

The Bride Valley Service for Sunday 1st August 2021
9th after Trinity

This service can be accessed via the telephone on 01308 293062

*At the beginning of our services in church today we will light a candle,
you may wish to light a candle at home too.*

Welcome and Opening Scriptures

How wonderful it is, how pleasant for God's people to live together in harmony! It is like the precious anointing oil running down from Aaron's head and beard, down to the collar of his robes. It is like the dew on Mount Hermon, falling on the hills of Zion. That is where the Lord has promised his blessing — life that never ends. (*Psalms 133*)

Hymn: All my hope on God is founded

1 All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2 Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

3 God's great goodness ay endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light, and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of nought.
Evermore, from his store
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4 Daily doth the almighty giver
bounteous gifts on us bestow;
his desire our soul delighteth,
pleasure leads us where we go.
Love doth stand at his hand;
joy doth wait on his command.

5 Still from man to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

Meine Hoffnung stehet feste Joachim Neander (1650-1680)
Paraphrased Robert Bridges (1844-1930) CCLI Licence 2370586

Confession

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.

We are not worthy to be called your children.

We turn to you again.

Have mercy on us, bring us back to yourself

As those who once were dead

But now have life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Absolution

Have mercy on us, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our iniquities and cleanse us from all sin. **Amen.** (based on Psalm 51)

Collect

Let us pray: **Almighty God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the light and life of your Church; open our hearts to the riches of our grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; 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 forever. Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Exodus 16.2-4, 9-15;

The whole congregation of the Israelites complained against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. The Israelites said to them, 'If only we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots and ate our fill of bread; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.' Then the Lord said to Moses, 'I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day. In that way I will test them, whether they will follow my instruction or not. Then Moses said to Aaron, 'Say to the whole congregation of the Israelites, "Draw near to the Lord, for he has heard your complaining." 'And as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the Israelites, they looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud. The Lord spoke to Moses and said, 'I have heard the complaining of the Israelites; say to them, "At twilight you shall eat meat, and in the morning you shall have your fill

of bread; then you shall know that I am the Lord your God.”’ In the evening quails came up and covered the camp; and in the morning there was a layer of dew around the camp. When the layer of dew lifted, there on the surface of the wilderness was a fine flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, ‘What is it?’ For they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, ‘It is the bread that the Lord has given you to eat.

New Testament Reading: Ephesians 4.1-16

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

But each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it is said, ‘When he ascended on high he made captivity itself a captive; he gave gifts to his people.’

(When it says, ‘He ascended’, what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the same one who ascended far above all the heavens, so that he might fill all things.) The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ. We must no longer be children, tossed to and fro and blown about by every wind of doctrine, by people’s trickery, by their craftiness in deceitful scheming. But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.

Gospel Reading: John 6.24-35

So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” Jesus answered them, “Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal.”

Then they said to him, “What must we do to perform the works of God?” Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” So they said to him, “What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” Then Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

Reflection

“I AM the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

The first of Jesus’ I AM statements from John’s gospel! There is a world of difference between knowing about Jesus and **knowing** him.

The gospels reveal his nature and character to us through the working out of purposeful miracles and then in John we have the seven descriptive statements which have real implications for humanity:

- 1. I Am the Bread of Life:** Jesus alone can sustain us, who are but starving beggars looking for food (John 6).
- 2. I Am the Light of the World:** Jesus is the original and eternal source of light in the universe for us who are spiritually blind by birth (John 8).
- 3. I Am the Gate of the Sheepfold:** Jesus is the only door to life for us who are lost outside God’s will (John 10).
- 4. I Am the Good Shepherd:** Jesus knows and cares for us who are orphaned, wandering sheep without a shepherd (John 10).
- 5. I Am the Resurrection and the Life:** Jesus is the key to escaping spiritual death for us who are hopelessly doomed to death because of our sin (John 11).
- 6. I Am the Way, Truth, and Life:** Jesus is the accessible path, the illuminating truth, and the giver of life for us who are lost, ignorant, and dead without Him (John 14).
- 7. I Am the True Vine:** Jesus is the source of eternal life for us who are dead and useless branches apart from him (John 15).

After considering these incredible truths about who God is, we are left with the difficult question that Jesus asked His disciples in Mark 8:29, “Who do you say that I am?” Do you know God?

Not do you know *about* Him, but do you really know Him on a personal level. If not — He can be known, wants to be known, and made a way for you to get to know Him through his Son Jesus Christ!

What Does This Mean?

Our world is full of so many people who know just enough about God to know what to say and sing, who do just enough good to feel better about themselves, who have memorized enough out-of-context verses to convince themselves they are fine, and who would quickly tick the box of “Christian,” but their eyes do not really see Jesus, their ears do not really hear His voice, and their life is not really in relationship with Him.

They say they love Jesus, but not enough to do what He says. There is an eternity of difference between knowing about Jesus and **knowing** Him.

May we hear and receive the words that Jesus said about Himself much more than what we think, how we feel, what we have heard, and even what we have experienced about Jesus in the past. May our prayer be similar to Paul's prayer in Philippians 3:10 to "know (Christ) and the power of his resurrection ..."

Let us affirm our faith in God in the words of the Apostle's Creed:

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth.**

**And is seated at the right hand of God the Father.
He will come again to judge both the living and the dead.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit
And born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again,
He ascended into heaven,**

**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.**

Prayers of Intercession (adapted from prayers by John Pritchard)

Lord of the Church, thank you for our church – the place, the people, the history and what it's meant to generations of people living near. Thank you for the people that have flowed in and out through the doors, faithful or searching, joyful or sad, hopeful or anxious. Thank you for the role the church has played in the lives of so many and the way the love of God has been made known in worship and service of others.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we pray for the churches near us, all with their own treasured story; St Michael and All Angels in Littlebredy, St Peter's in Long Bredy, St Mary's in Litton Cheney, Chilcombe Church, St Mary's in Puncknowle, Holy Trinity in Swyre, St Mary's in Burton Bradstock and St Martin's in Shipton Gorge. We pray for their well-being and for creative relationships across this network of local churches, each centred on Christ and longing to make him known. In particular we pray for the Bride Valley to be a safe place for all, including the many visitors who understandably want to share this beautiful place for a holiday.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, we give thanks that across the country churches stand as great beacons, reminding people of your presence in their midst. There are church towers punching the sky and church spires piercing the horizon. Churches give soul to every community, and without them there's a vacuum in the centre of community life. Enable us to keep our churches open and available, flexible and forward-looking; sacraments of your love as outward and visible signs of your inward, invisible grace.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, here in Britain with the Queen as our governor and across Europe there are enormous numbers of churches speaking of the Christian heritage that gave birth to the institutions of government, the legal system, hospitals, schools, the arts, philanthropy and so much more. Help our continent not to renege on its past, but to value its heritage as a springboard to an ever more just, peaceful and compassionate future. Especially we pray for the recovery from the full effects of Covid19, on individuals and on workplaces and economies, not forgetting all those who have lost their lives to this deadly disease.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, across the world the centre of gravity for Christianity has moved south. Thank you for the huge growth in the worldwide Church. Thank you for the variety of expression in worship and church life, in mission, ministry and social engagement. We pray especially for the links we have in South Sudan, Wonduruba. Bless our brothers and sisters and continue to strengthen our fellowship with them.

Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Lord of the Church, from *this church* to Salisbury Cathedral and beyond, we all belong to you; we have all heard your call, left our nets and followed you. We are not yet what we should be, but we are not stuck. Shape us into the Church you want us to become, to the glory of the Father, in the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ.

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

Let us now pray the Lord's Prayer together

**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.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
and the glory, forever and ever.
Amen.**

Hymn: All I once held dear (Know You)

1 All I once held dear,
Built my life upon,
All this world reveres,
And wars to own,
All I once thought gain
I have counted loss;
Spent and worthless now,
Compared to this.

*Knowing You, Jesus,
knowing You,
there is no greater thing.
You're my all, You're the best,
You're my joy, my righteousness,
and I love You, Lord.*

2 Now my heart's desire
Is to know You more,
To be found in You
And known as Yours.
To possess by faith
What I could not earn,
All-surpassing gift
Of righteousness.

Chorus

3 Oh, to know the power
Of Your risen life,
And to know You in
Your sufferings.
To become like You
In Your death, my Lord,
So with You to live
And never die.

Chorus

Graham Kendrick (born 1950)© 1993 Make Way Music, CCLI Licence 2370586

A special prayer for those of us who are unable to receive the sacrament at church today:

**Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.
Be with me today, as I offer myself to you. Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care.
help me to trust you now more than ever,
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.**

The service ends with the Peace

**Peace to you from God our Father who hears our cry.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ whose death brings healing.
Peace from the Holy Spirit who gives us life and strength.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you. Amen

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