

Berrow with Pendock, Eldersfield, Birtsmorton and Hollybush



2nd Sunday before Lent

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

HYMN

OPENING PRAYER

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you all
and also with you.

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.

Jesus said: Before you offer your gift, go and be reconciled.
As brothers and sisters in God's family, we come together to ask our
Father for forgiveness.

THE CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,

Material in this service is drawn from alternative worship all age, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* which is copyright © The Archbishops Council 2000, *New Patterns for Worship* which is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2002 and *The Promise of His Glory* which is copyright © The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England 1990 and 1991.

and in what we have left undone.
 We are heartily sorry, and repent of all our sins.
 For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
 forgive us all that is past;
 and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
 to the glory of your name.
Amen.

May Almighty God have mercy on you,
 forgive you your sins,
 and bring you to everlasting life.
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 COLLECT

Almighty God, you have created the heavens and the earth
 and made us in your own image: teach us to discern your hand in all
 your works and your likeness in all your children;

Material in this service is drawn from alternative worship all age, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* which is copyright © The Archbishops Council 2000, *New Patterns for Worship* which is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2002 and *The Promise of His Glory* which is copyright © The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England 1990 and 1991.

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
 who with you and the Holy Spirit reigns supreme over all things,
 now and for ever. **Amen.**

READINGS : Colossians 1:15 - 20, John 1:1 - 14

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

(Please read Proverbs 8:1, 22 - 31 at home)

REFLECTION

Having spent last Sunday banging on about how at Candlemas we turn from the crib to the cross, this Sunday I find myself preaching on that most Christmassy of readings – the very first chapter of John’s gospel. When I preached on this same passage at Midnight Mass last year, the main theme which sprang out at me was the incarnation, the majesty and wonder of the word made flesh who came and lived among us. However, today, seen in the light of the part of Paul’s letter to the Colossians which Ruth also read to us, and the excerpt from the book of Proverbs, it’s creation which hits me right between the eyes. In the beginning was the Word, in the beginning was Wisdom in the form of the Holy Spirit, God spoke his mighty Word and all things came into being. All things have been created through Jesus, the Word, and for him.

Whatever your view of the creation story told in the book of Genesis, all our readings today are united in telling us that the world came into being as a result of God’s astounding creativity. Whether through Big Bang plus evolution or six days of hard work, the end result, the amazing world we see about us every day is down to him – or as John puts it All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. And in his letter to the Colossians, Paul goes further telling us that “through him all things hold together.”

But what are we to make of a statement like that at a time like this when everything seems to be falling apart? When our world is afflicted by a global pandemic which has caused so much suffering, misery and death, and is threatening people’s lives and livelihoods, effecting the education of our children and young people and having a potentially very adverse effect on the future of the Church, the body of Christ on earth.

Material in this service is drawn from alternative worship all age, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* which is copyright © The Archbishops Council 2000, *New Patterns for Worship* which is copyright © The Archbishops’ Council 2002 and *The Promise of His Glory* which is copyright © The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England 1990 and 1991.

If God is light and life, where is he when our world appears to be engulfed by darkness and death?

The answer is he's right here with us in the midst of it. Always has been, and, more importantly, always will be. The Word became flesh, the invisible God became visible in the person of Jesus Christ, in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And when he ascended back up into heaven, he left behind him the Holy Spirit, the comforter, Wisdom in all her glory, who was also present at the beginning of all things, brooding over the waters. And she is with us still, hard at work in our world, Christ's hands and feet reaching out to tend the sick, deliver the groceries, teach the children, comfort the bereaved.

And the fact is, our world is still holding together through the kindness, the generosity, the loving care and, dare I say, the faith of so many people – family, friends and neighbours reaching out to help those who need it. We saw it in the amazing response to the wonderful, inspirational Captain Sir Tom Moore, whose loss we mourn, and on our own doorstep, in the way folk have rallied round to help and support Rev Julie and Bob. We see it in the way people are adapting, are being creative in the way they work, the way they teach, even the way we do Church.

And maybe, just maybe, this period of huge disruption, causing such pain and heartache to so many, could also be a way of making us step back and take a long hard look at what we are doing to God's glorious creation. Could make us look at the way we were living, the damage it was doing to our environment, and to those other species who share it with us, and reflect that we don't necessarily need to carry on down that road to destruction. That it's not too late to change direction, to live in a different way, one that values creation and the natural world as they deserve to be valued, not as commodities to be exploited but as a vital life support system to be cherished, cared for and enjoyed.

The Word became flesh to enable God to reconcile all things to himself by making peace through his blood on the cross. It's very easy to forget that this wasn't seen as particularly good news at the time. The very people Jesus came to save didn't accept him, didn't listen to him, didn't want to change their ways. We too as Church can become stuck in a rut, not wanting to change even though we know the way we are as Church isn't sustainable long term.

Covid has shown us that we are more resilient, more creative, more inventive and adaptable than we knew. That when circumstance forces us to change, we don't go under, and we not only survive but in some ways we thrive. Being forced to use new means of coming together and communicating has enabled us to connect with a whole new raft of people. I would suggest that instead of being in a rush to return to what was normal for us as Church before all this began, we need to take a careful look at all that we have gained from this Covid experience of being Church, as well as what we've been missing, and try to incorporate both into our new normal as the body of Christ in this place.

God is alpha and omega. He was there at the beginning of all things, he will be there at the end of all things. But most importantly for us, he is here now, here in the midst of us, sustaining us, supporting us, inspiring us to keep going, keep growing, keep being creative and inventive, to keep on shining his light out into the world even in these dark times.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Please ask for any additional prayers

**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;**

Material in this service is drawn from alternative worship all age, *Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England* which is copyright © The Archbishops Council 2000, *New Patterns for Worship* which is copyright © The Archbishops' Council 2002 and *The Promise of His Glory* which is copyright © The Central Board of Finance of the Church of England 1990 and 1991.

for thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE PEACE

“Where two or three are gathered together in my name”, says the Lord,
“there am I in the midst of them.”

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.
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 OFFERTORY PRAYER

Wise and gracious God,
you spread a table before us;
nourish your people with the word of life and the bread of heaven.
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 truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
 always and everywhere to give you thanks,
 holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
 From sunrise to sunset this day is holy,
 for Christ has risen from the tomb
 and scattered the darkness of death
 with light that will not fade.
 This day the risen Lord walks with your gathered people,
 unfolds for us your word,
 and makes himself known in the breaking of the bread.
 And though the night will overtake this day
 you summon us to live in endless light,
 the never-ceasing sabbath of the Lord.
 And so, with choirs of angels
 and with all the heavenly host,
 we proclaim your glory
 and join their unending song of praise:

**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.**

Lord, you are holy indeed, the source of all holiness;
 grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit,
 and according to your holy will, these gifts of bread and wine
 may be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;

who in the same night that he was betrayed'
 took bread and gave you thanks;
 he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you;
 do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks;
 he gave it to them saying; Drink this, all of you;
 this is my blood of the new covenant, 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.

Great is the mystery of faith
Christ has died:
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

And so Father, calling to mind his death on the cross,
 his perfect sacrifice made once for the sins of the whole world;
 rejoicing in his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
 and looking for his coming in glory,
 we celebrate this memorial of our redemption.
 As we offer you this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving,
 we bring before you this bread and this cup
 and we thank you for counting us worthy to stand in your presence and
 serve you.

Send the Holy Spirit on your people
 and gather into one in your kingdom
 all who share this bread and this cup
 so that we in the company of all your saints
 may praise and glorify you for ever
 through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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

(consume)

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

God our creator,
by your gift the tree of life was set at the heart of the earthly paradise,
and the bread of life at the heart of your Church:
may we who have been nourished at your table on earth
be transformed by the glory of the Saviour's cross
and enjoy the delights of eternity;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

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.

HYMN

THE BLESSING

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing;
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