

Parish of Central Exeter

Morning Worship and Spiritual Communion

9th Sunday after Trinity, 14 August 2022.

Welcome.

The reflections for today's worship are from Sheila. Many thanks.

We begin this act of worship today with a hymn of praise: 'Tell out my soul', sung here at Arundel Cathedral.

Words are on the screen.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E7QWLyDWe8>

Call to worship

God of creation, You brought life to all that we see.

You set the boundaries of the universe and placed us within its care.

Creator God, breathe life into Your creation

Holy Spirit, You bind Your children together in community.

Your bonds transcend borders created by humankind.

You kindle the fire within us that stirs our passion for faith, justice, and reconciliation.

Spirit God, inspire us to reconcile

Jesus the Christ, You came to teach and to lead. You showed us the cost of discipleship when You stood up against the powers of the world, and they tried to suppress Your truth by sentencing You to death. Your life was more powerful than death and Your truth lives on in us.

Jesus the Christ, help us reflect Your light of truth and peace

We seek forgiveness

Gracious God,

We know You to be generous and full of compassion
but in our anxiety we have stumbled and lost our way.

Called to be a voice for the voiceless we have been silent.
Challenged to fight for justice we have turned away.
Co-opted to the work of breaking down barriers
we have been quick to judge and slow to welcome.

Forgive all the moments when we have neglected
to seek out Your will and to follow it.

Silence

Grant us the courage to be Your faithful people
that Your compassion may flow through us to heal a broken world.
Amen

Assurance of forgiveness

God would have us be honest in all things.
To cry out when we are in pain
to seek guidance when we are lost
and to trust in God's strength when we are afraid.
Give thanks that we are reconciled to God
and free to be the people that God would have us be.
Amen

(Church of Scotland)

Collect for Today

Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of
the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

Worship song

Of the Father's love begotten. Somehow this is more likely to be sung at
Christmas, but it is appropriate at any time of the year. This is an ancient hymn
sung here to plainsong. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fpsj25M1QdI>

Reading

New Testament Reading

Hebrews 11:29 – 12:2.

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as if it were dry land, but when the Egyptians attempted to do so they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell after they had been encircled for seven days. ³¹ By faith Rahab the prostitute did not perish with those who were disobedient, because she had received the spies in peace.



³² And what more should I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets— ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. ³⁵ Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. ³⁶ Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented— ³⁸ of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground.

³⁹ Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, ⁴⁰ since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect.

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of^l the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

Prayer

Now faith is
the assurance of things hoped for,
the conviction of things not seen.
We come convinced of many things
but trusting very few.

Holy God of limitless surprises,
meet us here
in this place
as we touch that which we cannot see
that which we have not dared to hope.

(written by Katherine Hawker. Posted on Liturgies Outside.)

Gospel Luke 12: 49-56

⁴⁹ 'I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! ⁵⁰ I have a baptism with which to be baptized, and what stress I am under until it is completed! ⁵¹ Do you think that I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division! ⁵² From now on, five in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three; ⁵³ they will be divided:

father against son and son against father,
mother against daughter and daughter against mother,
mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law
and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.'

⁵⁴ He also said to the crowds, ‘When you see a cloud rising in the west, you immediately say, “It is going to rain”; and so it happens. ⁵⁵ And when you see the south wind blowing, you say, “There will be scorching heat”; and it happens. ⁵⁶ You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of earth and sky, but why do you not know how to interpret the present time?



Reflection

Hebrews chapter 11 recounts people of faith from the beginning of the scriptures to the summary section we have today. This leads to the memorable first two verses of chapter 12 with the exhortations to get rid of sin and always look to Jesus. (Those of us who were Crusaders remember that ‘looking to Jesus’ was the motto.) In our gospel passage Jesus challenges the crowd to look more carefully, to think about what he is saying and doing and thus be able to interpret the present time.

The challenge to learn from the past, from the witness of previous generations but at the same time not to be tied to the past but open and alert to what is happening in our own time is a constant one. Here is the quote that Brother Samuel included in his commentary on 1 Samuel 12 where the prophet Samuel

gave his farewell message to the people saying how he had listened to God and to their request for a king.

‘The Franciscan medieval theologian, St Bonaventure, says that our primary sin is inattention. Disobedience is at root a failure to listen attentively to God’s word – not just to the words of Scripture, but to what God is saying and doing in our world today. To ignore the needs of our neighbour, the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, not to listen to the voice of conscience or to heed God’s song of loving mercy upholding all creation, is to invite disaster upon us and all our institutions.’

With the coming of instant communication around the world it is hard to claim ignorance about ‘the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth’. However, it remains possible to ignore such cries and carry on living with no thought of the consequences as we see in the slowness of response to the carbon emissions reduction timetable or other global issues. Listening to God’s word and to what is happening in our world is not only for these problems but is relevant to our daily lives.

Again, I want to turn to comments made by Brother Samuel on an earlier passage in 1 Samuel 9 where we first meet Saul out looking for some lost donkeys and he is directed to find ‘the seer’. This is Samuel who is thinking about the people’s request for a king and where would he find one. Here is the quote.

‘It was once suggested to Archbishop William Temple that answers to prayer were just coincidences. He replied that ‘coincidences’ seemed to happen much more frequently when he prayed. Perhaps something of the same is happening in this story. The description of Samuel as a ‘seer’ – one who has insight is significant. The person who ‘sees’, who is attentive to the natural world and to people, who is awake to the signs of the times and who is alert to the Lord in their own life, is more likely to be able to discern what God is doing between the lines of the ordinary daily lives and concerns of others.’

I will close with the alternative collect for Trinity 6

Creator God, you made us all in your image:
may we discern you in all that we see,
and serve you in all that we do,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in a loving God
whose Word sustains our lives
and the work of our hands in the universe.

God is life.

We believe in God's son among us
who brought the seed of life's renewal.
He lived with the poor to show the meaning of love.

Jesus Christ is Lord.

We believe in the Spirit of Life
who makes us one with God,
whose strength and energy renews our own.

The Spirit is Love.

Camillo Torres, Colombia, from 'Creed'.

Worship music

Be thou my guardian and my guide. Sung here by the Singers of St Martins-in-the-Fields. Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZlOygMxT0k>

Intercessions

God of Christ Jesus, please hear our prayers for the human family in its happiness or its distress. Gather us up into the reconciling fire of your love, that we may be purged of all that fosters misery, and inducted into everything that creates love, joy and peace.

We commend to you those who feel ground down or broken,
isolated or alienated.

We commend to you the hungry or homeless, anxious or in agony.

We commend to you those who through terrorism and war
are shattered and despairing.

We commend to you the frightened and insane,

the dying and grieving.

We commend to you the tempted and the fallen,
the fearful and the faithless.

We commend to you the church with its truth and error,
its faith and its fear.

We commend to you all who love Christ,
and work for his way of reconciliation, justice, compassion, and peace.

God of Christ Jesus,
we submit these prayers to your refining fire.
Purify all that is pleasing to you for the service of your kingdom of grace,
where no good thing is discarded, and no loving deed wasted.
For your love's sake.
Amen!

(written by Bruce Prewer).

A short Spiritual Communion

The Book of Common Prayer reminds us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', even when we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.



Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

O God,
help me to trust you,
help me to know that you are with me,
help me to believe that nothing

can separate me from your love
revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

We can now listen to the Taizé song, 'The Kingdom of God is Justice and Peace'. This is a recent recording made at St David's church.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZECvP3Tfd4g>

Giving thanks for Christ's death and resurrection you may wish to say

Thanks be to you, Lord Jesus Christ,
for all the benefits you have given me,
for all the pains and insults you have borne for me.
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally,
I ask you to come spiritually into my heart.
O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen. *(after the Prayer of St Richard of Chichester)*

Post-Communion Prayer

Holy Father, who gathered us here around the table of your Son to share this meal with the whole household of God: in that new world where you reveal the fullness of your peace, gather people of every race and language to share in the eternal banquet of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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Worship Music

'All people that on earth do dwell', with the London Brass and Westminster Abbey Choir. Words are on screen.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42_kOGDTpKg

Closing prayer and benediction

Go on your way rejoicing;
Surrounded as you are by such a great cloud of witnesses,
take courage as you face each new challenge,
and comfort when you pick yourself from a fall,
In whatever good you choose to do,
precede it with hope,
accompany it with prayer,
and follow it with thanksgiving.

The blessing of God Most Wonderful,
whom the saints have trusted as
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
will be with you
now and ever more.

Amen!

(Bruce Prewer)



*Khrystyna Kvyk (Ukrainian, 1994–),
I Am the Light of the World, 2021*