



# Chet Valley Churches

## Passion Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Welcome to our service on the Fifth Sunday of Lent.

*Before we begin our time of worship why don't you place on a table, close by you, a lighted candle, a piece of bread and, if you wish, a glass of wine.*

### The Greeting and Welcome

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

**Amen. The Lord be with us.**

### ♪♪ Hymn: *Breathe On Me, Breath of God*

Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew,  
That I may love what Thou dost love, and do what Thou wouldst do.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure,  
Until with Thee I will one will, to do and to endure.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, 'till I am wholly Thine,  
Until this earthly part of me glows with Thy fire divine.

Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die,  
But live with Thee the perfect life of Thine eternity.

### The Prayers of Penitence

Let us confess our sins to Almighty God

**Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call.**

**Our love for you is like a morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes away early.**

**Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement;  
bind up our wounds and revive us;  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### The Absolution

May Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins,

confirm and strengthen us in all goodness,  
and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Collect: Prayer of the Day**

Gracious God, you gave up your Son out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

### **Old Testament: *Ezekiel 37:1-14***

The hand of the LORD came upon me, and he brought me out by the spirit of the LORD and set me down in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me all round them; there were very many lying in the valley, and they were very dry. He said to me, 'Mortal, can these bones live?' I answered, 'O Lord GOD, you know.' Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to these bones, and say to them: O dry bones, hear the word of the LORD. Thus says the Lord GOD to these bones: I will cause breath to enter you, and you shall live. I will lay sinews on you, and will cause flesh to come upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and you shall live; and you shall know that I am the LORD.'



So I prophesied as I had been commanded; and as I prophesied, suddenly there was a noise, a rattling, and the bones came together, bone to its bone. I looked, and there were sinews on them, and flesh had come upon them, and skin had covered them; but there was no breath in them. Then he said to me, 'Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, mortal, and say to the breath: Thus says the Lord GOD: Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live.' I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood on their feet, a vast multitude.

Then he said to me, 'Mortal, these bones are the whole house of Israel. They say, "Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are cut off completely." Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord

GOD: I am going to open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people; and I will bring you back to the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves, and bring you up from your graves, O my people. I will put my spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will place you on your own soil; then you shall know that I, the LORD, have spoken and will act, says the LORD.'

For the word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament: Romans 8:6-11**

To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law—indeed it cannot, and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

But you are not in the flesh; you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you.

For the word of the Lord, **Thanks be to God.**

### **♪♪ Hymn: Will Your Anchor Hold**

Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,  
When the clouds unfold their wings of strife?  
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,  
Will your anchor drift or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,  
When the breakers roar, and the reef is near;  
While the surges rave, and the wild winds blow,  
Shall the angry waves then your barque o'erflow?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

Will your eyes behold through the morning light  
the city of gold and the harbour bright?  
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,  
when life's storms are past forever more?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul  
Steadfast and sure while the billows roll,  
Fastened to the Rock which cannot move,  
Grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love.*

### **Gospel Reading: John 11:1-45**

The Lord is a great God. O that today you would listen to his voice.  
Harden not your hearts.

**Praise to you O Christ, King of eternal glory.**

The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. Mary was the one who anointed the Lord with perfume and wiped his feet with her hair; her brother Lazarus was ill. So the sisters sent a message to Jesus, 'Lord, he whom you love is ill.' But when Jesus heard it, he said, 'This illness does not lead to death; rather it is for God's glory, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it.' Accordingly, though Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, after having heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was.

Then after this he said to the disciples, 'Let us go to Judea again.' The disciples said to him, 'Rabbi, the Jews were just now trying to stone you, and are you going there again?' Jesus answered, 'Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Those who walk during the day do not stumble, because they see the light of this world. But those who walk at night stumble, because the light is not in them.' After saying this, he told them, 'Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I am going there to awaken him.' The disciples said to him, 'Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will be all right.' Jesus, however, had been speaking about his death, but they thought that he was referring merely to sleep. Then Jesus told them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.

For your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him.' Thomas, who was called the Twin, said to his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, some two miles away, and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them about their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, while Mary stayed at home. Martha said to Jesus, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.' Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.'

When she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary, and told her privately, 'The Teacher is here and is calling for you.' And when she heard it, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. The Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary get up quickly and go out. They followed her because they thought that she was going to the tomb to weep there. When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. 36 So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake

of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'



Many of the Jews therefore, who had come with Mary and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **Sermon**

As we gather for worship today we are caught up in an event which is, for most of us, beyond our understanding and experience.

Being confined to your home is something that happens when you are ill, not when you are healthy, not when the sun is shining and the birds are encouraging you to be outside. The current constraints on our daily life is an alien feeling but for the good of all we are encouraged, nay required to obey. Perhaps it will help us understand what life is often like for people in other parts of the world!

Today is Passion Sunday. I wonder what your Passion is. I wouldn't be surprised that because of the restrictions placed upon us we have an even greater desire to undertake that journey, that hobby, that activity which gives us a sense of enjoyment which we are passionate about. But Passion has the same root as Passive. A willingness to rest and not be over-active. Perhaps we can take that as an instruction for this time of enforced inactivity for the majority of us. Whilst acknowledging the need for action from those charged with caring for the welfare of our nation.

The three readings set for today, give us a sense of both waiting and action.

There is a story about St Francis. Jane Williams recalls that he once got up to preach, looked down at the hushed, expectant faces below him and said, 'God hasn't given me anything to say to you.' And with that, he blessed the people, and got down again. If he was faced with the readings from Ezekiel and John who can blame him since they are so brilliantly and powerfully told that there is very little to add. Yet...

In the story of Lazarus we see that Death, the last great enemy is subject to Jesus. It also demonstrates that death is not negligible or cost-free even for the Son of God.

As we ponder the story, so familiar to many, we see Jesus waiting, not rushing to rescue his ill friend. He wants to highlight that Lazarus is indeed dead; so that when the mourners and onlookers see life emerging from the tomb they know with certainty that this is not a trick. the gospel writer, John, is clear in how he expresses the story: When Jesus is accused by Martha of tardiness, in not coming straightaway, he tells her unambiguously, 'I am the resurrection and the life'; and despite her own grief this is something which Martha accepts without question.

But then despite having made that assertion, Jesus breaks down - he cries - he weeps - he is moved by the anguish of Lazarus's sisters and his own grief at the death of a friend. What a paradox we have here: the power of God incarnate brought low by human emotion. The power of God is mingled with the desolation we all feel when someone whom we love dies. Here then we have a foretaste, a glimpse, of the hope that is offered to all through the events which will unfold over the coming days as Jesus heads towards his death; and ultimately achieves in being raised from the dead.

But look at the final verses of our passage from John; here there is an ironic twist. The raising of Lazarus, returned to life, becomes as it were the final "signature" on Jesus's own death warrant. Just as he says to those standing around looking at Lazarus, "Unbind him and let him go", he is also actively allowing himself to be placed in a passive mode; allowing himself to be bound, to lose his freedom, to be at the behest of those who will crucify him. Now surely that is the great love of our friend Jesus. What a friend we have in Him.

## **The Affirmation of Faith**

**We believe in one God, the Father, the almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father.  
Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,  
and was made man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;  
he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.**

**With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.  
He has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **The Prayers**

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,  
let us pray to our heavenly Father.

We pray for the Church of Christ...

Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

We pray for Creation and human society...

Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

We pray for the local community...

Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

We pray for those who are ill or in need...

Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

We pray for the communion of saints...

Lord of compassion, **in your mercy hear us.**

Merciful Father,

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



# The Liturgy of the Sacrament

## The Peace

Once we were far off,  
but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near  
through the shedding of Christ's blood, for he is our peace.

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

## ♪♪ *Hymn: There's a Wideness in God's Mercy*

There's a wideness in God's mercy, like the wideness of the sea.  
There's a kindness in His justice, which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows are more felt than up in heaven.  
There is no place where earth's failings have such kindly judgment given.

For the love of God is broader than the measures of our mind.  
And the heart of the Eternal is most wonderfully kind.  
But we make his love too narrow, by false limits of our own  
And we magnify His strictness with a zeal He will not own.

There is plentiful redemption in the blood that has been shed;  
There is joy for all the members in the sorrows of the Head.  
There is grace enough for thousands of new worlds as great as this;  
there is room for fresh creations in that upper home of bliss.

If our love were but more simple, we should take him at his word;  
and our lives would be all gladness in the joy of Christ our Lord.

## Preparation of the Table

Look upon us in mercy not in judgement; draw us from hatred to love;  
make the frailty of our praise a dwelling place for your glory. **Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

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 right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation;

in your love you made us for yourself.

When we turned away you did not reject us,

but came to meet us in your Son.

You embraced us as your children

and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.

In Christ you shared our life

that we might live in him and he in us.

He opened his arms of love upon the cross

and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.

On the night he was betrayed, at supper with his friends

he took bread, and gave you thanks;

he broke it and gave it to them, saying:

Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;

do this in remembrance of me.

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him;**

**his body is the bread of life.**



At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave you thanks, and said:

Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,

which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins;

do this in remembrance of me.

**Father, we do this in remembrance of him:**

**his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,

send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine

may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**As we eat and drink these holy gifts**

**make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world

we offer you this sacrifice of praise

and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

Let us pray for the coming of the kingdom in the words our Saviour taught us:

**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 Breaking of the Bread**

Every time we eat this bread and drink this cup  
**we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes**

## **Sharing Communion**

Behold. the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.  
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**Lord, I am not worthy to receive you  
but only say the word and I shall be healed.**

*Let us take a moment or two to share in our common meal.*

## **Prayer after Communion**

**Lord Jesus Christ,  
we thank you for all the benefits you have won for us,  
for all the pains and insults you have borne for us.  
Most merciful Redeemer, friend and brother,  
may we know you more clearly, love you more dearly,  
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

## ♪♪ **Hymn: Guide Me O Thou Great Redeemer**

Guide me O Thou great Redeemer, pilgrim through this barren land.  
I am weak but Thou art mighty;  
Hold me with thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven, feed me 'till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain  
Whence the healing stream doth flow,  
Let the fiery cloudy pillar lead me all my journey through.  
Strong Deliverer, Strong Deliverer, be Thou still my strength and shield.  
When I tread the verge of Jordan, bid my anxious fears subside  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
Land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises, I will ever give to thee.

## **The Blessing**

Christ crucified draw you to himself, to find in him a sure ground for faith,  
a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

## ♪♪ **Gaelic Blessing**

Deep peace of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace of the flowing air to you.  
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep peace of the shining stars to you.  
Deep peace of the gentle night to you.  
Moon and stars pour their healing light on you.  
Deep peace of Christ, of Christ the light of the world to you.  
Deep peace of Christ to you.

## **Dismissal**

Remain in the peace of Christ.  
**Thanks be to God.**

