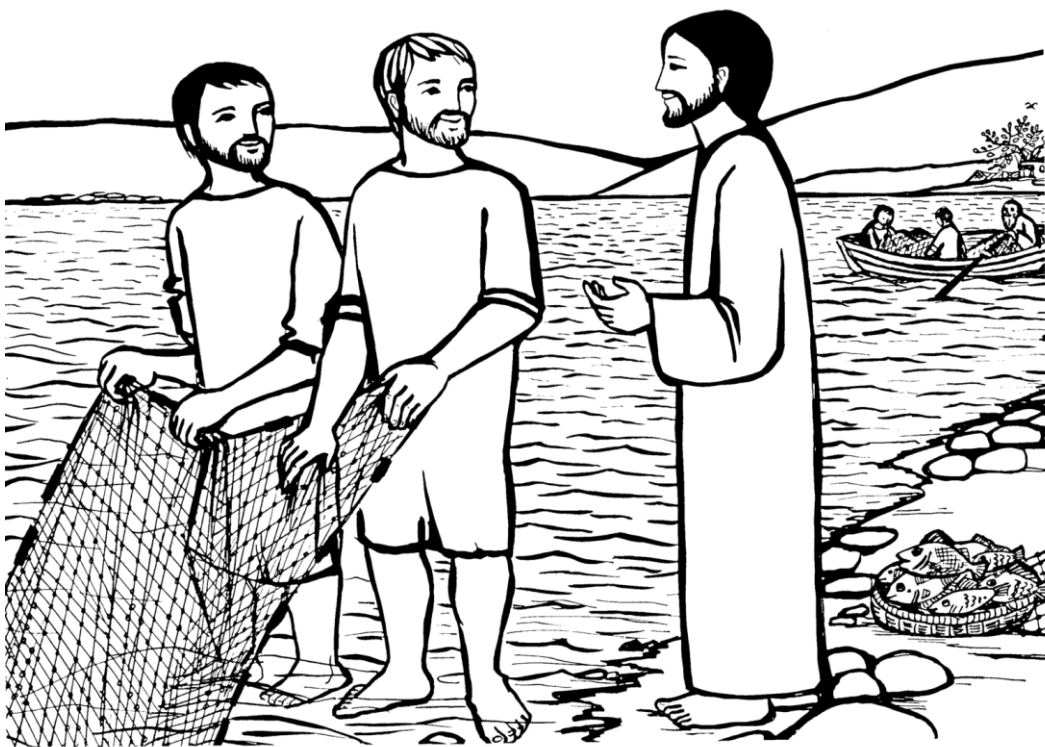


United Benefice of Berrow with Pendock Eldersfield, Hollybush and Birtsmorton



Holy Communion
for the Sundays after Trinity

THE WELCOME

Do have a candle, glass of juice/wine and cracker/piece of bread ready

THE FIRST HYMN

The Lord be with you
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 Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

THE CONFESSION 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.

(There will be a time of silence for reflection before we say the Confession together.)

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

THE COLLECT

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

THE READINGS: 1 Kings 19:1-8, Ephesians 4:25-5:2

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

THE GOSPEL READING: John 6:35, 41-51

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *N.*
Glory to you, O Lord.
At the end of the reading:

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

THE SERMON

Bread – the staff of life. An everyday, staple food pretty much since humanity discovered fire and started cooking. But isn't that a bit of a dull representation of the Saviour of the world? Surely the Almighty could have come up with a significantly weightier and more portentous image for his Son? Or are we to take from this that Jesus is – or should be – a part of our everyday. Not something you keep for Sunday best, but a part of the ups and downs of our lives? A vital staple, a sustainer and nourisher as well as a saviour and redeemer.

The prophet Elijah was certainly in need of some sustenance after he fled from Queen Jezebel. As most of you will know, making bread is a relatively simple process, requiring only a few ingredients. But it also requires time – time for the mix to rest, prove and rise – and kneading – giving your dough a really good pummelling to stretch out that gluten. The prophet Elijah had been given a good pummelling by Queen Jezebel. She was out for his blood and he'd had enough. This serving God business was very overrated, he just wanted to lie down and die. And what turned it around for him, was it a motivational speaker, an inspiring podcast or a can of Red Bull? No, it was good old-fashioned bread, and rest. Time and sleep to heal him, bread to give him energy and nourishment, set him up ready for the long walk to Mount Horeb where he hears the still small voice of God.

Everyone in the world has taken a good pummelling in the last 17 months. We've been stretched to the limit, and I'm sure there have been times for many of us when we've just wanted to lie down and give up on life for a while. What has sustained us and enabled us to keep going? Partly I think it's the support we've all received and given to each other via Phone Church, emails, cards, phone calls and many other ways of pulling together, for, as St Paul puts it in our epistle reading, we are all members of one body. And for me the enforced pause which Covid has brought to all our lives, the way it has stripped away much that we had come to rely on for security and sustenance, has helped to reveal what it is that we really can depend upon. Like the dough, we've been forced to wait, to go into a prolonged period of proving and waiting to see what would emerge when life as we knew it started again.

So what has emerged for me? Well, much of what St Paul says to the Church at Ephesus. The importance of being kind and compassionate to each other and to ourselves has been a theme throughout lockdown, and I think we have all become keenly aware of how vital it is to only say things which are helpful, which build each other up according to our needs, rather than looking to criticise and tear each other down. When life suddenly becomes fragile, transient, and even more precious, surely it makes sense to cast out anger and malice, to forgive as we have been forgiven, and to try to live a life of love, as our Saviour taught us?

That's what time has done for us, that enforced period of rest and reassessment we've all had to endure. What about the bread, what is it that has been the one thing which couldn't be taken away from us?

Faith. The love of God, salvation through Jesus Christ and the comfort and encouragement of the Holy Spirit. Faith is the wellspring from which all else flows. An inspiration, a challenge, something which will stretch us and make demands upon us, but will also provide us with firm foundations, some excellent rules for life and the sustenance which will enable us to keep going, keep trying to live that life of love and forgiveness. Because we know that this bread never runs out, this well never runs dry, this God never leaves us to struggle alone.

So when we eat the bread and drink the juice or wine in a few moments time, we do it to remember the sacrifice Jesus made for our sins, but we also do it to mark the fact that we are fed by our faith, sustained by a daily rhythm of prayer and worship which enables and empowers us to keep going, keep being the body of Christ in this place. Through faith, we keep living, keep loving, keep forgiving so that someday everyone will have the opportunity to listen, to learn, to live a life of love, hope and peace rather than anger, frustration and fear. Amen.

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 PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Lord, in your mercy
hear our prayer.
At the end of the prayers:

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

**As the grain once scattered in the fields
and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside
are now reunited on this table in the bread and wine,
so, Lord, may your whole church soon be gathered together
from the corners of the earth into your kingdom. Amen.**

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.

Let us pray

Father, we give you thanks and praise
through your beloved Son Jesus Christ, your living Word,
through whom you have created all things;
who was sent by you in your great goodness to be our Saviour.

By the power of the Holy Spirit he took flesh;
as your Son, born of the blessed Virgin,
he lived on earth and went about among us;
he opened wide his arms for us on the cross;
he put an end to death by dying for us;
and revealed the resurrection by rising to new life;
so he fulfilled your will and won for you a holy people.

Therefore with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven,
we proclaim your great and glorious name,
for ever 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.**

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 one bread and one cup,
so that we, in the company of [N and] all the saints,

may praise and glorify you for ever,
through Jesus Christ our Lord;

by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray.

**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.**

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast

(consume)

THE PRAYERS AFTER COMMUNION

God of our pilgrimage,
you have willed that the gate of mercy
should stand open for those who trust in you:
look upon us with your favour
that we who follow the path of your will
may never wander from the way of life;
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.**

THE FINAL HYMN

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.

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