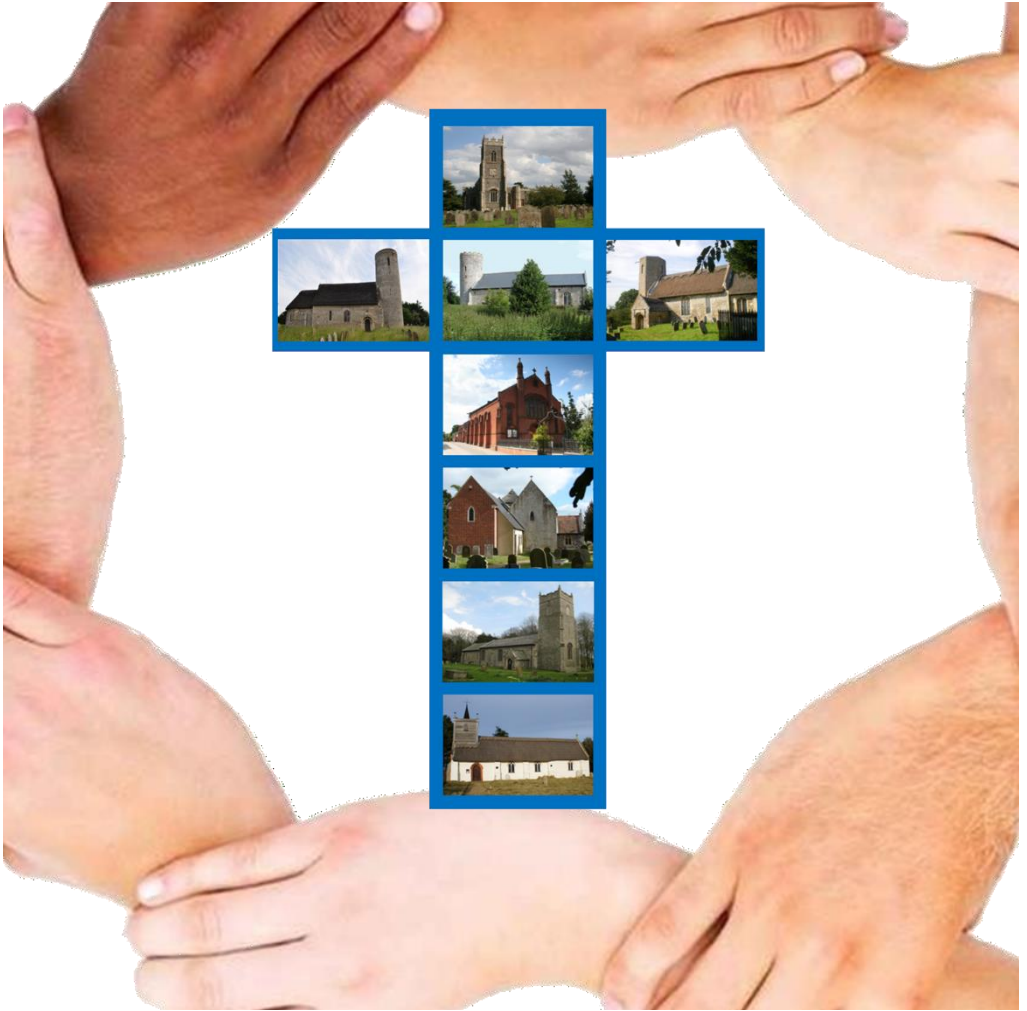


**Chet Valley Churches**



**We Are One**

**Morning Worship for  
Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

**24<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

*Our service today is based on an Ecumenical Celebration prepared by Lynne Chitty, on behalf of ROOTS for Churches Ltd.*

## **♪ Hymn: The Church's One Foundation**

**The church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is his new creation  
By water and the word:  
From heaven he came and sought her  
To be his holy bride;  
With his own blood he bought her,  
And for her life he died.**

**Elect from every nation,  
Yet one o'er all the earth,  
Her charter of salvation  
One Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy name she blesses,  
Partakes one holy food,  
And to one hope she presses  
With every grace endued.**

**Though with a scornful wonder  
Men see her sore oppressed,  
By schisms rent asunder,  
By heresies distressed;  
Yet saints their watch are keeping,  
Their cry goes up, 'How long?'  
And soon the night of weeping  
Shall be the morn of song.**

**'Mid toil and tribulation,  
And tumult of her war,  
She waits the consummation  
Of peace for evermore;  
'Til with the vision glorious  
Her longing eyes are blest,  
And the great church victorious  
Shall be the church at rest.**



**Yet she on earth hath union  
With God the Three in One,  
And mystic sweet communion  
With those whose rest is won:  
O happy ones and holy!  
Lord, give us grace that we,  
Like them, the meek and lowly,  
On high may dwell with thee.**

## **Opening Prayer**

Lord, you invite us to abide in you who are the vine-dresser who cares for us with love. You call on us to see the beauty of each branch united to the vine, the beauty of each person.

And yet, too often the differences in others make us afraid.

We withdraw into ourselves.

Our trust in you and one another is lost.

Come and direct our hearts toward you once again.

That as one family we may praise your name. **Amen.**

## **Litany of Praise**

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:  
glory to you!**

We sing your praise in the midst of the world and among all peoples,  
we sing your praise in the midst of creation and among all creatures.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:  
glory to you!**

We sing your praise among suffering and tears,  
we sing your praise among promises and achievements.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:  
glory to you!**

We sing your praise in the places of conflict and misunderstanding;  
We sing your praise in the places of encounter and reconciliation.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:  
glory to you!**

We sing your praise in the midst of rifts and divisions,  
we sing your praise in the midst of life and death,  
the birth of a new heaven and a new earth.

**You who call us to be praise in the midst of the earth:  
glory to you!**

### **Hymn: Bless the Lord (10,000 Reasons)**

**Bless the Lord, oh my soul.  
Oh my soul, worship his holy name.  
Sing like never before, oh my soul.  
I'll worship your holy name.**

**The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning.  
It's time to sing your song again.  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me,  
Let me be singing when the evening comes.**

**Bless the Lord, oh my soul...**

**You're rich in love and you're slow to anger.  
Your name is great and your heart is kind.  
For all your goodness I will keep on singing.  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find.**

**Bless the Lord oh my soul...**

**And on that day when my strength is failing;  
The end draws near and my time has come.  
Still my soul will sing your praise unending,  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore. Forevermore.**

**Bless the Lord oh my soul...**

### **Abiding in Christ: the unity of the whole person**

 *A reading from John's Gospel, chapter 15 beginning at verse 1.*

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.

My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete.

'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father.

You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

### **Short Reflection [Rev David]**

The reading we've just heard always brings a lump to my throat. It was the passage on which I preached my first sermon. Thinking back all those years makes me realise how the certainty of youth—I was 17 at the time—can seem precocious to one's elders! Yet as I re-read that passage so much still resonates. There is within it several "unions".

There is the unity of the branch to the root-stock; there is the unity of the vine-dresser to the plant; and there is, in the second half of the reading, the unity of friendship.

All three aspects speak to us today. The purpose of the branch is to bear fruit and the only way that can be done is by receiving the sap from the stem. The rootstock provides the wherewithal for existence and for the

produce. But then Jesus says that beyond the rootstock is the one who cares and tends the plant—God—who manages the dressing of the vine by pruning and nurturing. To be a whole person John writes we need to be attached to Christ and allow ourselves to be nurtured by God.

In our service last week, Reverend Alison reminded us of the importance of listening to God since each and every one of us has a vocation—a calling—if we're prepared to listen to what it is. One aspect of our calling is that to be whole we need to abide in the love that flows from God through Jesus and which we can share with those around us—especially in these times when isolation and separation is so prevalent.

## **Intercessions**

God of love, through Christ you said to us: “You did not choose me but I chose you.” You invite us to receive your friendship. Teach us to respond more deeply to this invitation, and to grow and grow in a life that is ever more complete.

**The joy of our heart is in God.**

God of life, you call us to be praise in the midst of the world and to accept one another. May your loving gaze, which rests upon each person, inspire us to celebrate each other just as we are.

**The joy of our heart is in God.**

God you who gather, you knit us together as one vine in Jesus. May your loving Spirit abide in us as church and in our community that together we may celebrate you with joy.

**The joy of our heart is in God.**

God of the one vineyard, you call us to live in your love in all we do and say. Touched by your goodness, grant us to be a reflection of that love in our homes, schools and places where we work.

**The joy of our heart is in God.**

Spend a moment to reflect on God's love; then write your name in the heart on your piece of paper.

## **Hymn: *May the Mind of Christ My Saviour***

**May the mind of Christ my Saviour**

**Live in me from day to day,**

**By his love and power controlling all I do and say.**

**May the word of God dwell richly  
In my heart from hour to hour,  
So that all may see I triumph only through his power.**

**May the peace of God my Father  
Rule my life in everything,  
That I may be calm to comfort sick and sorrowing.**

**May the love of Jesus fill me,  
As the waters fill the sea;  
Him exalting, self abasing: this is victory.**

**May I run the race before me,  
Strong and brave to face the foe,  
Only looking unto Jesus as I onward go.**

## **The visible unity of Christians**

 *A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, chapter 1 beginning at verse 10.*

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you should be in agreement and that there should be no divisions among you, but that you should be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, 'I belong to Paul', or 'I belong to Apollos', or 'I belong to Cephas', or 'I belong to Christ.' Has Christ been divided?

## **Short reflection**

As we look back over the history of the church it isn't one to be proud of. And we don't even need to look back since even today there is evidence of so many instances of dis-unity. Much to the church's shame.

Last week I joined in with a prayer vigil around the pandemic and as I was praying and meditating I discovered a little book on my book-shelf, "Prayers that Live" by Frank Colqhoun. I've had for it for many years—long before I came to Norfolk—reading it, I came across a prayer which was added to the Book of Common Prayer in 1715 upon the accession of the House of Hanover to be used on the anniversary of the monarch's accession:

"O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour the Prince of Peace: give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great

dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from godly union and concord: that, as there is but one body, and one Spirit, and one hope of our calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all; so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

There is room for diversity in the church. It is only fair to say that we cannot all agree with one another on every point of doctrine or practice. But however much we disagree we must rid ourselves of amongst other things an exclusive sectarian spirit which hinder us from living to the full the life God wants. Frank Colquhoun quotes from John Wesley’s Letter to a Roman Catholic (1749):

“If we cannot as yet think alike in all things, at least we may love alike. Herein we cannot possibly do amiss. For of one point none can doubt a moment: God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.’

Let us heed and act on that desire.

## **Intercessions**

Holy Spirit, you create and re-create the Church in all places. Come and whisper in our hearts the prayer which Jesus addressed to his Father on the eve of his passion: “that they may all be one... so that the world may believe”.

**Thank you. Amen.**

Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace, light the fire of your love in us so that suspicions and misunderstanding cease in the Church. May the walls that separate us fall.

**Thank you. Amen.**

Holy Spirit, Consoler of all, open our hearts to forgiveness and reconciliation and bring us back to you when we lose our way.

**Thank you. Amen.**

Lord Jesus, gentle and humble of heart, give us poverty of spirit so that we may be open to your grace.

**Thank you. Amen.**



Holy Spirit, you never abandon the men, women and children who are persecuted for their faithfulness to the gospel. Give them strength and courage, and support those who help them.

**Thank you. Amen.**

Let us offer, in whatever way seems appropriate, a sign of Christ's peace as our prayer and commitment to unity.

### **♪ Hymn: O Lord All the World Belongs to You**

**O Lord, all the world belongs to you  
And you are always making all things new.  
What is wrong, you forgive, and the new life you give  
Is what's turning the world upside down.**

**The world's only loving to its friends,  
But your way of loving never ends,  
Loving enemies too; and this loving with you  
Is what's turning the world upside down.**

**The world lies divided and apart,  
You draw men together, and we start  
In your body to see that in fellowship, we  
Can be turning the world upside down.**



**The world wants the wealth to live in state,  
But you show a new way to be great:  
Like a servant you came, and if we do the same,  
We'll be turning the world upside down.**

**Oh Lord, all the world belongs to you  
And you are always making all things new.  
Send your Spirit on all in your church whom you call  
To be turning, to be turning, to be turning  
The world upside down.**

### **The unity of all peoples with all creation**

**📖 A reading from the Revelation, chapter 7 beginning at verse 9**

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm

branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

## Short reflection

For some this period of lockdown has provided another opportunity to engage with nature. To re-appraise the space and environment around them. "No man is an island" - wrote John Donne - recognising our need to be in comm-unity, one with another, is of importance, yet there is also a unity required between humanity and nature. The way we "use" the world's resources not only impacts on our lives but also on the very essence of creation. The care we take of creation is not just for us but for generations to come.

I mentioned that I was a teenager when I first preached on John 15. Now, nearly 50 years later, it is often teenagers who are carrying the torch to challenge all of us to respect and care for the world in which we live. To be in union with the environment requires us to be willing to recognise that it isn't ours but God's; and that the Vine-dresser's requirement for us to bear fruit involves the "mundane" aspects of life.

The LORD's sovereignty is paramount. It is through our unity with Jesus and with each other that we can truly live and move and have our being.

## Intercessions

God of life, you have created everyone in your image and likeness. We sing your praise for the gift of our many cultures and traditions. Grant us the courage to stand against injustice and prejudice.

**God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Merciful God, you have shown us in Christ that we are one in you. Teach us to use this gift in the world so that believers of all faiths in every country may be able to listen to each other and live in peace.

**God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

O Jesus, you came into the world and shared fully in our humanity. You know the hardships of life for people who suffer in so many different ways. May the Spirit of compassion move us to share our time, gifts and resources with all those in need.

**God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

Holy Spirit, you hear the fury of your wounded creation and the cries of those already suffering from climate change. Guide us toward new ways of living that are in harmony with all creation.

**God of peace, God of love, in you is our hope!**

At the centre of the world is God, in whom all our desires and longings find their meeting place. As we move closer to God, so we draw closer to one another. And the closer we come to one another, the closer we come to God.

Let us pray as one the prayer that Jesus taught us as his disciples

**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: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling**

**Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heav'n to earth come down:  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
All thy faithful mercies crown:  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
Pure, unbounded love thou art;  
Visit us with thy salvation,  
Enter ev'ry trembling heart.**

**Come, Almighty to deliver,  
Let us all thy life receive;  
Suddenly return, and never,  
Nevermore thy temples leave.  
Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve thee as thy hosts above,  
Pray and praise thee without ceasing,  
Glory in thy perfect love.**

**Finish, then, thy new creation;  
Pure and spotless let us be:  
Let us see thy great salvation  
Perfectly restored in thee;  
Changed from glory into glory,  
'Til in heav'n we take our place,  
'Til we cast our crowns before thee,  
Lost in wonder, love, and praise.**



## **Commitment**

Will you pray and work that God may reign?

**With God's help, we will.**

Throughout your day will you let the Word of God breathe life into your work and play and rest?

**With God's help, we will.**

Will you maintain inner silence in all things so as to dwell in Christ?

**With God's help, we will. Amen.**

## **Blessing**

Be one, so that the world may believe!

Abide in God's love, and bear the fruits of this love.

**May the God of all creation, fill us with all joy and all peace in faith,  
so that we may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Go in in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ. Amen.**