

ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, RASTRICK WELCOME TO

Morning Praise

28th June 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.**

May the Father of all mercies
Cleanse us from our sins
And restore us in His image
To the praise and glory of His name
Through Jesus Christ our Lord
Amen

Hymn: [I, the Lord of sea and sky](#)

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I the Lord of snow and rain,
I have borne my people's pain.
I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak my word to them.
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord.
Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord,
if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

The Word of God

[Epistle is Romans 6: 12-end followed by the Gospel Matthew 10: 40-end](#)

read by Doreen & Derek Davis

Reflection Jill Swallow

'You're Welcome'

I do like to see a clever slogan or a handwritten sign outside a church. They can reveal such a lot. Our children always remember wandering up a long churchyard path in a Northumberland village, because over a wall I'd spotted a large handwritten sign on the church door. I couldn't quite make it out and I wanted to see what it said. I have to say, at my insistence we all trudged up to this main door, and there waiting for us was the sign. It smirked back at us in big capital letters. It said 'THIS DOOR IS KEPT LOCKED TO KEEP THE SWALLOWS OUT'. That was us told. Our five swallow family took a photo of it for posterity, and then, duly spurned, turned back down the path.

Now Jesus wasn't always welcome either. He'd had the 'cold shoulder' more than once. Otherwise, why would He tell His disciples when he sent them out that if a place didn't make them welcome, then they must shake off the dust from their feet and leave? And what about that time Jesus went to Simon the Pharisee's house? There, Jesus told Simon to his face that He had not been welcomed. In fact, He says to Simon "I entered your house, and you gave me nothing to eat or drink, and you gave me no greeting" Didn't mince His words.

Welcomes don't just happen (or not) at the back of churches, or on our own doorsteps. A good welcome is ongoing and is a sign that we are valued and not just taken for granted. Jesus tells us this morning that "Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me" And we know that He is not just talking about a quick smile (not easy these days behind a mask) or a handshake (remember those?)

Last week I witnessed a wonderful welcome in Brighthouse. It was a 'welcome back' actually of somebody who has been self-isolating. This lady is known and loved by many of us, but will remain nameless. She appeared on the doorstep of the greengrocers and entered in triumph with a big smile saying "I'm back. I've made it" In turn the greengrocer returned her smile and then said "Stand back everybody. This lady is going to do a lap of honour around our shop" She didn't, but we all gave her a round of applause anyway. A great welcome. Now few of us get a round of applause, or get to do a lap of honour, but it was one of those moments to treasure and enjoy, for her and for us. It was also a good foretaste of this morning's gospel "whoever welcomes you" says Jesus "welcomes me" Well, to take Him at His word, indeed He was welcomed in Brighthouse, last Monday morning, in and among the fruit and vegetables.

But a good welcome is not a once and for all event. I look on the word welcome as an 'in' word, because any welcome should include, inform, invite and involve. Lockdown has challenged us to find new ways of continuing our ongoing welcome in and around our churches and communities. Indeed there is much to watch and learn (and I have to say, plenty of time to watch and learn it) as we stand in queues. Shops have much to teach us. For a start there are different sorts of queues.

First of all there is the 'Wait there, one in and one out' queue. It's quite possible to find yourself at the wrong end of this sort of queue, in which case you might get a telling off and have to do the walk of shame all the way from the front to the back.

Then there are long queues outside the larger shops, but with no signage.....until you get right to the front. On the main door then, and only then, you squint at a titchy little sign telling you that only one person per household can go in the shop, so one of you has to quickly tell the other what you were going for (in the vain hope they may remember to look for it) and then disappear.

But there is also the well managed queue. Here, there is clear signage and sometimes a member of staff actually allocated to look after the queue, and engender interest among potential customers. This might involve passing on clear information before you go in. For instance by telling us that it's a one-way system round the shop, or asking us if there's anything particular we're looking for, and if so, where it is in the shop. They sometime tell us about special offers too.

In such little ways they make us feel that our custom is important. In fact they make us feel part of the shop even before we've got in the shop. A church in a community can also be like a well managed queue, in that people feel informed and included even if they are not in church week by week. A well managed queue will inform, include, invite and involve. In other words make us we feel welcome. And clever retailers and savvy shops will always see the potential in a queue. They know that waiting time need not mean wasted time. Waiting time has its opportunities too. Blessed are those who wait.

"Whoever welcomes you, welcomes me" says Jesus. Wonder if He ever had to queue? Lockdown has challenged us all to find new ways of welcoming, and many of us have risen to the challenge. With or without technology, most of us can write a card or letter, or pick up a phone, and in so doing we are offering that ongoing welcome that Jesus talks about this morning.

These days if we stand still long enough people think we're in a queue. I thought I was joining the queue to go into Beverley Minster last week. I joined the queue up the steps behind two lots of people talking, and a lady at the main door. I'd been standing there nearly fifteen minutes when the couple in front of me turned and said "Oh we're not in a queue you know. We're just talking. You can go straight in."

Remember - every single one of us can inform, include, invite and involve somebody this week, and it's something we can continue to do in absolute safety. So no need for our welcomes to be put on hold, or forgotten. Our welcome, in Christ's name, is ongoing. Amen.

Hymn: [Bind us together, Lord](#)

*Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken.
Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together, —
bind us together with love.*

1. There is only one God,
there is only one King.
There is only one Body,
that is why we sing:

2. Made for the glory of God,
purchased by his precious Son,
Born with the right to be clean,
for Jesus the victory has won. . .

3. You are the family of God,
you are the promise divine,
you are God's chosen desire,
you are the glorious new wine...

Words: Bob Gillman Copied under CCL Licence 680151

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 – John Hearson [Click Here](#)

Let us pray for the church, and for all men according to their need.

Today we think of the challenges of the worldwide church.

Heavenly Father, we are a people set apart for You. We are called to leave the slavery of sin and to live instead as slaves to righteousness, making a daily choice to live grace-filled and holy lives. And it's wonderful to hear the many stories of the Gospel touching communities. We reflect on Tear Fund's work in nations such as the Democratic Republic of Congo. Here, fake news about Coronavirus had led to attacks on health workers and a refusal to socially distance. Tear Fund and its partners have organised a huge multi-media campaign involving church leaders, leading to churches organising themselves online. In this way, safe practices are spreading throughout the whole country. Father, strengthen Tearfund's hands as they work to enable vulnerable groups of people to protect themselves.

Sadly, we also hear of sections of the church such as the so-called 'Christian Right', in which the Gospel is distorted to justify amassing wealth and voting for a government that maintains systems of injustice, turning eyes away from the plight of the poor. As the 'Black Lives Matter' protests remind us, we confess that the church hasn't always taken a clear stand on poverty, on slavery and on the treatment of minority groups. We are deeply sorry for those times when the church has been a discredit to You. May we heed and act on Your words spoken throughout the Gospels.

Sadly, too, we haven't always heeded Your words, Lord Jesus, about embracing those who are different from us, but who have clearly welcomed you. We've squabbled and allowed denominational barriers or minor doctrinal disagreements to mar the witness of Your body. Forgive us; may we build bridges not walls.

Lord, help us to live as Your disciples, taking up our cross daily to follow You. Purify Your church worldwide, so that we may be marked out as people of grace who live bravely, act sacrificially and are truly salt and light wherever we are.

*Lord, in Your Mercy, **hear our prayer.***

In many parts of the world, being a Christian involves living under fear of persecution. We read with alarm about the closure of churches in China and the ever-tightening surveillance of religious groups; of the social credit system that penalises attendance

at Christian gatherings. Likewise, it's dangerous to be openly a Christian in countries such as Iran especially if you're a convert. The cry of the saints in the book of Revelation, "How long, O Lord?", echoes in our ears.

In our prayers we join hands with the persecuted church, for whom living as 'slaves to righteousness' bears a cost we can barely imagine. May we hear their cries, read their stories, support them in prayer and be open to active involvement on their behalf. Today we ask You to come alongside each persecuted believer with a special closeness. Provide food for the hungry, access to the Bible and fellowship for those who cannot meet.

Provide opportunities to share their faith, make them bold but give special wisdom to know when to take a risk. We ask you, Lord, to heed their cry to deliver them and are deeply encouraged to hear stories of miraculous intervention. Strengthen those organisations that support the persecuted church, and those such as the Christian radio stations and the Bible Society who work to supply Christian materials for them.

*Lord, in Your Mercy, **hear our prayer.***

How these strange days of lockdown have given us an insight into belonging to the underground church! We thank You, Lord, for all the ways we've continued to enjoy worship, prayer and fellowship during this period. Help Your church throughout the world to continue running the race you have set before us; to act as beacons of hope, of encouragement and practical help within our communities. May we act with wisdom as we re-open our churches, seeking to combine boldness with care and diligence.

We thank You for the way our church leaders in Britain have been visible during the Lockdown and ask for inspired wisdom for archbishops Justin and Stephen, and bishops Nick and Jonathan, as they prepare for the next stage.

*Lord, in Your Mercy, **hear our prayer.***

We pray for boldness and wisdom for our own clergy, Stephen, Michael and Gill; for lay readers Alan and Glenn; and for our PCC. We lift up to you those who are struggling with sickness, remembering Graham Wilson, David and Christine's son; also, George and Ivy Wilkinson from St. Matthews who have suffered a bereavement.

Finally, our own Benefice looks ahead to the search for a vicar. Prepare our own hearts so we are ready to embrace and to cherish our new incumbent. Prepare them, too, so there is a marriage of their leadership with our service. It's our heart's desire that both we and they are able to know the Holy Spirit's confirmation that it's the right appointment.

Merciful Father,

Accept these prayers for the sake of Your Son.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ our Lord, 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

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.

Hymn: [For this purpose Christ was revealed](#)

For this purpose Christ was revealed
To destroy all the works of the evil one,
Christ in us has overcome,
So with gladness we sing
And welcome his kingdom in.

Over sin he has conquered
Hallelujah, he has conquered.
Over death victorious
Hallelujah, victorious.

Over sickness he has triumphed
Hallelujah, he has triumphed.
Jesus reigns over all.

In the name of Jesus we stand,
By the power of his blood we now claim this ground.
Satan has no authority here,
Powers of darkness must flee,
For Christ has the victory.

Words: Graham Kendrick
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Final Prayer

O God, whose beauty is beyond our imagining
and whose power we cannot comprehend:
show us your glory as far as we can grasp it,
and shield us from knowing more than we can bear
until we may look upon you without fear;
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Blessing

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God and his son 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.**

[St Johns plays The Gladiator](#)