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Service for the 19th Sunday after Trinity, 18th October 2020

A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.

CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 66)

Praise God with shouts of praise all people!
Singing to the glory of His name, offer Him glorious praise.

HYMN: Praise to the living God

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Praise to the living God,
all praise be to His name,
who was, and is, and is to be,
for aye the same!
The one eternal God,
ere aught that now appears;
the First, the Last: beyond all thought
His timeless years!

2 Formless, all lovely forms
declare His loveliness;
holy, no holiness of earth
can His express.
Lo, he is Lord of all!
Creation speaks his praise,
and everywhere, above, below,
His will obeys.

3 His Spirit floweth free,
high surging where it will:
in prophet's word He spoke of old,
He speaketh still.
Established is His law,
and changeless it shall stand,
deep written on the human heart,
on sea, on land.

4 Eternal life hath He
implanted in the soul;
His love shall be our strength and stay
while ages roll.
Praise to the living God!
All praise be to His name,
who was, and is, and is to be,
for aye the same!

From the Hebrew Yigdal, c13th cent

PRAYERS

Let us pray.

We thank you our God that we can come into your presence and we do so with thanksgiving and praise.

For you are great and greatly to be praised; we stand back in awe and wonder at your goodness and mercy toward us, especially seen in your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

But dear Lord, you know all about each one of us, the good, the bad and the ugly. Please forgive the things that we have done that displeased you and help us to do better, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE 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: And can it be

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment*

1 And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me?

2 'Tis mystery all! Th'Immortal dies!
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.

3 He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.

4 Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
Thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free;
I rose, went forth and followed Thee.

5 No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in Him is mine!
Alive in Him, my living Head,
And clothed in righteousness divine,
Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Charles Wesley

SCRIPTURE READING

St Matthew 22: 23-33 *Marriage at the Resurrection*

²³ That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. ²⁴ “Teacher,” they said, “Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. ²⁵ Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. ²⁶ The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. ²⁷ Finally, the woman died. ²⁸ Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?”

²⁹ Jesus replied, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. ³⁰ At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. ³¹ But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, ³² ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.”

³³ When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Thanks be to God.

COMMENT: *Mr Colin Hale*

No Resurrection, no Hope

Today’s Gospel reading from the Lectionary is not one I would have chosen myself; but upon reading it, I was struck straightaway by a feeling of its appropriateness.

All the Sadducees were trying to do was to catch out Jesus by using an argument about something they didn’t believe in – life after death! What the Sadducees questioned was part of the Law of Moses, which was put in place for the protection and support of widows, similar to the new Covid laws we have now for our protection.

Perhaps folk today are also prepared to use any argument if they feel their rights have been eroded – and are prepared to blame God if all other arguments fail. The Sadducees were always trying to catch out Jesus.

In the Bible passage, the woman’s husband dies: sad in itself and we can understand her grief, as over the last months it has been the experience of many, compounded with all the restrictions on visiting and funerals, *etc.* Now amidst all she has been through, she has been left to her husband’s brother, without being consulted. She must have felt helpless.

Perhaps we feel like that, as events have overtaken us about which we have no control. We don’t know the reaction of the brothers as they had this commitment placed upon them, especially if they were already married. Then, to make matters worse, it happens seven

times! It was just an illustration that was being used, but we too may feel that events today are conspiring against us.

Jesus turned the tables on them, saying how wrong they were, not knowing the Scriptures or God's power. He just takes their argument away by telling them there is no marriage in heaven: when the dead rise they will be like angels.

At the end of our reading, Jesus reminds his listeners that whatever the circumstances, God is in control, and we shouldn't worry about what we don't know, whether in this life or the next. Even after suffering the loss of his four daughters drowned at sea, Horatio Spofford could write the hymn 'When peace like a river', which includes the line in its chorus "It is well with my soul".

It's hard to see God's hand today in all that's going on; yet it's all around us in the care for others that has been evident, and the coming together of neighbours & communities in the common cause. We have not been abandoned, He has promised never to leave or forsake us. He knows us by name and He wants us to trust that "all things work together for good to those that love God", as St Paul said in his letter to the Romans (8: 28).

Job in the Old Testament lost everything: family, possessions and even his wife told him to curse God and die. Job's answer (Job 19: 25-27) was "I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end He will stand upon the earth, and after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God".

He along with countless numbers have the blessed assurance that despite all happenings, our God reigns. Jesus was saying who God is, and that they needed to know He is God of the living: it would be too late when they died.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Let us pray

We thank you Lord for all that we have been blessed with, that we take for granted, our food, homes, health, family and friends.

In this time of uncertainty and fear, we pray for your peace to fill our lives.

We pray for all who are anxious about their health, jobs, and relationships.

For those in positions of authority, that they will be led by you in the decisions they make.

For those in the medical profession, that they will not grow weary in the work they do; and that each one of us will be drawn closer to Yourself.

In Jesus' name, **Amen.**

HYMN: When I survey

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.

3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Isaac Watts

BLESSING

The blessing of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with each one of us now and for evermore.

Amen.