

Eternal God, giver of love and power, your Son Jesus Christ has sent us into all the world to preach the gospel of his kingdom: confirm us in this mission, and help us to live the good news we proclaim; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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 always. **Amen.**

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

NOTICES

1 St Margaret's is now open daily 10.00 - 11.00 for private prayer. Thank you to the volunteers who have been manning the church at these times.

2 We are now able to hold funeral services in church, with 'small' numbers, and weddings with a maximum of 30 guests.

3 **From next Sunday, 5th July, we shall hold 10.00 services**, and we are really looking forward to welcoming you back to church. We shall be observing government guidelines and directions from the bishop regarding hygiene and safe distancing. So:

- a There is hand sanitiser to use
- b We shall use single-use service sheets
- c We will not sing - but will listen to the hymn tune and have the words in the booklet.
- d Communion will be in one kind only
- e The collection plate will be by the font so donations to be made on entry - no bag collections.
- f One-way system for going to communion - anticlockwise
- g Socialising after the service to be done outside. If you want to bring your own flask that's fine. On a dry day we may be able to put some chairs out.
- h The WC will be available, taking extra care of hygiene
- i 8.00 services will follow in a few weeks, but not yet.

Additionally

Standing Committee by zoom on 8 July, 2.30

PCC meeting by zoom on 30 July, at 7.30

St Margaret's Old Catton



28 June 2020

3rd Sunday after Trinity
proper 8

*this service can be found online at <https://youtu.be/IJB7XAEklkU>
You can also find it on 'A Church Near You' - look for St Margaret's Old Catton*

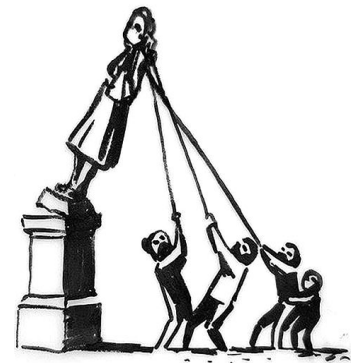
Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you
and also with you.

**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.**

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.

**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.**

2

Collect

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin, and
have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father:
give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service,
that we and all creation may be brought
to the glorious liberty of the children of God;
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.

New Testament Reading

Romans 6.12-23

Do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies, to make you obey
their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of
wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been
brought from death to life, and present your members to God as
instruments of righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you,
since you are not under law but under grace.

What then? Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace?
By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone
as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin,
which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But
thanks be to God that you, having *once* been slaves of sin, have become
obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were
entrusted, and that you, having been *set free from sin*, have become
slaves of righteousness. (I am speaking in human terms because of your
natural limitations.) For just as you once presented your members as
slaves to impurity and to greater and greater iniquity, so now present your
members as slaves to righteousness for sanctification.

When you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. So
what advantage did you then get from the things of which you now are
ashamed? The end of those things is death. But now that you have been
freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is
sanctification. The end is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but
the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Gospel Reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

St Matthew 10.40-42

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me
welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name
of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a
righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward

You send your Spirit to bring new life to the world,
and clothe us with power from on high.

7

And so we join the angels to celebrate and sing:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Father, on the night before he died,
Jesus shared a meal with his friends.
He took the bread, and thanked you.
He broke it, and gave it to them, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this to remember me.

After the meal, Jesus took the cup of wine.
He thanked you, and gave it to them, saying:
Drink this, all of you. This is my blood,
the new promise of God's unfailing love.
Do this to remember me.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.**

Father, as we bring this bread and wine,
and remember his death and resurrection,
send your Holy Spirit, that we who share these gifts
may be fed by Christ's body and his blood.

Pour your Spirit on us that we may love one another,
work for the healing of the earth,
and share the good news of Jesus,
as we wait for his coming in glory.
For honour and praise belong to you, Father,
with Jesus your Son, and the Holy Spirit:
one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Trusting in the compassion of God, let us pray with confidence
as our Saviour has taught us ...

**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.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Your Spirit enables us to cry, 'Abba! Father!', affirms that we are fellow-heirs with Christ and pleads for us in our weakness; we pray for all who are in need or distress.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

In the baptism and birth of Jesus, you have opened heaven to us and enabled us to share in your glory: the joy of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit from before the world was made.

May your whole Church, living and departed, come to a joyful resurrection in your city of light.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

Let us commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

God our saviour, look on this wounded world in pity and in power; hold us fast to your promises of peace won for us by your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

Merciful Father,

accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

The Lord is here

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is always right to give you thanks, God our Creator, loving and faithful, holy and strong.

You made us and the whole universe, and filled your world with life.

You sent your Son to live among us, Jesus our Saviour, Mary's child.

He suffered on the cross;

he died to save us from our sins;

he rose in glory from the dead.

of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.'

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

We've heard a lot about slavery these last few weeks. It doesn't take much to imagine how you would feel, walking past the statue of Edward Colston in Bristol, if you were descended from slaves. People can readily talk about not obliterating bits of history, but engaging rationally with it - and I take that point entirely, it's quite logical. We can't rewrite history. Yet, if I had a black skin and had ancestors who were slaves, I know it would be my emotions that were engaged over the matter, not my logic. In my gut, a watery grave was a very appropriate place for him! Our government seems currently to talk of buccaneers, as if they were a model of enterprise and an adventurous economy. But I am wary of the word buccaneer - to me it is rather too-close-for-comfort to the word 'pirate'. Many churches are now wondering about the monuments within them, and whether perhaps the people they commemorate are all as worthy as their families would have liked us to think they were.

The church, including those whose monuments line our walls, is a company not of those who are pure and perfect. It is by definition, a company of sinners, in need of the grace of God. Their families probably wanted us to admire them; we probably should pray for them, and for ourselves!

Slavery was a readily available metaphor for St Paul to use, because slavery was widespread in the ancient world - everyone knew about slaves. Defeated tribes and nations were reduced to slavery, their lands given over to faithful servants of the empire or the emperor. Like the British Empire, the Roman Empire benefited greatly from slave labour. You can get rich as a society and personally, when you have people working for you whom you don't have to pay, but there's a difference between being a volunteer and being a slave. Nobody volunteered to go and pick cotton in the Southern States, or sugar in the West Indies, of course.

One of the things about slavery was that it was enforced. There was a brutality about it - you couldn't just walk away. It was not a state you chose to remain in - and if the opportunity should ever come to be free, you would take it.

And St Paul reflects that, being a Christian, we have been freed from slavery to sin. Formerly, as slaves to sin, we were engaged in the works of the flesh, he told the Galatians, 'the works of the flesh are obvious: fornication, impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these.'

And we know that we are not slaves to such things now. We may be tempted by one or two of them, once in a while, but we're not enslaved by these things.

I heard how a parish priest asked a parishioner, 'How's your relationship with God?' The parishioner says, "There's not much to tell. I like sinning. God likes forgiving. We get along just fine."

That story is an adaptation of some lines from W. H. Auden's poem, *For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio*. In the poem King Herod's responds to the magi's news of the Saviour's birth and the grace and forgiveness it brings with these words:

Every crook will argue: 'I like committing crimes. God likes forgiving them. Really the world is admirably arranged.'

I sort of like the "admirably arranged" world Auden describes. It's comfortable. It's easy. It doesn't ask much of me. I can make my apology to you when I've done something wrong or hurtful, offer a quick "Please forgive me God," and go on about life. It's business as usual.

The problem with an "admirably arranged" world is that wounds aren't healed. Relationships are not put back together. Lives are not transformed. Nothing really changes. Too often we settle for an "admirably arranged" world instead of being, as we prayed for in today's collect, "brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Our relationship with God in Christ is more than an admirable arrangement. We have an identity with Christ. "Whoever welcomes you," Jesus tells his disciples, "welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me" (Matthew 10:41). By our baptism we have been immersed in Jesus' death and resurrection. We share his life. We speak with his mouth, see with his eyes, walk with his feet, touch with his hands. That means we now re-present Christ to the world. We live his life in this time and place.

Sometimes, however, we choose not to live that life. We turn away. We deny ourselves the life Jesus has given us. We *live less* than who we most truly are. St. Paul calls that sin. This isn't simply a question of good or bad, right or wrong, keeping or breaking rules. Ultimately, it's a choice between life and death.

Maybe that's why St. Paul is so adamant in his Letter to the Romans. Christ is our way and our life. We are a part of him and he is who we *are* and who we *are to become*. In some way St. Paul is telling us to become who we really are.

Do not sin.	Don't be an instrument of wickedness
Present yourselves to God.	Be an instrument of God's righteousness.

St. Paul is like the parent who says to his or her child, "I expect more of you. Don't do that. You can do better. You are more than that." As a child we hear those words as harsh, critical, judgmental. But loving parents, good parents, say those words seeing more in their child than they can see for themselves. They are words that call their child into the fullness of life, to be whole, complete, and fully alive. That's what St. Paul is doing.

I am uncomfortably grateful for his words. He challenges me to examine my life and see the ways in which I have denied myself the very life I say I want. He reminds me that I have a choice and so do you. We are responsible - we are no longer slaves to sin. We choose what our life will be like. We choose to whom we listen. We choose to whom we give ourselves and our obedience.

By grace we are released from slavery to sin. Grace is the power of God's love and the means of God's presence that enables us to make a different choice, a better choice, a choice to live and to love as Jesus. That is something an "admirably arranged" world can never give us.

The gospel has something unsettling about it - St Paul knew that and so did WH Auden. We are no longer slaves to sin. Slavery was wrong then and it's wrong now, and we dishonour the descendants of slavery if we just think of it as an 'admirable arrangement' of long ago.

And what is more, we need to grow in recognition that the lifestyle we enjoy, and the choices we make that impact climate change, continue to impact the poor of the world. The lockdown has eased for a while the stress we have placed on the natural resources of the world. We shall need to be immensely sensitive to the implications of the easing if we are not to fall back into slavery.

May the grace of God who calls us out from slavery, to freedom, lead us, guard us and grant us wisdom.

INTERCESSIONS

Let us pray.

High and holy God, robed in majesty,
Lord of heaven and earth,
we pray that you will bring justice, faith and salvation to all peoples.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.

You chose us in Christ to be your people
and to be the temple of your Holy Spirit;
we pray that you will fill your Church with vision and hope.

Lord, hear us.

Lord, graciously hear us.