

Morning Service 17th May 2020

Thank you for joining us for this morning service for this final Sunday after Easter. I'm Rev John Musson, vicar of Cudham and Downe and I'm joined by Helen Musson, Ordinand at St Augustines college.

Today we look at the continuation of John 14 – Jesus focuses on giving his followers the Holy Spirit to comfort, challenge and be with us as we respond to Jesus' love for us.

You'll find the words of the service on the church website pcd.org.uk Please also join us for virtual coffee after the service via zoom - Meeting 841 9102 7344 Password 445122.

The Greeting – *As the Easter Candle is lit*

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

Praise to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:
He has given us new life and hope by raising Jesus from the dead!

Alleluia, Christ is risen!
He is risen indeed, Alleluia!

The Father loves you.
The Son loves you.
The Spirit loves you.
Come, enjoy the love of God as we worship.

**Spirit of truth, come close to us.
Unite us into the body of Christ.
Enable us to worship God in Spirit and in truth.
Help us to support and encourage each other.
Help us to love as we are loved.
Spirit of truth, come and abide in us. Amen.**

Our first song today is 'As the deer'

Song

**As the deer pants for the water
So my soul longs after You
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.
*You alone are my strength, my shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.***

**I want You more than gold or silver
Only You can satisfy
You alone are the real joy giver
And the apple of my eye.**

*You alone are my strength, my shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.*

You're my friend and You are my brother
Even though You are a King.
I love you more than any other
So much more than anything.
*You alone are my strength, my shield
To You alone may my spirit yield
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.*

Opening Prayer

Gracious God, we come before you,
drawn by the power of your welcoming love.
We come with our sorrows and joys.
We come with our expectations and apprehensions.
We come with what we have done.
We come as who we are.
In your love we find peace and hope. **Amen.**

Prayer of penitence

God of love, we are sorry
that at times our love for you falters;
that we have wrong priorities;
that we overlook your guidance.
O God, forgive us.
O God, renew us.

Loving Saviour, we are sorry
that we disobey your commandments;
that we fail to love;
that we walk by on the other side.
O God, forgive us.
O God, renew us.

Spirit of truth, we are sorry
that we disregard your presence;
that our thoughts and feelings are unrighteous;
that we follow the world's way.
O God, forgive us.
O God, renew us.

May your presence abiding in us lead us in the right way,
in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

Prayer for Today

God our Father, whose Son Jesus Christ gives the water of eternal life: may we thirst for you, the spring of life and source of goodness, through him who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen**

Bible Reading *John 14:1-14 (NIV). Jesus says....*

¹⁵ 'If you love me, keep my commands. ¹⁶ And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you for ever – ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ Before long, the world will not see me any more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realise that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.'

Talk

Our bible reading today continues from that of last week - back from the resurrection appearances of Jesus to a time when he was preparing his friends for his departure; he is still speaking to his friends who were concerned that he would be leaving them soon - do you remember the questions Thomas and Philip asked? He is continuing to prepare them for his death, resurrection and ascension and now reassures them by promising to send the Holy Spirit to them. You might know the saying 'ignorance is bliss' – Stephen Fry once said 'if ignorance is bliss, why aren't there more happy people around?' The question such a passage poses for me is 'would you rather know the truth or not'? I heard a story about a father who ate his son's homework. He said, when you go back to school, you will learn an important lesson. Even when you tell the truth, people won't believe you. Jesus speaks so much truth in this passage, and as we look ahead to Pentecost in just two weeks' time, we could simply wait and then be surprised by the Spirit's presence, or we could listen to these words of Jesus and be ready – I know which I prefer, but thinking things through, listening for nuance is a skill many find difficult, preferring black and white, certainty, both in everyday life and also in our walk of faith. John's gospel in particular requires this kind of nuanced thinking, and I invite you to do some of that for the next few minutes.

Did you notice all the different terms Jesus uses for the Spirit? Advocate, Spirit of Truth, the one who lives in us, who brings and shows us truth, and Jesus says all this within a spiral of thinking which brings us back to the centrality of love (have a look back to John 13:34). We fully grasp the Spirit's life as we love Jesus and the evidence of this is when we obey his command, the most important of which is to love as he has loved us. And for this we need the Spirit's presence. Jesus promises someone who will help us – he's ready, willing and able to ask his Father to give us another 'advocate' who will be with us for ever, the one he calls 'The Spirit of truth' – so three things for you to ponder –

- 1) Another – the word recorded means 'the same as' – confused? What Jesus promises is that the Holy Spirit, being God as he is, will do all that Jesus did for us as he did for his disciples when he was with them. The Spirit makes Jesus real to us.
- 2) Advocate – the word is 'paraclete' – someone who will be alongside us – someone who is on our side, a supporter, or maybe the word should be 'comforter'? But it's so easy to mistake this word – Have you ever seen the Bayeux tapestry – a bit like the newspaper of its time, it tells a one-sided story. In one scene we see Bishop Odo trying to encourage weary troops back into battle with the flat side of his sword – the caption – 'Bishop Odo comforts his troops' – a strange kind of comfort! And so the Spirit's comfort may not always be so comfortable too! The word though means to give strength to the weary – I know weariness is something I've been feeling of late, and I know that I need the Spirit's comfort to give me strength.

- 3) The Spirit is the Spirit of truth. The Spirit will never desert us in our time of need – the Spirit of truth leads into the truth – the truth found in the scriptures – the promises found in God’s word. Whatever I feel at the moment, I can find truth and strength in God’s word and God’s promises.

Jesus promises not to leave us comfortless. He asks the Father, and the Father hears Jesus prayer to give us the Spirit who can be as close to us as Jesus was close to his friends, when we love him and follow his call. We do this by reflecting on the Bible, putting its truth into practice, and in turning to prayer – prayer centering us into the very heart of the love of God, and then bringing others into that same love.

This Thursday, Ascension Day, sees the beginning of this year’s ‘Thy Kingdom Come’ 9 days of prayer between then and Pentecost at the end of May. Have a look at this week’s notice sheet where you’ll find links to lots of resources to help you in this focused prayer. One of the suggestions is to take a piece of cord, rope of ribbon and make 5 knots in it – these represent people you know who you love and who you would like to grow more like Jesus and be filled with his Spirit.

Please join us for homegroup via zoom as we look again at this passage and last week’s too - Meeting ID: 882 3701 5281 Password: 304932. John will be sending out notes soon, please ask if you’d like a copy.

The Creed *based on 1 Cor 15:3-7*

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ

**Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures;
he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures;
afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles:
this we have received, and this we believe. Amen.**

The prayers *during which the Tallis anthem ‘if ye love me’ is played in the background*

Dear Lord, we bring into your love
those who do not know you and your love;
those who have turned away from you;
those who struggle to accept you;
those who refuse to listen.
May your love touch them,
and transform their lives.

Dear Lord, we bring into your love
those who need parental love;
those who are alone;
those who are abused;
those who are neglected.
those who are ill, those who are bereaved, especially we pray for....
May your love touch them,
and transform their lives.

Dear Lord, we bring into your love
those who seek the truth;

those who work in Government, local and national;
those who work in the justice system;
those who work in the NHS and care homes; police, fire and other essential services;
those who campaign and advocate on behalf of the voiceless.
May your love touch them,
and transform their lives.

A special prayer for schools, produced by Spinnaker..

Dear Lord, we ask You, especially, to be with and strengthen all Heads of schools as they manage the responsibilities and the changing circumstances they may face. Give them Your wisdom in the best ways to help both staff and children and supporting parents who are home schooling.

And please be with parents Lord. Some are enjoying this time of blessing with their children. We pray for strength and grace for those at home who are finding it difficult to cope, not only with the curriculum, but perhaps with sibling relationships and possible financial concerns as well. Please help them to access everything they need. We think especially of those parents coping alone, or in confined living spaces. Thank You that You care for them all.

Amen

May we show the power and presence of your love in our church,
our community, our schools and our world – for Jesus' sake.

Amen.

*I invite you to draw or cut out a heart on a piece of paper. Imagine that it is the heart of God, and write or draw on the heart people or situations you would like to place in God's heart, pausing after each one in a moment of prayer. **May our hearts be as your heart, O God, filled with kindness and with love.***

Strengthen, support and fill with peace all those for whom we pray.

Amen.

Why not use this heart in your own prayers during the coming week?

We join together as Jesus taught us to pray:

**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

Song

**Spirit of God show me Jesus,
Remove the darkness,
Let truth shine through!**

**Spirit of God show me Jesus
Reveal the fullness of His love to me.**

Closing prayer with actions *Which we repeat three times.*

Hold your hands together in prayer; then hold your arms around yourself as if being hugged.
Thank you, Lord God, for your love.

Hold your hands together in prayer; then stretch your arms in front of you.
Help us, Jesus, to love.

Hold your hands together in prayer; blow into them.
Come to me, Spirit of truth.

*Thank you for following our service today. Please join us for coffee via Zoom now: Meeting 841 9102 7344
Password 445122. Thursday is Ascension Day and you'll find a prayer Book service of Evening Prayer from
St Mary's Downe at 6pm on our youtube channel*

*Details of our next services are found on our facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/PCDChurches/>
where you can watch the service live or catch up later, and you'll find this week's notice sheet and other
useful information on the church website pcd.org.uk*

*Please also contact the Vicar, Rev John Musson if you need any help or just for a chat! vicar@pcd.org.uk
01959540012*

Blessing

Go in peace in the presence of the Spirit
to live in love,
to show God's love,
to receive God's love
– everywhere, and at all times. **Amen.**