

Swaythling Parish

Sunday 3 May Fourth Sunday of Easter

Welcome

Below is a service sheet for you to use. This is based on a service that is being made into a video; which some of our congregation will be joining in with this Sunday morning through the YouTube channel.

If you are able to watch YouTube videos (on a computer or tablet or phone) let us know, and we can give you the details of where to find the video. If do not have access to watch the YouTube video, we hope you will be able to use these words and join us too in spirit.

Greeting

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

Alleluia. Christ is Risen
He is Risen indeed. Alleluia

Let us just have a moment to gather our thoughts and then we say together.

**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: God is love, His the care.

(if you would like to sing this at home the words are below).

1 God is love: his the care,
tending each, ev'rywhere,
God is love, all is there!
Jesus came to show him,
that we all might know him!

Refrain:

*Sing aloud, loud, loud!
sing aloud, loud, loud!
God is good! God is truth!
God is beauty! Praise him!*

2 None can see God above;
we can share life and love;
thus may we Godward move,
finding him in creation,
holding ev'ry nation. [Refrain]

3 Jesus lived on the earth,
hope and life brought to birth
and affirmed human worth,
for he came to save us
by the truth he gave us. [Refrain]

4 To our Lord praise we sing,
light and life, friend and King,
coming down, love to bring,
pattern for our duty,
showing God in beauty. [Refrain]

Percy Dearmer (1925)

We are now going to say "thankyou". Just gather to mind something or things that have happened that are good, things that it can be easy to miss in moments like these. Perhaps things that we are grateful to others for, perhaps things that we have

managed, perhaps other things. Let us hold those things and thank God.

The Confession

And where things have not gone right, where we have got it wrong we don't have to let the failure hold us, God is a God of forgiveness and love, so Let us offer our sorry to God now.

Lord God, You raise us to new life in Christ,
forgive us when we chose to live in our own strength.

Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Christ, You are forgiveness and love and yet sometimes we fail to love ourselves and others.
Christ have mercy. **Christ, have mercy**

Lord Spirit, You lead us into new revelations,
forgive us when we close our minds to your prompting.
Lord, have mercy. **Lord, have mercy.**

May the God of love
bring us back to himself,
forgive us our sins,
and assure us of his eternal love
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect is a prayer that is used in church across the land on this Sunday, so we are going to pray it now.

**Risen Christ,
faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep:
teach us to hear your voice
and to follow your command,
that all your people may be gathered
into one flock,
to the glory of God the Father.**

Readings

Acts 2: 42-47

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

John 10:1-10

Jesus said, "I am telling you the truth: the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in some other way, is a thief and a robber. The man who goes in through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him; the sheep hear his voice as he calls his own sheep by name, and he leads them out. When he has brought them out, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice. They will not follow someone else; instead, they will run away from such a person, because they do not know his voice."

Jesus told them this parable, but they did not understand what he meant.

So Jesus said again, "I am telling you the truth: I am the gate for the sheep. All others who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Those who come in by me will be saved; they will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only in order to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness."

A Reflection from Rev'd Peter Dockree

Within no time at all of the lockdown happening there were community groups organising and notes going through doors in our locality and others around the country, people organising to make sure that those who may be unable to get food in these times could be aided. We and others rallied around the local schools to make sure they had backup to make sure that those who would struggle had food to eat. In these times there has been so much done from all levels of society to make sure that no one goes hungry. Efforts were made by councils to provide emergency housing to the homeless, as in a very real sense we realised that the health of the poorest was going to impact us all. This is all awesome, and a real clarion call, but we must make sure that when lockdown ends then we continue to think down those lines.

In the first reading we had today from the book of Acts we have a powerful image of sharing, them giving to anyone as they had need. This is not sharing the surplus, this is radical sharing of resources. We see signs of this in our society in these times, but we must not lose this when things go "back to normal".

In the gospel reading Jesus compares himself to those who have come before who were thieves and bandits i.e. out for themselves. He was the good shepherd, his love was sacrificial and not self-seeking. If we are to follow Jesus, then we are called to make sure that resources are shared, that needs are met, not just this month but every month. That is a challenge, one that know I fall short on all the time, human nature so often leads us in different directions, but a challenge that we cannot ignore.

Peter Dockree

Prayers

On the video Karen leads us in the following prayers.

In these prayers, the response to the phrase "Lord in your mercy" is "hear our prayer"

God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

Lord of heaven and earth, in these strange times of social isolation, we thank you that there is nothing in all of creation, not even coronavirus, that is able to separate us from your love.

We thank you for your church, that although we can no longer meet together in one place we can still worship and serve you through different media. We pray for ministers and church leaders as they face the challenge of ministering and supporting their communities within social distancing rules; we pray that you will give them wisdom and strength and resilience.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray for world leaders and for the leaders in our own country that they will make wise decisions over the coming days, and they will be able to balance the many competing priorities they face; Grant them also the skills to listen and communicate wisely. We pray for all areas of the world where there is poverty or conflict, that they will not be forgotten in the light of the pandemic, thinking especially of Syria, the Yemen and South Sudan.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

Lord we ask that you will give skill, sympathy and resilience, to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom, persistence and insight to those searching for a vaccine and other tests Strengthen

them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health; or protected from future harm.

We pray also for strength for all who continue working to support society, in many different and vital ways. We ask that in all cases they will have the equipment and facilities they need to continue to work safely.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your blessing, and the comfort of your presence for those who are unwell and concerned for loved ones, for those vulnerable because of underlying conditions

for those watching their entire income stream dry up and those who have no choice but to go out to work

for the lonely and those who are afraid to be at home, particularly those at risk of domestic violence or abuse

for those who are bereaved and grieving.

Lord be their healer, their comfort, their strength and provision, their security, safety and companion.

Lord in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

Lord may your love that never fails continue to be shared through the kindness of strangers and neighbours looking out for each other, and grant us each a greater appreciation of what is truly important, and an awareness of your presence.

Merciful Father,

Accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Text adapted from various Church of England, CAFOD and Christian Aid coronavirus prayers

Hymn: Praise my Soul the King of Heaven.

- 1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet your tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
evermore his praises sing.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise the everlasting King!
- 2 Praise him for his grace and favor
to his people in distress.
Praise him, still the same as ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Glorious in his faithfulness!
- 3 Fatherlike he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows.
In his hand he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Widely yet his mercy flows!
- 4 Angels, help us to adore him;
you behold him face to face.
Sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space.
Alleluia, alleluia!
Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1834)

Closing Blessing

Blessed are the poor
For theirs is the kingdom of God
Blessed are the hungry
For they shall be filled
Blessed are the meek,
For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are the pure in heart,

For they shall see God.

Blessed are those who mourn,

For they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the merciful

For they shall be shown mercy.

Blessed are the peacemakers,

For they are the children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness and justice,

For great is their reward.

Words adapted from the Bible ©Shane Claiborne ,
Jonathan Wilson- Hartgrove, Enuma Okoro. 2001.

And the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you now and always. Amen.

Thank you for joining in with us. If we can support you in any way, please get in touch.

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The Sunday Service Video will be on YouTube at 10am on Sunday. Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.

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