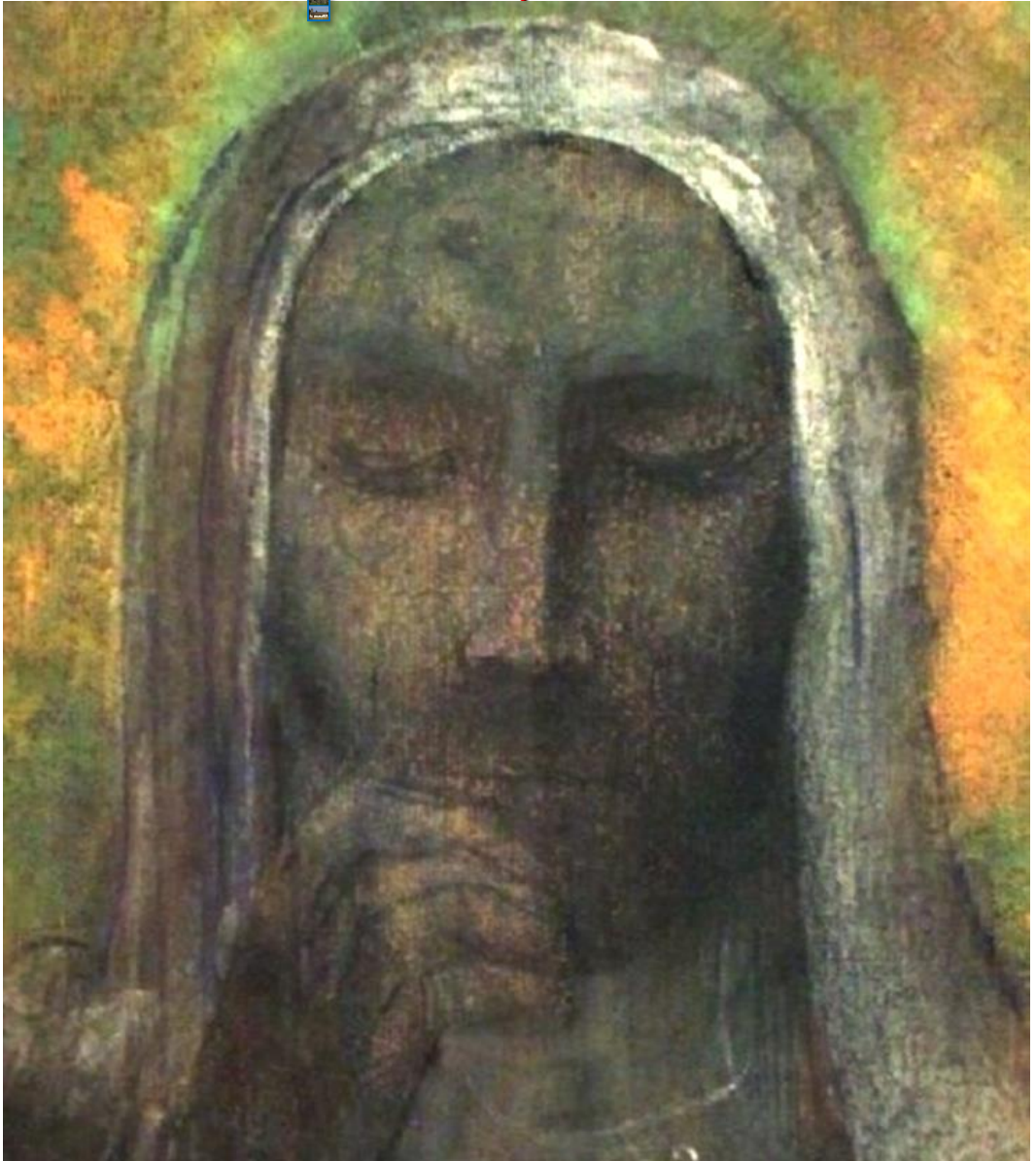




Chet Valley Churches



All Together Worship

Jesus: The Image of God

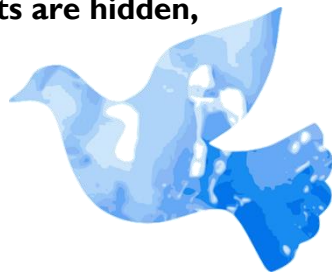
17th July 2022

Introduction: “Who, or maybe, ‘what’, is Jesus?”

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

🙏 The Collect for Purity—A Prayer of Preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden,
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit
that we may perfectly love you
and worthily magnify your holy name
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**



🎵 Hymn: Christ Triumphant

**Christ triumphant, ever reigning, Saviour, Master, King!
Lord of heaven, our lives sustaining, hear us as we sing:
Yours the glory and the crown,
The high renown, the eternal name.**

**Word incarnate, truth revealing, Son of Man on earth!
Power and majesty concealing by your humble birth:
Yours the glory...**

**Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated, victim crucified!
Death is through the cross defeated, sinners justified:
Yours the glory...**

**Priestly king, enthroned for ever high in heaven above!
Sin and death and hell shall never stifle hymns of love:
Yours the glory...**

**So, our hearts and voices raising through the ages long,
Ceaselessly upon you gazing, this shall be our song:
Yours the glory...**

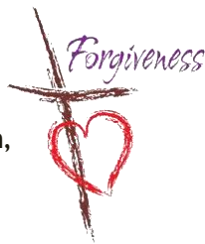
🙏 The Collect—A Special Prayer for the Day

**Almighty God, Send down upon your church the riches of your Spirit,
and kindle in all who minister the Gospel your countless gifts of grace;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Confession—We Say Sorry to God

A minister introduces a time of penitence.

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden,
to ask for his forgiveness and peace.



**Father God, we ask you to forgive us
for the things we have thought and the things we have said
and the things we have done that do not please you.
We are sorry.**

**Help us to be more like Jesus: ready to pray, ready to help others,
ready to do your will in all things, every day. Amen.**

Absolution

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal
and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord.
Amen.

♪ Gloria

**Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo; (x2)
Lord God, Heavenly King, peace you bring to us;
We worship you, we give you thanks,
We sing our song of praise.**

**Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo; (x2)
Jesus, Saviour of all, Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away our sins,
O Lord, have mercy on us all.**

**Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo; (x2)
At the Father's right hand, Lord receive our prayer,
For you alone are the Holy One,
And you alone are the Lord.**

**Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo; (x2)
Glory, Father and Son, Glory, Holy Spirit,
To you we raise our hands up high,
We glorify your name.**

Gloria, 🙌🙌 gloria, in excelsis Deo; (x2)

Reading: Colossians 1:15-20

Jesus Christ is the image of God, the invisible one, the firstborn of all creation. For in him all things were created, in the heavens and here on the earth. Things we can see and things we cannot—thrones and lordships and rulers and powers—all were created both through him and for him.

And he is ahead, prior to all else and in him all things hold together; and he himself is supreme, the head over the body, the church. He is the start of it all, firstborn from realms of the dead; so in all things he might be the chief.

For in him all the Fullness was glad to dwell and through him to reconcile all to himself, making peace through the blood of his cross, through him—yes, things on the earth, and also the things in the heavens.

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

Talk [Rev Alison]

What a wonderful reading this morning: a great hymn of praise to Christ. A hymn that might help us to answer that question about Jesus that I wondered at the beginning.

“Who, or maybe, ‘what’, is Jesus?”

The great Christian writer, C S Lewis, got upset when people would say Jesus was just a good man, a teacher of wisdom. He would say, “No! That’s not an option”. For C S Lewis, there were only three possibilities.

Firstly, Jesus thought he was God but was actually mentally ill, having delusions of Godhead;

Second, he knew he was not God but pretended to be, conning thousands of gullible peasants;

Or third, he actually *was* God, just as he claimed.

Paul was in no doubt, as he said in the letter we have just heard. So what does that letter tell us?

To start with it says that Christ, Jesus, is the image of the invisible God. That sounds strange enough in itself. How can you possibly have an image of something that is invisible?

If I have a mirror, it’s easy to see my own reflection in it, but impossible to see my granddaughter in it because she lives on the other side of the

country and so, as far as I am concerned, is invisible. But maybe if she was in the next-door room, with the door open, I might be able to angle the mirror somehow so that I could see her in it.

In the same way, Jesus is the mirror image of God who is there but to all intents and purposes is invisible to us.

When his disciple, Philip, said, “*Lord, show us the Father*”. Jesus answered, “*Anyone who has seen me, has seen the Father*”.

The more we look at Jesus, the more we will get to know the true nature of our loving God. It reminds me of those verses in the first chapter of Genesis,

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

And in the opening verses of Paul’s letter, we discover that Christ, Jesus, is firstborn in creation—all things were made in him and through him and for him. It sounds like the opening verses in St John’s Gospel that we hear at Christmas, when John refers to Jesus as The Word:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.

It’s hard to imagine that Jesus was right there in some way, one with God at the beginning of time and space, and was then born on earth as a human at a particular time in a particular place. But we’re told that it was so.

Jesus is supreme, first of all beings, reigning over the kings and queens of this world, over presidents and prime ministers, over generals and potentates. In fact, all of creation is held together in him. Not only is Christ, Jesus, first in creation, but he is also first in God’s new creation, reigning supreme in God’s kingdom.

Perhaps that makes Jesus feel rather remote, lofty, way above us all. Except that we know when he was Emmanuel, God with us, he showed love beyond measure, love that led to the cross.

Jesus revealed the invisible God to humanity; we can meet God face-to-face in Jesus who is made in God’s image. We too are made in the image of God, but because of the wrong things we do—our sin—our image is a bit messed up and doesn’t truly reflect God.

But because Jesus didn't stay dead for ever—he was first born from the dead and we celebrate his resurrection at Easter—we are brought back to God through the cross. And through the cross, we can again see God and see his image in us.

Why do we need to know about Jesus, who or what he was? Well quite simply, Christianity is about Jesus Christ. The more that we know about Jesus, the more that we will understand about God and what he's done for us.

The Profession of Faith

Let us affirm our common 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.**

♪ Hymn: King of Kings, Majesty

**King of kings, majesty, God of heaven living in me,
Gentle Saviour, closest friend,
Strong deliverer, beginning and end,
All within me falls at your throne:**

**Your majesty, I can but bow, I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve I live to serve your majesty.**

**Earth and heaven worship you, love eternal, faithful and true,
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
Brought this sinner near to your throne;
All within me cries out in praise:**

**Your majesty, I can but bow, I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve I live to serve your majesty.**

I live to serve your majesty.



We Pray Together

Our minds are so often full of words, and what is worse, our hearts are often clogged up with thoughts and ideas as well, which leaves little room for meeting God in simplicity and stillness. So this morning we are going to have space to pray ourselves, guided with leads and prompts.

So first, let us take a little time to notice how many good things surround us, how much there is that we take for granted, and how much our lives have been blessed this last week with good people and enjoyable experiences.

Silence

We pray now for some of those people and places in the news, things we will read in the Sunday papers when we get home, or maybe have seen on our TV screens during the week. We hold them now within God's love.

Silence

We turn now to pray for the Church, for any of the big issues facing it at present, and we pray for our own church, particularly with many opportunities and some problems before us. We ask for guidance and grace for the Church.

Silence

Between us all, we know so many people who are struggling today with illness, crises, big decisions and major changes in life. God's care for them is even greater than ours, but let us show our own love and concern for them as we pray, naming our own people in quiet trust before God.

Silence

Each of us has things on our mind, perhaps things we hesitate to mention to anyone else. But our heavenly Father understands us totally, and wants only the very best outcome for us. Let us pray to him in the honesty of our own hearts.

Silence

These, Lord, are the prayers of your people this morning. We ask you to take each one of these prayers and answer them in your own time and in your own way. And in the meantime give us expectant and trustful hearts. For Jesus' sake. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

We bring all our prayers together in the words
that Jesus himself taught us saying together:



**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.**

🎵 Hymn: *Jesus is Lord*

**Jesus is Lord! Creation's voice proclaims it.
For by his power each tree and flower, was planned and made.
Jesus is Lord! The universe declares it.
Sun, moon and stars in heaven cry, 'Jesus is Lord!'**

**Jesus is Lord! Jesus is Lord!
Praise him with Hallelujahs for Jesus is Lord!**

**Jesus is Lord! Yet from his throne eternal,
In flesh he came to die in pain, on Calvary's tree.
Jesus is Lord! From him all life proceeding,
Yet gave his life a ransom, thus setting us free.**

**Jesus is Lord! O'er sin the mighty conqueror.
From death he rose, and all his foes, shall own his name.
Jesus is Lord! God sent his Holy Spirit
To show by works of power, that Jesus is Lord.**

Blessing & Dismissal

May God, who gives patience and encouragement, give you a spirit of unity to live in harmony as you follow Jesus Christ, the image of God, so that with one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; 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.

