

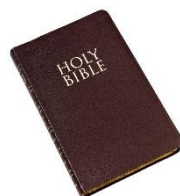


St Maxentius Church - Worship at Home



EASTER 5 – SUNDAY 2nd MAY 2021

Here below we have an outline of our service for you to follow at home if you can't be with us. Choose a quiet reflective space and to make it more meaningful have a cross, bible and candle to make your sacred space.



INTRODUCTION

Good morning everyone I hope you are all well, it has been a lovely spring so far and I hope you've been able to get out and enjoy nature as it wakes from its winter sleep. On the theme of getting out in the countryside, we have our team walk for Christian Aid on Saturday 10th July and we are walking from St. Peter's Belmont to Christchurch Walmsley, then St. Maxentius and finishing at St. Anne's Turton. The whole walk is about 10 miles but you can do just one stage or two if you prefer. There will also be refreshments at each church so we need volunteers to help there and of course, we need sponsorship for this great cause. It is a wonderful time for us to safely get together outside and hopefully the weather will be kind to us. If you want to walk you have to register with your church Christian aid representative ours is Dot Mitchell or Chris Sutcliffe, I'm looking forward to it already.

Our APCM is by zoom on the 18th May; if you require further details or wish to join the PCC please contact Carol Carr.

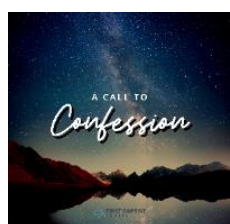
Today's reflection is by Chris Jamieson and the intercessions are by Chris Sutcliffe. Many thanks to them

Jan B.

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

God is spirit; let **us worship him in spirit and truth**
The Lord is with us. **Let us praise his name together.**

CONFESSION



Let us say sorry to God for all the things we have done wrong or the things we have not done. You can use the prayer below or use your own prayer.

Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not

loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbour as ourselves. In your mercy forgive what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

GLORIA



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 sins of the world: have mercy upon 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

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.

THE NEW TESTAMENT READING - ACTS 8, 26-40

Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." (This is a wilderness road.) 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 and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, "Go over to this chariot and join it." So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?" He replied, "How can I, unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him.

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. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth". The eunuch asked Philip, "About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?" Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus.

As 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?" He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the

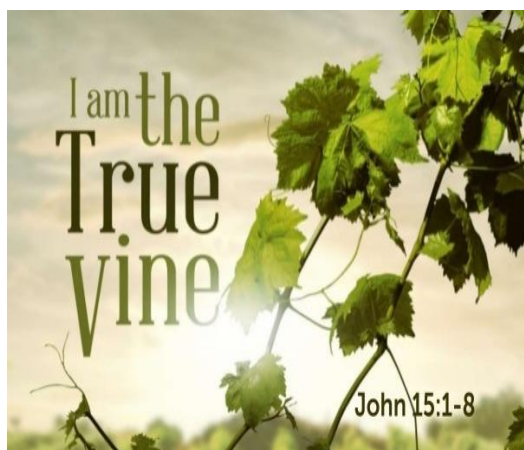
water, and Philip baptized him. When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

This is the word of the Lord – Thanks be to God

THE GOSPEL

Alleluia, Alleluia I am the first and the last says the Lord and the living one; I was dead and behold I am alive for evermore. Alleluia, Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our lord Jesus Christ, according to John - Glory to you O, Lord.



"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide 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. I 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. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

This is the Gospel of the Lord – Praise to you O Christ

REFLECTION

Father God, who by your grace has put onto our minds good desires, help us to bring them to good effect through Jesus our risen Lord.

The wonderful passage from John's gospel about Jesus as the vine and we as the branches gives us an opportunity to think about the love that God has for us in that we are invited to dwell in him and him in us. During my training for ministry, the best and most memorable occasion was when we spent an entire morning looking at this passage and considering just what it means to be rooted and grounded in Christ. Jesus tells us that we are to abide in him, to be an integral part of God himself. The reading from the first letter of John also reminds us of the riches of God's love. The reading says, 'God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is life, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for sins.' God loves us so much, he wants us to be so close to

him that he lives in us and we are perfected by his love. This indwelling of us in God and God in us is essential for our growth in Christ and for the growth of the church in the world.

God's love and care for us is such that he treats us as branches of his vine. We are part of the stock of God.

When a vine grower plants a vineyard, what does he expect to get from his vines? Grapes of course! But what he wants is not just any old grapes what he really wants is the best quality grapes that the vines can produce. In order to achieve this he cares for his vines through pruning and careful cultivation. He gets rid of unfruitful or diseased branches and prunes the others to produce the highest possible yield. And this is what God does to us; he tends and cares for us in such a way that we too can produce fruit for him.

Our passage then has two themes: firstly, God loves us unconditionally and secondly he wants us to produce fruit for him.

Through our abiding in Christ, we can learn to live for him. We are called to be his ambassadors here on earth. The story of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch puts this into perspective. Philip was in the right place at the right time and this is what we must seek to do. We need to be ready to respond to the call of God on our time and on our resources. We don't know what God will require of us, just as Philip didn't know he would be meeting with the Ethiopian, but he was ready, willing and able to fulfil the task set before him. Are we so ready, willing and able? The wonderful truth is that God makes us ready for the tasks he has planned for us. If our gifts are in worship through music, then we are provided with the necessary skills to meet this challenge. If we are called to service through prayer or service to others, again God gives us the ability to meet these needs. And God prepares us through training us and pruning us so that we are fit to undertake the jobs that he has set for us.

There are all kinds of ways in which we can be better prepared to work for God. The diocese provides training courses of all kinds, we can join together in prayer and Bible study and we can co-operate with each other in working for the benefit of other people.

It will soon be Christian Aid Week and there are plans for a Team walk through all four parishes to raise money for Christian Aid. This is an excellent opportunity to join together to bear fruit for Christ. So let's do all we can to make this event a success in our parishes and in the Team. Let's all get involved to bear fruit for Christ by helping others who are in desperate need of our support and assistance. This is one way we can act as branches of God's vine.

So as we give thanks for being rooted and grounded in God let us pray, ' Give us Lord, a vision of your Kingdom as your love desires it, a world where the weak are protected and none go hungry, a world where life is shared, and enjoyed by all, a world where all races, nations and cultures live in tolerance and respect, a world

where peace is built and justice is guided by love, and give us the inspiration and courage to build it.' Amen.

Rev Chris Jamieson

THE CREED



I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again; ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

INTERCESSIONS

During the intercessions, we pray for the church, our country, our government, people in difficulty and those who have died. You can use your own prayers or if you *prefer here are some on today's theme.*



Jesus is the Vine and we are the branches.
Loving God help, us to stay connected to you each day

Lord, thank you that you are here with us. Make us aware of your presence as we worship you. Speak to us that we might know you better. Fill us again with your Holy Spirit that we would live for your glory
Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God we pray for all in power throughout the world that they may make decisions that will benefit and support all. Thinking today especially of the Leaders in India as they struggle to control the pandemic through lack of equipment and medication. We pray other countries share their resources at this time.
Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Holy God we pray for your blessing to be upon all the Turton Moorland Team, the Clergy, ALMs, readers and all who are supporting the wider community at this time. Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Father God, please forgive us when we have chosen: to hate instead of loving others, to grumble instead of giving thanks, to be irritable instead of showing patience, to be unkind instead of showing kindness, to be drawn to bad things instead of doing good, to be unfaithful instead of being faithful. Jesus said Love one another as I have loved you, help us to follow this commandment and to bear the good fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God, we ask for your healing touch on all who are ill or suffering and we especially pray for Helena Hargreaves as well as anyone we know and those who are struggling with mental health problems. Let us reach out to support them by asking how they feel and if they need help.

We also keep in our prayers today those who are living with a terminal illness, may they feel comfort and not pain.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, give courage and faith to those who are bereaved, that by casting their cares on you they may find the strength to face the days ahead. Commending all who have died to the everlasting arms of the God of love, in whom there is life in all its fullness. From our book of Remembrance, we pray for Julia Priestley, Mary E Gradwell, Reginald Entwistle and George Standish.

Jesus, you are The Vine and we are the branches. Help us to stay connected to you each day.

Merciful Father, **Accept these prayers for the sake of your son, Our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

THE LORD'S PRAYER



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 forever. Amen.

THE BLESSING

May God give to us and those that we love his comfort and peace, his light and his joy in this world and the next and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with us now and forever. **Amen.**

