

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK

# Welcome to Morning Praise

16<sup>th</sup> August 2020

*Click on the underlined links to take you to safe content on the internet.  
If you are able light a candle as you start the service and if others are in the house  
encourage them to reading some of the service with you.*

## *Introduction*

This is the day that the Lord has made.  
**Let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

We have come together in the name of Christ  
to offer our praise and thanksgiving,  
to hear and receive God's holy word,  
to pray for the needs of the world,  
and to seek the forgiveness of our sins,  
that by the power of the Holy Spirit  
we may give ourselves to the service of God.

## *Prayer of Penitence*

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' So, let us turn  
away from our sin and turn to Christ, confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

## *Together we pray:*

**Lord God, we have sinned against you.  
we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and repent.  
Have mercy on us according to your love.  
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.  
Renew a right spirit within us  
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Hymn: [It is well \(Kristene DiMarco - You Make Me Brave\)](#)

The Word of God - [Click Here](#)

OT Reading: Isaiah 56:6-8 read by Holly Mason  
NT Reading: Romans 11:1-2a, 29-31 read by Margaret Ellis  
Gospel: Matthew 15: 10-28 read by Susan Milnes

## *Reflection prepared by Rev Stephen Hannam*

There's a rather nice link between our coming back into church and our Gospel reading today. That link is a theme of unity. Of being together as family.

I guess we have all felt the pain of separation during the lock down and in a way we still feel the threat that at some time we may well have to go back into something similar. However, whatever may lay ahead, today we are united as family. If you watch families being reunited at airports it involves hugs and kisses - sadly that's not possible now but in our heads I'm sure that's what we are doing. So I send you all my hugs and kisses at being together again. P T L Praise the Lord!!!

### Story

There was once a shipwreck and four people managed to reach a desert island. When they were rescued, they proudly showed their rescuers around their little settlement. "Look" they said, "here are the houses we made for ourselves and here are the two churches we built." "Two churches?" the rescuers said. "Why two?" "Well this one is our church." They replied, "and that one over there is the one we don't go to." I wonder does that remind you of any situations??

So, this morning as we think about our own togetherness perhaps, we can see how easy a sense of belonging can become a matter of "us" and "them." Our first reading from Genesis is a very familiar story. It's a story of jealousy and betrayal among brothers, something to do with a favourite son and a multi-coloured coat.

Remember how: Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, so they sold him as a slave and told his father he was dead. But Joseph was taken to Egypt where he impressed Pharaoh with his ability to interpret dreams and predict a famine. So while all around are starving, Joseph is in charge of food storage and distribution in Egypt, and thanks to him the people of Egypt are doing fine. Joseph's starving brothers come to Egypt in search of food. They kneel before him, but they don't realise that he is the brother they sold as a slave. Joseph tests their love and decides to forgive them.

**Click here: [Joseph all the time \(From 'Technicolour Dreamcoat'\)](#)**

The second reading is about "us" and "them." Jesus was a Jew. The Jews called themselves "The house of Israel" Jesus' followers thought of him as "One of us." Jesus calls the house of Israel his lost sheep and himself as their shepherd. The other people, the Canaanites, were definitely not "one of us!" I guess in a way the Jews were in a way jealous and suspicious of their worldly, pleasure-seeking ways.

Then a woman from Canaan comes asking for help for her sick daughter. Her faith seems to open up the monopoly of the house of Israel and Jesus says: "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish."

Both stories have this theme of “them” and “us.” That is people being shut out and then welcomed in! Josephs brothers resented him so much that they got rid of him. When they begged from him in Egypt, he could have sent them away empty handed. But instead he welcomed the whole family back with open arms and invited them to share his good life.

The woman was initially shunned by Jesus he said she was nothing to do with him, but her humility and faith won through and she was welcomed into the those who received his help.

So what do these stories tell us today? I think they remind us that past ill-treatment and grudges can cause us to shut people out. Maybe you have felt that at some time. Just as a feeling of they are “not one of us” or not “Our sort” of people. Maybe at some time in our church we have felt excluded or maybe unwittingly we have been one of those on the inside, shutting people out. Or putting it another way not making people feel welcome.

Our church walls separate the inside from the outside, our church from Rastrick. During that last few months, we have been separated from the inside of our church, maybe like me you have been left feeling shut out. But today we are tentatively back home and that feels good. Maybe like Joseph and his family and the Canaanite woman you feel included part of the family again. United once more!

Music is a wonderful symbol of unity. Voices and instruments can join together to create a harmony. (excluding me!) The Psalm for today says: “How good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity.” Perhaps it’s not as it used to be here in church. Perhaps we are not able to express our unity as we would like. But at home and in church we are together as family. So “How good and pleasant it is to dwell together in unity.”

**Hymn:**        [Come be with me \(Keith Duke\)](#)

### **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.  
he 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.**

*Prayers of intercession prepared by Cherry Fancourt*

We are here Lord Jesus back in your church that we love after so many weeks of lockdown worshipping you at home. We welcome you into our midst giving you thanks that we are safe and well and can stand together in your love with joy in our hearts.

**Thank you, Lord, that you have blest us and kept us safe.**

We bring before you and pray for our world devastated by a virus that has swept through all the continents leaving behind grief, sadness, the loss of loved ones and not knowing what the future may hold for each one of us.

We pray for the people of Beirut whose lives have been shattered by the explosion in the port, so many Lord who have died, are injured and their homes destroyed through the greed and neglect of the authorities, be with each of them Jesus as they try to rebuild their lives.

**Come Holy Spirit and walk beside them, calm them and give them hope.**

We pray for our Queen and her family and thank you for keeping her safe. Guide the leaders of our nation as they make decisions that affect every-ones homes, jobs, the disabled, the abused and so many others whose lives have been turned upside down by this pandemic which is on the rise again.

**Come Lord Jesus and give us hope.**

Here at home we pray for our church and community for the PCC given the task of making the right decisions for the opening of church today and in the future whether we should allow people to use the hall (which helps with the finance of the church) so that we can keep them and ourselves safe from harm.

**Be with us Lord Jesus guide and leads us to make the right decisions.**

We give thanks for Stephen, Michael, Jill, Alan, and Glen and all those who have contributed each week a wonderful service, up-to-date news, homily's reflections, and stories to cheer us up, so many gifts Lord we have enjoyed through their efforts to keep us in touch.

**Thank you, Lord, for the gifts you have bestowed on them.**

We bring to you Jesus who has the power of healing , be with those who are ill, those named on our prayer wall, all known only to ourselves and those injured in the Aberdeen train crash that with your compassion and generosity you will bless them, give them help to cope with their illness, courage to face a future whatever it may be and the quiet peace of knowing you are by their side.

**Come Lord Jesus and be with them.**

We pray for all who mourn so many Lord, whose loved ones have passed on to be with you leaving behind a huge trail of sorrow and desolation remembering today those killed in the Aberdeen train crash and anyone close to ourselves, may they be comforted with the knowledge that they are now in a place of peace, love and joy.

As we move forward in faith knowing you are with us Lord may we hold your people in our hearts, stretch out our hands to help others, be compassionate and understanding of others needs.

**Bless us Lord, keep us safe, and give us your peace.**

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

### *A Prayer for Church Growth*

**God of Mission**

**Who along brings growth to your church,**

**Send your Holy Spirit to give**

**Vision to our planning**

**Wisdom to our actions**

**And power to our witness.**

**Help our church to grow in numbers,**

**In spiritual commitment to you,**

**And in service to our local community,**

**Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**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 for ever. Amen.**

*The Collect for today*

Lord of heaven and earth,  
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,  
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,  
but always to bring our prayers before you;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn: [Everything is possible \(Phillipa Hanna\)](#)

**Final Prayer**

God of our pilgrimage,  
you have willed that the gate of mercy  
should stand open for those who trust in you:  
look upon us with your favour  
that we who follow the path of your will  
may never wander from the way of life;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*Our service ends with the Grace,*  
**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
and the Love of God,  
and the Fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

Prelude & Fugue in A min (BWV559) Attr. J S Bach  
Played on the Conacher organ, St John the Divine, Rastrick by Gordon Balmforth  
For the congregation during lockdown

[Click Here](#)