



Heacham Parish Church



Sunday Service 2nd May 2021 - 5th Sunday of Easter

Opening music - Hilary and Lesley play 'Broken for you' as we gather

As we gather in our homes, together yet apart, we meet in the presence of God, so let us come together to be God's people.

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

All and also with you.

Alleluia, Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed, Alleluia.

Jesus Christ is risen from the dead.

Alleluia.

He has defeated the powers of death.

Alleluia.

Jesus turns our sorrow into dancing.

Alleluia.

He has the words of eternal life.

Alleluia.

Song: You are the vine

sung and played by Colin, Rosie, Karen, Terry, and Lynda

You are the vine,
we are the branches,
keep us abiding in You.

You are the vine,
we are the branches,
keep us abiding in You.

Then we'll grow in Your love,
then we'll go in Your name,
that the world will surely know
that You have power to heal and to save.

You are the vine

Then we'll grow in Your love

You are the vine,
we are the branches,
keep us abiding in You.

Those of us gathering in church are celebrating Holy Communion today,
so we use some of the liturgy from the Communion service to unite us in
church, online, and those reading this.

Prayer of preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your
Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:
The first commandment is this:
'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.
You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ
to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven,
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep
God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

Confession

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness, through our own
deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,
have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Bible Reading: Acts 15: 1-8 read by Pam Lee

A Reflection by John Whitbread

Cast your mind back to when you were a small child holding on to one of
your parent's hands in a crowded place and then all of a sudden you
were not holding their hands, you were alone surrounded by people who
you did not know. You were lost, scared, and left on your own, where
was the parent who was looking after me? What a relief when your
parent suddenly finds you with hugs and reassures you that all is well,
and maybe even provides a little treat.

This happen when we don't have God in our lives. We go on with our lives believing that the thing that we hold on to will keep us safe - a good job, healthy living, friends, and perhaps your family. But where is God in this wonderful life?

You see that we do need to be connected to something or somebody. Unfortunately, most of what we are connected too is only good when the times are really good with no hiccups or trouble.

God knows us when times are good but also when times get really tough. We need to be connected to God. What does it mean to be connected?

Well, it means three things. It means we have power. When we are connected to each other through our faith in Jesus Christ, it means that we are strong and can get things done. Our faith gets nourishment and strength from both Christ and our fellow believers. As our faith strengthens, it bears fruit in the form of bringing benefit to ourselves and to the lives of others while doing God's work in the world.

The second thing that being connected means is that we have a presence. We are not alone. Someone shares our lives. Someone is there for us, just like all of you are here for each other. If we abide with Christ, it means that we have a close, daily relationship with him. I speak as one who has suffered from ill health over the past few months, I am thankful for the members of the church and family who pray for me, and for Gloria, who helped with things around the house. Thus, we become a branch of the vine called Christianity, a branch that bears fruit. As such, our wants will be his wants, we will do as he suggests according to his words, and he will be pleased with our prayers.

Finally, being connected means that we will live a productive life. A vine and its fruit point to the giftedness of discipleship while also indicating the substance that will sustain new branches and abundant fruit. The relationship between the vine and the branches, as well as the connection between source and fruit, lies in the love between God and Jesus, and between Jesus and us. It does not matter where we are on that branch if we are a strong supporting vine or a small twig – God's love is the same for all of us. In other words, we are to love one another as Christ has loved us.

We can only be grafted to Christ by cutting our attachment to our way of life and its creature comforts just like a gardener prunes bushes to make them grow better. The useless branches have to be removed in order to save and strengthen the stronger ones, only then can we truly be fruitful and multiply.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen. We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end, We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen

Prayers of Intercession, led by Richard Gowland

Heavenly Father, we are here to worship you. May we continue to show full reverence for your presence in church or home. Our sacrifices in lockdown are as nothing compared to the suffering of Jesus in his mission to save us.

Lord in Your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for the Church and for the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Renew the life and faith of the Church at this difficult time. May we take time to reflect on how we rebuild an even stronger church family. Strengthen our witness; and make us one in Christ. We pray for our leaders, Archbishops Justin and John and Bishop Graham. May they continue to guide us in ways of truth and faith, for our own Veronica, and the group of readers at St Mary's. May we faithfully follow their leadership and teaching. Enable us to do what you need in growing the faith community.

Lord in Your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for good government. Our leaders have faced the pandemic crisis with dedication and have even admitted the errors made in the past months. Despite the many voices complaining at the delay in relaxing regulations to allow a return to normal, we need to proceed with caution. The risks of a further crisis are not to be ignored. Help all of us over the next few months. All need to turn to you and to embrace Jesus' message to love one another and work for the common good. Our society will need to examine its priorities and become less selfish when we return to normal. Guide us as we re-build a more just vision. Justice and safety lie only with you.

Lord in Your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

Continue to guide this church family at Heacham. Help us to decide our personal priorities and where the well-being of this community and the church should be.

May we show compassion towards those in need, wherever they come from. Let us not fall into the habit of assuming that someone else will deal with it.

Lord in Your mercy.... **Hear our prayer.**

We thank you for the service of our Queen and her family. May they continue to serve the nation and You faithfully. Our Queen is rightly admired for her wisdom and her sense of duty. Thank you for guiding her in all she does and is. The media do not always portray the truth in their desire to promote their own agenda. May this not affect the queen's happiness.

Lord, in your mercy.... **Hear our Prayer.**

We raise before you now in a few moments of silence those known to us who specially need prayer. In illness, bereavement, worry, and people who are hurting. Our prayer chain is an active example and duty for us to observe. May this be used more. May we learn to pray more and to talk to you through this prayer. We specially remember at such a time our friend Steve Oliver who is in hospital.

(Short Silence)

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

Remember, the souls of your servants no longer here on earth with us and for those who are saddened by their passing. Be with the bereaved in their loneliness and give them the faith to look beyond their present troubles to your Son Jesus Christ who died and rose again and who lives for evermore. We shall all be reunited in heaven.

(Short Silence)

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

We pray together the Lord's Prayer

Song: **A new commandment I give unto you**

sung and played by Sue, Judith, Hilary, Lesley, Richards C and G

A new commandment I give unto you,
That you love one another As I have loved you,
That you love one another As I have loved you.

By this shall all know That you are My disciples,
If you have love one for another.
By this shall all know That you are My disciples,
If you have love one for another.

A new commandment

I am the true Vine, my Father is the gardner,
Abide in me and I in you.
I am the true Vine, my Father is the gardner,
Abide in me and I in you.

A new commandment

Now, Love is patient, nor arrogant, nor boastful.
Love bears all things, love is eternal.
Now, Love is patient, nor arrogant, nor boastful.
Love bears all things, love is eternal.

Closing prayers

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep
your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you and those you love now and always.
All Amen.

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

Closing music - Lesley and Hilary play a medley of songs

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