Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush

17th. Sunday after Trinity

Welcome-*do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready*.

The Lord be with you
and also with you

OPENING PRAYER
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 Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYERS OF PENITENCE AND ABSOLUTION

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.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour, in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry, and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who in Jesus Christ has given us
a kingdom that cannot be destroyed,
forgive you your sins,
open your eyes to God's truth,

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strengthen you to do God's will
and give you the joy of his kingdom,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE COLLECT

Almighty God,
you have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in you:
pour your love into our hearts and draw us to yourself,
and so bring us at last to your heavenly city
where we shall see you face to face;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

READINGS : Philippians 3.4b.-14
(Please read Matthew 21:33 to end at home)

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

REFLECTION

The word "marathon" comes from the historical legend of when the Persian army invaded, and the Greek runner-messenger Pheidippides in 490 B.C., was dispatched to carry the good news of the victory to the terrified residents of Athens. Pheidippides ran the entire 25 miles across the plain of Marathon to the city, not once stopping. When he arrived, exhausted, dehydrated, Pheidippides burst into the city assembly, shouted, "Rejoice! We conquered!" And then he collapsed and died.

The Greek word for the Bible is "gospel," or the "good news,". God's victory won in Jesus Christ is the kind of news that sends people running.

Think of the way Peter and John run to the graveyard on Easter morning amid the confusing reports that Jesus' body is gone, wanting to see the empty tomb with their own eyes. And there are others whom the good news of Jesus sets running out of sheer joy at what they have found and out of desire to share the joy with others -- think of the women who run away from Jesus' empty grave in "fear and great joy" to tell his friends; or think of the apostle Paul from his jail cell to the Philippians, "Rejoice! The Lord has conquered."

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In Philippians, Paul imagines his whole life as a kind of long and arduous marathon, and he imagines himself as a runner hitting the wall and straining forward to break the tape at the finish line, trusting that it is all worth the pain: “Forgetting what lies behind,” he says, “and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward … the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus” (3:13-14 NRSV).

The Greek word that we translate as “press on” in this passage has the connotation of chase, of hot pursuit, of even hunting down. Paul is chasing after Christ. Of course, Paul had been hunting after Jesus for a long time -- but at the start, when the news about Jesus first set him running, he was running *after* Jesus’ followers, trying to kill them.

During that time in his life, Paul had been running toward a different prize. He wanted to be a religious success. He wanted to follow God’s law. He trained hard, and by outward measures, he succeeded.

He lists his spiritual resume, Circumcised on the eighth day after his birth (a lifelong member of the faith); born of the tribe of Benjamin; a Hebrew born of Hebrews and follows God’s law, as Pharisee.

On the road to Damascus, Paul met and was cared for by one of Jesus’ people, Ananias. Paul came to a new understanding of Christ and his relationship to God. Paul realized he had been running the wrong way. His eyes were opened to the truth.

Christ was the fulfilment of the law, the reason behind it. God had brought the law to life by sending a faithful guide in Jesus, who embodied, in the flesh, what the law was all about, and who made it available to all people.

Christ, through the Spirit, could live within and through him, within and through God’s people, and enable them to be and do what they could never be or do on their own. What God wanted was not law-abiding citizens who played by the rules to justify their identity as God’s people; what God wanted were sons and daughters who fulfilled the meaning of the law because they had the heart and mind of this man Jesus. And now, through the Spirit, that could really happen in human lives.

“I want to know Christ,” Paul wrote. He had a new focus, and a new way of understanding his life now. Paul is running toward a new prize now, a prize that is worth it -- toward Christ.

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So “forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the … prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.”

He runs now, not because others have told him to, but because he *wants* to. He follows Jesus, not because he must, but because he *may*, because he *can*. Paul runs toward Christ, not because he has to, but because now he *has* to.

After that meeting, everything Paul says and does is with joy and a real passion.

We can become defensive of our faith and the state of the church. If we can capture that joy and passion, with confidence and conviction, how much more appealing than being defeatist.

It is hard to reconcile our modern faith with Paul's faith. Paul found something in Jesus that emboldened him to forfeit his previously normal life.

Does our faith resemble Paul's?

Praying without ceasing, cheerfully giving, basking in the quiet that speaks, ever mindful that there is no condemnation or separation from the love of God in Christ Jesus. This filled him up and rescued him.

Those of our community, do they want to know, for all our praying and singing, sitting and standing, what we have we gained, that it is something the world cannot give?

In this time of rediscovering different ways of outreach and mission, how can we rediscover what's significant about being church again.

What shall we do? Jesus has redeemed the past and bought us a future with his love. Let’s not get stuck in the past. Let’s find ways of moving forward with Jesus and that takes some work. It stretches us forward. But we press on toward the goal of the heavenly calling.

You and I have been called to release heaven wherever we are. And you and I have been given the capacity to release heaven wherever we find ourselves. And more heaven gets released every day you and I press on with Jesus. Forgiveness is from heaven. So is love, peace, joy, generosity and kindness. We're pressing on toward that at home and at work, in the community, wherever we are.

Pressing on with a God that is beyond our asking or imagining. A God who came among us gently, lived wonderfully, taught truthfully, died violently, was risen

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triumphantly, empowers generously and remains our companion steadfastly. No words can contain it. No effort can attain it. The best thing is to proclaim it. That's the whole point. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

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

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Gathering our prayers and praises into one,
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour taught us.
Our Father,
which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done ;
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil;
for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

THE PEACE

We are all one in Christ Jesus.
We belong to him through faith,
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

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

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

THE THANKSGIVING 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 him thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.

And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels praising you, and saying:

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

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna, in the highest.

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
Through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
And as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit
That broken bread and wine outpoured
May be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
And taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
Do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took a cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this all of you;
This is my blood of the new covenant,

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Which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did, in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
Made once upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
We proclaim his death and resurrection
Until he comes in glory.
Great is the mystery of faith

Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
Help us work together for that day
When your kingdom comes
And justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
Gather into your loving arms with St Faith, St John the Baptist, St Thomas of Canterbury with St Peter and St Paul, The Church of the Redeemer and all the Saints to feast at your table in heaven.
Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
All honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
For ever and ever. **Amen.**

Jesus, Lamb of God
have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.
Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us peace.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
Therefore let us keep the feast

(Consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

Lord, we pray that your grace may always precede and follow us, and make us continually to be given to all good works;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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We thank you, Lord, that you have fed us in this physical and spiritual sacrament, united us with Christ, and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all peoples.
Amen.

THE 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 BLESSING

May the father from whom every family
in earth and heaven receives its name
strengthen you with his Spirit
so that Christ may dwell in your hearts;
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

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