

## 4th Sunday after Trinity



This is a simple act of worship which can be followed at home. We recommend setting aside time at 10am on Sunday; we can worship together in spirit, remembering always that we are one family, one community, one church—wherever we are.

## GREETING

In the name of the Father,  
And of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**

The Lord be with you  
**And also with you**

## PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though we have rebelled against him. Let us then renounce our wilfulness and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

May your loving mercy come to me, O Lord,  
and your salvation according to your word:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Your word is a lantern to my feet  
and a light to my path:  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

O let your mercy come to me that I may live,  
for your law is my delight:  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins,  
and bring us to everlasting life,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

## HYMN

God is Love: let heav'n adore him;  
God is Love: let earth rejoice;  
let creation sing before him,  
and exalt him with one voice.  
He who laid the earth's foundation,  
he who spread the heav'ns above,  
he who breathes through all creation,  
he is Love, eternal Love.

God is Love: and he enfoldeth  
all the world in one embrace;  
with unfailing grasp he holdeth  
every child of every race.  
And when human hearts are breaking  
under sorrow's iron rod,  
then they find that selfsame aching  
deep within the heart of God.

God is Love: and though with blindness  
sin afflicts the souls of all,  
God's eternal loving-kindness  
holds and guides us when we fall.  
Sin and death and hell shall never  
o'er us final triumph gain;  
God is Love, so Love for ever  
o'er the universe must reign.

*Timothy Rees*  
*Tune: BLAENWERN*

## COLLECT

O God, the protector of all who trust in you,  
without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:  
increase and multiply upon us your mercy;  
that with you as our ruler and guide  
we may so pass through things temporal  
that we lose not our hold on things eternal;  
grant this, heavenly Father,  
for our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## A READING FROM PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree that the law is good. But in fact it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwells within me.

So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God in my inmost self, but I see in my members another law at war with the law of my mind, making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, with my mind I am a slave to the law of God, but with my flesh I am a slave to the law of sin.

*Romans 7:15-25a*

## THE GOSPEL OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

“But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not mourn.’

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.”

At that time Jesus said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

*Matthew 11:16-19,25-end*

## REFLECTION

A few years ago, a friend gave me a mug which I use frequently and the inscription continues to amuse me, ‘Lead me not into temptation I can find the way myself’. It strikes me, this is similar to what St Paul writes in his letter to the Romans, “I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but do the very thing I hate” (Romans 7:15). Then he goes on to say in a convoluting way ‘I do not do the good that I want to do because of the evil within me’. The book of Genesis gives us an indication of where he is coming from when it illustrates that humanity was given dominion over the earth and granted the ability to do great things. With that came the resilience to cope with natural disasters such as flooding and the responsibility to care for all creatures, together with the world in which we live. It also illustrated our sinfulness and lack of resistance to temptation, because of our inherent nature.

After all, it is true, human beings are capable of great things such as: the charting of mid-ocean mountain ranges where there is always new life to be found; discoveries in the sky above us and the universe beyond; artificial intelligence and communication through technology which is beyond the comprehension of most people. Our achievements in engineering, agriculture, chemistry, medicine, art, music and just about every academic field are remarkable.... and yet we keep on letting ourselves down. We are capable of creating great things and equally prone to destroying them in our arrogance and thirst for power and control.

Paul, offers some insight into this paradox of human nature. If you have been following the readings in the past few weeks you could be forgiven for thinking that Paul is obsessed with sin and yet it is a subject that we seem to fight shy of: perhaps we find his rhetorical style confusing or maybe because the subject makes us feel uncomfortable. Yet Paul had a deep-rooted personal understanding of weakness. He knew the Law of Judaism inside out and it had to be obeyed. Paul practiced the Law and persecuted others, like Jesus, who thought differently. It took a blinding light to convince Paul otherwise.

His understanding of our addiction to sin helps us to face our demons: why some people are prone to self-destruct through addictions; why affluence can lead to reckless extravagance; and why our self-centred nature causes us to rape the planet. We try to save situations by education: if someone is addicted to nicotine or the excessive use alcohol we try to teach that they are damaging their health; that obesity, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes can be avoided by diet and exercise; that taking heroin is likely to kill you. The naive assumption is that by teaching the dangers of excess, people will stop. Teaching of course remains imperative – but equally we need to understand that our inclination to push the boundaries and take chances is like a magnet. The closer we get to it the more likely we are to become trapped, preventing us from doing the good that we need to do and leading us to a loss of self-worth and hatred of ourselves for being so weak.

It is easy to become disheartened. However, the good news is that we are all 'work in progress'. We are caught in between: we know with our heads and hearts that Christ has liberated us from sin and will shoulder the burden; while on the other hand, we know that our struggles with temptation are not over. As Paul said in his letter to the Philippians "but one

thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining toward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus. (Phil.3:13-14). Amen

*Revd Eric Lewis*

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family  
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through  
faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us  
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Jesus said

Where two or three gather together in my name,  
I will be there with them.

It is in Jesus' name we are gathered here today.

We are together in his Spirit

And as we pray together, wherever we are,  
We share our worries and needs with Jesus  
and with each other.

Lord in your mercy

**Show us your way**

Loving God, friend of those in need,  
we pray for those with endure injustice,  
hunger and poverty;  
who suffer oppression at the hands of others, on  
account of their ethnicity, gender, sexuality and  
status.

May they find hope in your loving care and  
through our efforts as a church to relieve their  
suffering and answer their cries for help.

Lord in your mercy

**Show us your way**

Loving God, friend of those in need, your Son Jesus  
has untied our burdens and healed our spirits. We  
lift up the prayers of our hearts for those still  
burdened, those who have difficult challenges to  
overcome in their lives; those seeking healing, those  
filled with despair and sadness.

We pray particularly at this time for Martin Cooper,  
Norman Searle, Catherine Connors, Kate Davson  
Gordon, Olya Bouchard, Michael Hampson, Emma  
Campbell, Jacqui Hamilton, and Andrew Harrison.

Lord in your mercy

**Show us your way**

Loving God, friend of those in need,  
We pray for people who are dying;  
That you will strengthen them for their final journey  
to be with you.

We pray for those who have died recently including  
Shelagh Goodwin; those whose years mind falls at  
this time, including Pat Hylton.  
May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord in your mercy

**Show us your way**

Loving God, friend of those in need  
We call to you in prayer  
open our ears to hear your word  
and draw us closer to you and to each other.  
May the whole world be one with you  
as you are one with us.  
We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

## HYMN

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Come unto me and rest;  
lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
thy head upon my breast':  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary and worn and sad;  
I found in him a resting-place,  
and he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'Behold, I freely give  
the living water, thirsty one;  
stoop down and drink and live':  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
'I am this dark world's light;  
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
and all thy day be bright':  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun;  
and in that light of life I'll walk  
till travelling days are done.

*Horatius Bonar*  
Tune: KINGSFOLD

## CONCLUSION & PEACE

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,  
since as members of one body  
you are called to peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
**[and also with you]**