

Parish of Central Exeter

Morning Worship and Spiritual Communion

17th Sunday after Trinity, 9
October 2022.

Taking Action

Welcome



October is a month with a particular focus on tackling poverty. Monday 17 October is the United Nations' International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, and 3-9 October is Challenge Poverty Week. In our Harvest Service last Sunday we thought especially about Exeter Food Action and the increasing number of people who find themselves dependent on Food Banks.

Although this theme will be reflected in the service, which includes some of the liturgy used last Sunday, the two readings are those appointed for this Sunday, and the reflections on each reading which Sheila has chosen, are those of overseas Christians.

October 4 was the Feast Day for St Francis of Assisi. It seems appropriate to begin our service with the hymn that is attributed to him.

‘All Creatures of our God and King’ Words are on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJRqM45Y8Gk>

Call to worship

Living God,
we come to you now,
in wonder.
We have heard of your works -
as Creator, Upholder, In-dweller,
Lover of all –
and we have known you
in our own times,
in our own lives,
in the lives of our neighbours.
Before the mystery

of your presence all around
and within,
it is right for us to be silent,
and to offer thanks and praise.

A Prayer for Forgiveness

With the weepers we weep.
With the warriors we yearn for peace.
With the exiles we wander far from home,
for our hearts wander far from you.
We live in an uncertain world—
time and again we turn to people
who promise us security.

But God, you are our only source of safety.
Help us turn to you,
our heart's true home.
Call us again and lead us home.
Author of peace,
teach us to seek our peace in you.
Source of every blessing,
forgive us for the multitude of our transgressions.
Rekindle a spirit of love and self-discipline within us,
through Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace.

Words of Assurance

(inspired by 2 Timothy 1: 1-14)

Our Saviour Jesus Christ abolished sin and death
and brought life and immortality to light.
By the grace of the Eternal One,
we are forgiven in the power of the Holy Spirit
living within us.
(posted on the Ministry Matters website.)

Collect for Today

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself,
and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
through 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. Amen

Worship song

‘Beauty for Brokenness,’ a hymn for justice and peace. Written by Graham Kendrick for the Tear Fund. Sung here at Leicester Cathedral. Words on the screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D81ZD1NDPyE>

Reading

Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7

Jeremiah's Letter to the Exiles in Babylon

29 These are the words of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the remaining elders among the exiles, and to the priests, the prophets, and all the people, whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ⁴ Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.



Reflection Climate Exiles

In this powerful letter to the exiles, God calls them to settle, to marry, to make homes and contribute to the well-being of the countries in which they are settling. One of the greatest impacts of climate change is migration. Climate change contributes to migration in many ways – from slow climatic changes, to massive disasters. In the case of a hurricane or massive flooding, people lose homes, infrastructures, savings and hope. Often the young people leave for the city, hunting for jobs. Climate change also contributes to slow changes, harvests fail on a more frequent occasion, fertile areas can no longer sustain small holder farms, and families are pushed off the land. It also contributes to violence, as once peaceful neighbours compete for scarce resources. Inhabitants of small island states are forced to leave their ancestral lands.

This message “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. ⁶ Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. ⁷ Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper” is sent to the exiles.

But perhaps in today’s world, where there is so much xenophobia, so many political parties that are trying to gain power by attacking refugees, so much blame pushed on immigrants for crime and use of the nation’s social support system – this message is one for the receiving nations – let us allow refugees to build houses and settle down, to plant gardens and pray for the peace of the prosperity of the place to which they have come. Some of the greatest nations

were built by refugees. Will we allow them to prosper, to help to build our cities and nations, to intermarry with our sons and daughters for as the prosper, so we will prosper too

Rev Rachel Mash, Anglican Church of Southern Africa

Gospel Reading Luke 17:11-19

11 On the way to Jerusalem Jesus was going through the region between Samaria and Galilee. ¹² As he entered a village, ten lepers approached him. Keeping their distance, ¹³ they called out, saying, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' ¹⁴ When he saw them, he said to them, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went, they were made clean. ¹⁵ Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. ¹⁶ He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷ Then Jesus asked, 'Were not ten made clean? But the other nine, where are they?' ¹⁸ Was none of them found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?' ¹⁹ Then he said to him, 'Get up and go on your way; your faith has made you well.'



Cleansing of the ten lepers. Codex Aureus 11th century,

Reflection

An Attitude of Gratitude

Out of ten lepers who are made clean, only one shows gratitude, and he is a Samaritan, an “unbeliever”. This is one of the gospel stories that breaks through the boundaries of Jesus’ mission to the People of Israel. The one sent to the lost sheep of the House of Israel crosses this boundary again and again. And the leper who is healed shows his gratitude.

Gratitude is relevant to the issue of worldwide justice, peace and the integrity of creation, because it is gratitude that prompts us as Christians to work in and for the world. It is our gratitude for the loving acceptance of God, who loves us despite of all the things that separate us from Him. And it is our gratitude for nurturing us day by day. Here in Western Europe, most of us have far more than our daily bread, we are not subject to state despotism, nor are our lives in danger as is the case for so many people in other parts of the world, and was once the case for our forebears here, too. Gratitude for God’s loving affection and for the bountiful care which we are privileged to receive can be a powerful motivation to take action for others and for creation.

To this end we need to call our privileged circumstances to mind time and again. We are in a similar situation to the leper who was made clean – freed from the huge burdens of life. Gratitude is not something that can be forced. And, as the story stresses, it is perhaps always the mindset of a minority. But in my opinion it is one of the gifts of God’s spirit that Christians can ask to receive.

Dr Michael Gaertner, Diocese of Speyer (Germany); translated by Anja Huebel

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in God, who creates all things,
who embraces all things, who celebrates all things,
who is present in every part of the fabric of creation.
We believe in God as the source of all life,
who baptises this planet with living water.
We believe in Jesus Christ, the suffering one, the poor one,
the malnourished one, the climate refugee,

who loves and cares for this world and who suffers with it.
And we believe in Jesus Christ, the seed of life,
who came to reconcile and renew this world and everything in it.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the breath of God,
who moves with God and who moves among and with us today.
We believe in everlasting life in God.
And we believe in the hope that one day
God will put an end to death and all destructive forces.
(Gurukul Theological college, India / adapted by Keld B. Hansen 2009)

Intercessions

Father God,
We have so much to thank You for –
food to eat, clothes to wear, friends and families and so much more.
But we are aware that there are many in the world –
in this country and in countries far away, who do not enjoy these blessings.
So we remember before you –
those who challenge poverty by their words and their actions.

Those who give of their time, money and skills
to bring relief to people whose lives are blighted by poverty,
and people who have to make difficult choices
about how to use the scarce resources that they have.

We pray that more people will be prepared to speak out
and to hold politicians and large companies to account
and put their faith into actions by showing Your love.

Help us as we give thanks for the blessings we enjoy
and to do what we are able to show Your love to those in need.
In Jesus' name, Amen

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 a recording from St David's Church, courtesy of Nigel.
This is a harvest anthem. 'Thou visitest the earth...'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EJOEhuu53rE>

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)*

The Lord's prayer:

Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,
Father and Mother of us all,
Loving God, in whom is heaven:
The hallowing of your name echoes through the universe!
The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!
Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

Your beloved community of peace and freedom
sustain our hope and come on earth.
With the bread we need for today, feed us.
In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.
In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.
From trials too great to endure, spare us.
From the grip of all that is evil, free us.
For you reign in the glory of the power that is love,
now and forever. Amen.

(Adapted from The New Zealand Book of Prayer | He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa. This version of the Lord's prayer was influenced by Maori theologians)

Post-Communion Prayer

Lord, we pray that your grace
may always precede and follow us,
and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Worship Music

'Now thank we all our God' Words are on screen.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iLjJBFIXR0>

Closing prayer and benediction

May we always walk gently upon the Earth,
in right relationship,
nurtured by your love,
open to the wind of the Spirit,
taking only what we need,
always open to the needs of others,
making choices that bring wellbeing,
living with generosity,
striving for justice,
honouring all with reverence,
reconciling and peacemaking,

mindful of those who will come after,
recognising our proper place as part of your creation.

Grant us the strength and courage, Lord,
for such a radical transformation into your Kingdom.
Amen.

(from Christian Aid and Christian Ecology Link.)

May God who established the dance of creation,
Who marvelled at the lilies of the field,
Who transforms chaos to order,
Lead us to transform our lives and the Church
To listen to the voice of all creatures,
That reflect God's glory in creation.

(adapted from the CTBI Eco-Congregation Programme)



*The Primal Wing, 1933, by
Agnes Pelton (American
1881-1961)*

*He will cover you with his
feathers,
and under his wings you
will find refuge;
Psalm 91:4*