



Highcliffe and Bransgore **Methodist Churches**

Sunday 26th April 2020, 10:30am, 2nd Sunday after the Resurrection (Easter 3)

Prepared by Rev'd Phillip Dixon

This written worship has been prepared for you to use as we gather in separate places but united in love for our Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing that other people are sharing in this worship with you in their own homes is an encouragement to us and brings us closer together. We continue to be in the glorious season of resurrection and as "a people of the resurrection" our proclamation is:



Alleluia! Christ is risen!

He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Opening Prayer:

We invite your Holy Spirit to be with us this morning in our homes, to spiritually unite us, so that we can be a people gathered together in worship with a longing for a touch and a word from each other and particularly from You Lord God. We imagine ourselves sitting alongside other believers, our family in Christ, happy in our place and Your Holy Spirit moving amongst us.

In these resurrection days we pray that we may continue to be a people filled with the certainty of new life, new beginnings and full of joy and expectancy for all You are doing, and will do, in the days ahead, in our land and in us Your church.

We represent the lost, the lonely, the sick, the broken-hearted and the bereaved. May our worship, our prayers and praise, our spoken and unspoken words of repentance, our longing and our thankfulness, be true and faithful.

Thank you Lord, that we can approach like happy and loved children, Your throne of grace and love with certainty and boldness, through Your Son and our Saviour Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life, the perfecter of our faith.

May this time of worship this morning increase our desire to live lives which honour and glorify You.

This we pray in the name of our precious Saviour Jesus, Amen.

(we pause as we picture our dear friends and the face of Jesus)

Hymn: StF 152 This is the day.

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words.

This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made,
that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day
that the Lord has made.

This is the day, this is the day
when He rose again , when He rose again
We will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day when He rose again;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
when He rose again.

This is the day, this is the day
when the Spirit came,
when the Spirit came.
We will rejoice, we will rejoice
and be glad in it, and be glad in it.
This is the day that the Spirit came;
we will rejoice and be glad in it.
This is the day, this is the day
that the Spirit came. Anonymous

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pupwXqg-6jw> There are surprisingly very few good versions available. This is a music only version but has only 2 verses so will need to be repeated or try singing the third verse unaccompanied.

The Collect for Easter 3:

Almighty Father, who in Your great mercy gladdened the disciples with the sight of the risen Lord: give us such knowledge of His presence with us, that we may be strengthened and sustained by His risen life and serve you continuously in righteousness and truth; 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.

From the book of Common Worship

Introduction to our prayer of confession:

If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear them from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. – 2 Chronicles 7:14

Most merciful God I confess to You,
before the whole company of heaven and one another, that I have sinned in thought, word or deed or in what I have failed to do or say.

Pause

Forgive me my sins, be it pride, unforgiveness, jealousy, greed, avarice, faithlessness, or unkindness.

Pause

I am sorry for the times when I have placed my own desires and plans above Yours Lord. I pray for humility and a lessening of my own sense of self and instead a growth in my love and support for each other and for You Lord.

Pause

O Lord, in the words of the hymn; “Take my life, and let it be consecrated to Thee, take my moments, my feet, my lips, my intellect, my heart, take myself, and I will be ever, only, all for Thee”.

In Jesus name, Amen.

Based on a prayer from the Evangelical Alliance and from the hymn by Frances Ridley Havergal. StF 566 (1836-1879).

Lord Jesus, we name the specific things for which we are asking forgiveness.

A Time of silence

Thank you Lord, for the unmerited gift of forgiveness by Your grace; I pray Your Holy Spirit will fill me afresh with miraculous light, love and kindness so that I may reflect your wondrous glory; strengthen me Lord so that I may journey with You during these troubled yet unfolding days. Amen.

Reading: Acts of the Apostles 2: 42-47

⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

New International Version

A time to pause, read again, pray, and reflect.

Preaching notes: Six verses that illuminate to us what the church can be. No encumbrance of a structure or a hierarchy or tasks to do: just a delight of simple worship and being in the warm glow of the Lord's favour. For those who say that this is an idealistic or naive expression of church then I would say "I would rather be idealistic and naïve in a rich and joyful relationship with God and other believers, than attending a formal and organised structure that is orderly and business-like but lacks love.

Just prior to hearing about this vital and growing church (which from the very beginning was about people and never supposed to be a building) we hear Peter saying "be saved from this perverse generation" (v40) and those who "gladly received his words" were immediately

baptised and came steadfastly under the teaching of the apostles (v41,42). In going back to Matthew 3:7 before the ministry of Jesus we hear very similar words as Peter's spoken by John the Baptist to the priests and leaders of the Jews (the Pharisees and Sadducees), amazingly also in the same context - the importance of baptism: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

These were the same words/longing (Matthew 3:7 and Acts 2:40) that John Wesley used in the forming of the early societies - small groups of people (no more than 12) longing for a Spirit led revival in their lives and the land. In the same way as this early church in Jerusalem, the early Methodist societies devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship and prayer.

When we read the words "had everything in common" or in some versions "were of one accord" we have, I think, one of the essential keys to understanding what God was doing through these early believers. It was "the Lord" who was adding to their number, not a scheme or programme they have heard or read of or looked up but it was "the Lord".

In the same way; the "signs and wonders" being performed such as healings (Acts 3:7) are the Lord's blessing and spiritual outpouring resulting from the devotion, trust and faith, "praises ascend and blessings descend" in a virtuous cycle like the never-ending praise in the throne room of heaven (Revelation 4:8).

Belonging and being firmly rooted in a local church (meaning a group of fellow

believers in Jesus Christ) is the first step to the blessings. I accept the word “membership” does not appear in our passage but many would agree that the “being of one accord”, “meeting together” in homes and temple courts, praying and breaking bread together represents the same belonging that is stressed in an active membership of the local church.

The use of the word “believer”, which is the most common description of the early church members, is a whole lot more than just “an assent of there being something greater than us, perhaps God...” You do not make the sacrifices that these early believers did without a conviction that it is all absolutely true. Peter, who is the chief character in these early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, makes it very clear that to be a believer is to accept: “Jesus Christ whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead... salvation is not found in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”. (paraphrase of Acts 4:10-12).

In closing, I am not saying that we must sell our buildings and our possessions, what I am saying is that we must “hold them lightly”, always being open to what the Lord is saying to us. How will we know God’s purpose and plan for us unless we are of one accord, praying, worshipping, and breaking bread together, in harmony and love?

Division only brings deficiency, despair and decline. The rich and joyful relationship with God and each other is a choice that we make; it is an attitude of heart and mind, an openness to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and nothing

to do with a building or a structure. Let us break bread with one another, pray and meet together (even virtually) as the basis of our fellowship and faith and just like the first Christian church and the early Methodist societies, the Lord will “add to our number daily those who are being saved”.

Amen

Let us pray: Holy Spirit come powerfully into my life today, fill me with Your supernatural love and power. May I never tire of prayer and when I, in loneliness, miss my friends and family remind me of the connection I have with other believers and with You. Morning, night and at times in between I will praise You for all You have done and continue to do in my life. May I be Your witness to Bransgore, Highcliffe and the whole of Great Britain. Add to our number daily those who are seeking salvation in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and saviour. Amen.

We pray together our Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on 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.

Hymn: StF 51 Great is thy faithfulness

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKIqmdfHSk>

Great is Thy faithfulness
O God my Father
There is no shadow of turning with Thee
Thou changest not
Thy compassions they fail not
As Thou hast been
Thou forever will be

*Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me*

Summer and winter, and springtime and
harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses
above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

*Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
Great is Thy faithfulness
Lord unto me*

Pardon for sin
And a peace that endureth
Thine own dear presence to cheer
And to guide
Strength for today
and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand
beside

*Great is Thy faithfulness
Great is Thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see*

*All I have needed Thy hands hath
provided*

Great is Thy faithfulness

Lord unto me

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)

Prayer of Intercession:

Let us pray to God, for the needs of our world, those we know and love and those we do not.

Almighty God, we pray for those touched by sorrow today, those who mourn the loss of a loved one, those who despair for the suffering, and those who weep in the watches of the night. **O Lord have mercy.**

We pray for those who are fearful, gripped by a sense of anxiety, choked by doubt, and living in hopelessness, full of unanswered questions. **O Lord draw near.**

We pray for those who wrestle with their thoughts, who feel abandoned, who are living not just in physical but emotional and spiritual separation. **O Lord remind us of your unfailing love.**

We pray for all who are affected by coronavirus, through illness or isolation or anxiety, that they may find relief and recovery. **O Lord give peace.**

We pray for the safety of those who serve and care for us in hospitals, care homes, shops, government, police, and whose work helps keep order and saves lives. **O Lord place Your protection over them.**

We pray for our nation, for Your healing to fall upon this land and its people. For a turning back to You. For our care of this world, which You created, to be an expression of our faith and love of You. **O Lord strengthen us.**

Closing Hymn: StF 548 Blessed Assurance

Sing/read /pray /proclaim the words.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=veef_s0hnkA8 Chelmsford Citadel Songsters

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine;
Oh, what a foretaste of glory divine!
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.*

Perfect submission, perfect delight,
Visions of rapture now burst on my sight;
Angels descending, bring from above
Echoes of mercy, whispers of love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long*

Perfect submission, all is at rest,
I in my Saviour am happy and blest;
Watching and waiting, looking above,
Filled with His goodness, lost in His love.

*This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long.
This is my story, this is my song,
Praising my Saviour all the day long*

Blessing:

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.

Amen and Amen.

Notices:

Next Sunday we will share in Holy Communion together. Please have some bread and “wine” to hand as we join together to break bread in “each other’s homes”.

I hope you are being blessed by the morning and evening prayers that I provided for you last week.

I am very pleased to let you know that the leaders of our church home groups will be providing you each week with a bible study, which will enable you to go deeper and further with the passage I am using in these weekly services.

As we continue to engage with the book of Acts both in these Worship at Home sheets and the bible studies we are making available to you, I encourage you to read a chapter of Acts a day. With only 28 chapters to read you will gain such a rich and deep understanding of the early church.

BBC local radio is broadcasting a service on Sundays at 8am and of course Songs of Praise is on air at 13.15 on Sundays.



Until we meet again, God bless. Phillip
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YouTube links are external resources and are provided to help you engage with the songs. Singing the Faith resources are provided by using the Highcliffe Church CCLI 178182