



Chet Valley Churches



Holy Communion for Trinity 18

11th October 2020

The Greeting and Welcome

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.**

♪♪ **Hymn: Thy Hand, O God, Has Guided**

**Thy hand, O God, has guided
Thy flock, from age to age;
The wondrous tale is written,
Full clear, on every page;
Thy people owned thy goodness,
And we their deeds record;
And both of this bear witness:
One Church, one faith, one Lord.**

**Through many a day of darkness,
Through many a scene of strife,
The faithful few fought bravely,
To guard the nation's life.
Their Gospel of redemption,
Sin pardoned, man restored,
Was all in this enfolded:
One Church, one faith, one Lord.**

**Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave thy work undone;
With thy right hand to help us,
The victory shall be won
And then, by men and angels,
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem:
One Church, one faith, one Lord.**

Confession

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandments and to live in love and peace with all.



**Most merciful God,
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed.
We have not loved you with our whole heart.
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.**

**In your mercy, forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are,
and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

Absolution

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

Gloria in Excelsis

**Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

The Collect—Prayer of the Day

God, our judge and saviour, teach us to be open to your truth and to trust in your love, that we may live each day with confidence in the salvation which is given through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

OT Reading: Isaiah 25:1-9

○ Lord, you are my God; I will exalt you, I will praise your name; for you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you

have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin; the palace of aliens is a city no more, it will never be rebuilt.

Therefore strong peoples will glorify you; cities of ruthless nations will fear you. For you have been a refuge to the poor, a refuge to the needy in their distress, a shelter from the rainstorm and a shade from the heat. When the blast of the ruthless was like a winter rainstorm, the noise of aliens like heat in a dry place, you subdued the heat with the shade of clouds; the song of the ruthless was stilled.

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

NT Reading: *Philippians 4:1-9*

Therefore, my brothers and sisters, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, my beloved.

I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you also, my loyal companion, help these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about

these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

♪ **Hymn: Rejoice! Rejoice! Rejoice!**

**Rejoice rejoice rejoice! Rejoice rejoice rejoice;
My soul rejoices in the Lord!**

**My soul magnifies the Lord,
And my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour;
My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God.**



📖 **Gospel Reading: Matthew 22:1-14**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: ‘The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, “Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.” But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, “The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.” Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.’

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon [Rev Alison]

I really don't like this parable! And I really didn't want to preach on it. I mean clearly, if we're talking about the kingdom of heaven, the king must be God. But if it's God, then what is he doing?

OK, so a bunch of rich, self-centred, self-assured, vicious men kill the king's slaves and that's not good. But then the king is so angry that he goes out and destroys not only them but also their city and, presumably, any innocents caught up there? I mean, what's that even about?!

Obviously you shouldn't be allowed to get away with murder, and fair enough for the king to be enraged. But that sounds more like Sodom and Gomorrah and Noah's Flood. I thought that kind of retribution had been done away with. And what about forgiveness? Isn't the king, although the judge, supposed to be loving and merciful and gracious and endlessly forgiving? Isn't that what the kingdom of heaven is supposed to be about? This all sounds far too close to real life – despotic, powerful, vengeful leader and rampaging citizens. Anyway, I think it would sound much better if the parable went like this:

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, "Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet." But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, maltreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged....

The king was enraged, had them arrested and gave them a fair trial. They were imprisoned and encouraged to rehabilitate before being released back into the community, fit to come to the banquet. The king invited the families and friends of the murdered slaves to the wedding banquet. He cared deeply for them all and wanted to show his love for them.

That feels better! But then there's that bit at the end too. I don't like that either!

Then he said to his slaves, "The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you

find to the wedding banquet.” Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, “Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” For many are called, but few are chosen.’

That just seems grossly unfair! The king invites people, everyone good and bad, to his wedding banquet. And that includes the man who is not dressed right. But then he goes and chucks him out. Not just back out into the street, but bound hand and foot into outer darkness.

I mean, why should someone get thrown out just because they’re not on the ball with wedding fashion? Maybe they didn’t have the money to have lots of lovely clothes. Or perhaps they just didn’t like dressing up. And there wasn’t any mention of dress code anyway. It’s a curious kind of invitation: “Yup, you can all come. Yes, yes do come in. Lovely to see you all – oh... but not you! You haven’t got the right clothes on. No, I didn’t say but you should have known” ... somehow! Hmmm. So I’ve done another re-write...

...so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

‘But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, “Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe? Here come with me. We’ve got lots of wedding clothes. Why don’t you choose one of these if you would like? Or if you’re more comfortable as you are, then that’s fine too.”

That’s much better isn’t it? Much more welcoming. Really helping the badly-dressed man feel at home. So with a few amendments the kingdom of heaven sounds great! The king sounds like a great bloke. Lots of invitations, more and more of them. In fact, all are invited – amazing – and it doesn’t matter who comes or what they are like.

Trouble is, once I’ve finished fiddling with the parable, I’ve ended up with something rather bland and insipid. Not at all like the original. Not at all like the parable that Jesus gave us. No challenge! So what are we to make of it? This difficult parable? We could just ignore it because we don’t like it.

But Jesus will have told it for a purpose so... The two bits I really didn't like were the king punishing the people who were wicked and the bit where he threw out the person with the wrong clothes. But what are the alternatives?

Do we want God to cast a blind eye on the evil of the world – should we do the same? Surely not! If that were the case, we wouldn't have to worry about social justice either.

And the man with the wrong clothes? Yes, it is true that all are called. But having been called, does that mean that we can carry on living just as we are? Comfortable in our comfortable way of life? Are you wearing wedding clothes? Or is there something you need to change in order to fit in at the wedding feast of the lamb, the heavenly banquet?

The Confession of Faith

**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

We pray that your people, called by grace, will be worthy of their calling. Keep the church faithful in proclaiming all the good things that you give.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray that the whole world will hear your call. Come to those who turn away and gather them all into the great feast of your love.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray that those in our communities who are at odds with each other will be reconciled. Draw us, our families and friends, into the peace that is beyond understanding.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray that you will be with your servants who suffer for their proclaiming of the Gospel. Turn the hearts of their persecutors and bring them to the way of truth.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

We pray that you will grant your peace to the faithful departed, that they may enjoy the perfection of those good things which they have partially known in this world.

Lord in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.
Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

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



Offertory Hymn: The Lord's my Shepherd

**The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters, his goodness restores my soul.**

*And I will trust in You alone, and I will trust in You alone,
For Your endless mercy follows me, your goodness will lead me home.*

**He guides my ways in righteousness,
And He anoints my head with oil,
And my cup, it overflows with joy, I feast on His pure delights.**

And I will trust in You alone...

**And though I walk the darkest path, I will not fear the evil one,
For You are with me, and Your rod and staff
Are the comfort I need to know.**

And I will trust in You alone...

Preparation of the Table

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours.

All things come from you, and of your own do we give you.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**

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

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 forever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

The president breaks the consecrated bread.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**



The Communion

Prayer after Communion

We praise and thank you, O Christ, for this sacred feast: for here we receive you, here the memory of your passion is renewed, here our minds are filled with grace, and here a pledge of future glory is given, when we shall feast at that table where you reign with all your saints for ever. Amen.

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

♪ Hymn: *All are Welcome*

Let us build a house where love can dwell
And all can safely live,

A place where saints and children tell
How hearts learn to forgive.

Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
Rock of faith and vault of grace;
Here the love of Christ shall end divisions;

Let us build a house where prophets speak,
And words are strong and true,
Where all God's children dare to seek
To dream God's reign anew.

Here the cross shall stand as witness
And a symbol of God's grace;
Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

Let us build a house where love is found
In water, wine and wheat:
A banquet hall on holy ground,
Where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
Is revealed in time and space;
As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place.

The Blessing

The peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

