reading Acts 8.26-end

²⁶ 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.) ²⁷ 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 ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' ³¹ He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² 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.

³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.'

³⁴The eunuch asked Philip, 'About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?' ³⁵Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶As 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?' ³⁸He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹When 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. ⁴⁰But 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.



Hymn

Led like a lamb to the slaughter
In silence and shame,
There on Your back You carried a world
Of violence and pain.
Bleeding, dying, bleeding, dying.

*You're alive, You're alive,
You have risen, Alleluia!
And the power and the glory is given,
Alleluia, Jesus, to You.*

At break of dawn, poor Mary,
Still weeping she came,
When through her grief she heard Your voice
Now speaking her name.
Mary, Master, Mary, Master!

At the right hand of the Father
Now seated on high
You have begun Your eternal reign
Of justice and joy.
Glory, glory, glory, glory.

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Gospel Reading

John 15.1-8

¹⁵I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. ²He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴Abide 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. ⁵I 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. ⁶Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and

withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.



Reflection

As you may know our Lectionary readings have a three-year cycle starting on Advent Sunday: we have years A, B and C – this is year B. So every three years on the fifth Sunday of Easter I would have spoken about these same readings. One of the benefits of working on a PC these days, is that it is very simple to look-up what you have said previously and I usually do this as I start preparing each week. The down-side of this is that you can get stuck and fail to see or hear anything new in the passage. The up-side is that occasionally you find something said at one church which seems worth adapting for a different congregation, so you've got a head-start. The last time I spoke on these passages it was a Benefice Service in 2019 and though, 'I says it myself what shouldn't', there was some good stuff in it about what it means to 'abide in Christ'! It drew from the Gospel, the Acts reading and the Epistle which we haven't read today (1 John 4.7-end if you want to look it up) but as I read it through again, I realised that what I had said was rather complicated, and well, it's really not, is it? The whole thrust of this Gospel reading could be summed-up in two words, 'stay connected'. Stay attached. It's as simple as that: stay connected to Jesus. If you want your life to

produce fruit, then stay connected to the vine. Allow God to prune off the unfruitful bits of you (and yes, that sounds painful and often is, but worth it in the end) and let the life-giving, nourishing sap of the Spirit flow through what remains, to sprout and grow and be fruit-bearing.

Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit in his letter to the Galatians 5. ²² ... *the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,* ²³*gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things.*

Of course there is 'no law against such things', because these are the things everyone appreciates and wants in their lives. The good fruits the Spirit grows within us, are things that others will see and appreciate and they will maybe even want to know how we got them! That way we can introduce them to Jesus, our Lord.

Staying connected to Jesus is the vital bit we often forget. We loose touch, loose interest, get distracted by other things – often good things, but if we get detached, that sap dries-up, it becomes ever-harder to stay connected and the fruit in our lives gradually shrivels.

So abide in Christ – stay connected to Jesus, in prayer and worship through Bible reading and study – letting his word abide in us - through talking about him and his ways, with other believers, through doing those things he directs us to (and no more) and let the fruit of the Spirit flourish and be shared!



DECLARING OUR FAITH

Let us affirm our common faith in Jesus Christ.

All **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

Hymn I, the Lord of sea and sky,
 I have heard my people cry.
 All who dwell in dark and sin
 My hand will save.
 I who made the stars of night,
 I will make their darkness bright,
 Who will bear my light to them?
 Whom shall I send?

 Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
 I have heard you calling in the night.
 I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
 I will hold your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
'Til their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

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Prayers of intercession

Let us pray to the Lord God Almighty, in whom we live and move and have our being. (Please add in your specific prayers as they occur to you)

Father, we want to produce good fruit in abundance;
nurture us as branches of the true vine,
train and prune us where necessary,
and may our spiritual harvest
make the rich wine of your kingdom.

Your kingdom come
Your will be done.

Father, clearly we see around our world
the tragic and expensive consequences
of branches cut off from the true vine.
We pray for a seeking after your truth
and a desire to act rightly and justly
in all areas of human society.

Your kingdom come
Your will be done.

Father, we pray for those to whom we are linked
by family, friendships or work;
especially we pray for those separated
from their loved ones or their home.

Your kingdom come
Your will be done.

Father, we long for healing and wholeness
in all who suffer
and in all dysfunctional communities;

guide us to understand
how we can be part of the healing.

Your kingdom come
Your will be done.

Father, we know that death
cannot separate us from your love;
in that knowledge we commend to your keeping
all who have died and all who miss them.

Your kingdom come
Your will be done.

Father, we thank you
that we can live our lives connected to Jesus
we dedicate ourselves to serving others
with the fruit of the Spirit.

Merciful Father,
accept these prayer
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.**

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

**For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Hymn

And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain,
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

'Tis mystery all: the Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above
So free, so infinite His grace,
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

CLOSING PRAYER AND BLESSING

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.

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

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

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All In the name of Christ. Amen.



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