

The Parish Churches of
**St James Birkdale and
St Peter's Birkdale**



Seeing is Believing
John 20:19-31

Second Sunday of Easter

11th April 2021

An act of worship
for use in church and in people's homes.

Call to Worship

The LORD is compassionate and merciful,
slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.

He will not constantly accuse us,
nor remain angry forever.

He does not punish us for all our sins;
he does not deal harshly with us, as we deserve. *Psalm 103:8-10*

A Gathering Prayer

Lord, we come as those who sometimes doubt.
We come as those always in need of forgiveness.
We come as those slow to proclaim you
as our Lord and our God.
We come as those longing to hear your words of peace.
So we pray: Lord Jesus, come to us as you came to Thomas,
and set us free to worship you without hesitation
and without fear.

Hymn: O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder

- 1 O Lord my God! when I in awesome wonder
consider all the works Thy hand hath made,
I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder,
the power throughout the universe displayed;
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!*
*Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee,
how great Thou art, how great Thou art!*
- 2 And when I think that God His Son not sparing,
sent Him to die – I scarce can take it in,
that on the cross my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin:
Then sings my soul . . .
- 3 When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
and take me home – what joy shall fill my heart!
Then shall I bow in humble adoration
and there proclaim, my God, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul . . .

Prayer of Confession

Merciful God, we turn to you in confidence
to confess those times when we doubted you:
forgive us and help us;

to confess those times
when we have hidden from your presence:

forgive us and help us;

to confess those times
when we have been hesitant to speak of your glory:

forgive us and help us;

to confess those times
when we have been slow to rejoice in your goodness:

forgive us and help us –

for we ask in Jesus' name.

Words of Forgiveness

Lord, we thank you for your patience with us,
your acceptance of our doubting and questioning,
and your assurance of forgiveness.

How many times do we grieve your heart with our lack of belief,
and exasperate you with our lack of faith?

But like a good parent, you gather us to you,
and answer our misgivings.

With you there is infinite forgiveness. **Amen.**

The Collect of the Day

Risen Christ,
for whom no door is locked, no entrance barred:
open the doors of our hearts,
that we may seek the good of others
and walk the joyful road of sacrifice and peace,
to the praise of God the Father.

Bible Reading: Psalm 27:1-14

¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation –
whom shall I fear?

The LORD is the stronghold of my life –
of whom shall I be afraid?

² When the wicked advance against me
to devour me,

it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.

³ Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

⁴ One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:

that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.

⁵ For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent
and set me high upon a rock.

⁶ Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

⁷ Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.

⁸ My heart says of you, 'Seek his face!'
Your face, LORD, I will seek.

⁹ Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.

Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Saviour.

¹⁰ Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.

¹¹ Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.

¹² Do not hand me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.

¹³ I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.

¹⁴ Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD

Song: We believe in one true God

We believe in one true God
Father, Spirit, Son
One Church, one faith, one Lord of all
His kingdom come

We believe in God the Father
Almighty, Lord of life
Creator of the Heavens
The earth, the sea, the sky
And we believe in Jesus
The only son of God
Born of the virgin Mary
Who lived as one of us

We believe in one true God
Father, Spirit, Son
One Church, one faith, one Lord of all
His kingdom come

We believe that Jesus suffered
Was beaten, crucified
He died and he was buried
Entombed in darkest night
The third day rose victorious
Ascended into Heav'n
Will one day come to judge us
The living and the dead

We believe in one true God
Father, Spirit, Son
One Church, one faith, one Lord of all
His kingdom come

We believe in God the Spirit
One Church, empowered by Him
Communion of God's people
Forgiveness of our sin
Our bodies resurrected
To everlasting life
To worship, love and wonder
Before the throne of Christ

We believe in one true God
Father, Spirit, Son
One Church, one faith, one Lord of all
His kingdom come

We believe in one true God
Father, Spirit, Son
One Church, one faith, one Lord of all
His kingdom come

Bible reading: John 20:19-31

¹⁹ On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁰ After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Again Jesus said, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.' ²² And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'

²⁴ Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. ²⁵ So the other disciples told him, 'We have seen the Lord!'

But he said to them, 'Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.'

²⁶ A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.'

²⁸ Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'

²⁹ Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Reflection

There is no pre-recorded video or audio to watch or listen to this week.

You will be able to watch the service live at 10.30am by clicking [here](#).

Alternatively, you can click on that same link at any time after the service to watch the recorded version. Following the service we intend to upload an audio file of the

Reflection. This can be accessed through the church website at

[Sunday Service Online](#) and will be available by Monday morning.

What we Believe

**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.

Hymn: How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

(a different tune to the one you may be familiar with, lovely singing by the Scottish Praise Gathering Choir, pity the person doing the graphics can't spell!)

- 1 How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,
and drives away his fear.
- 2 Dear name, the rock on which I build,
my shield, and hiding place,
my never-failing treasury, filled
with boundless stores of grace.
- 3 Jesus, my Shepherd, Guardian, Friend,
my Prophet, Priest, and King,
my Lord, my Life, my Way, my End,
accept the praise I bring.
- 4 Weak is the effort of my heart,
and cold my warmest thought;
but when I see thee as thou art,
I'll praise thee as I ought.
- 5 Till then I would Thy love proclaim
with every fleeting breath;
and may the music of Thy name,
refresh my soul in death.

Intercessions

Eternal, Everlasting God you are eternally patient with us,
and no matter what we do, you persevere with us.
Help each of us to show patience and perseverance with others;
and with this prayer in our hearts and on our lips,

we pray for those we know and love and hear of this day.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For those struggling to accept the Easter message of resurrection;
for those who long to have faith but miss the final step;
who long to see Jesus but doubt what they see,
seeing only as if in a mirror dimly;
who long to hear your word, but grasp only a muffle and murmur;
who yearn to feel your presence but shy away from contact;
for those who need convincing of the truth
in an age of fake news and skewed views.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For those whose health and well-being
teeter on the edge of uncertainty or insanity, pain, disfigurement and anguish;
for those living with Covid in all its forms, immediate and long term;
for those whose treatment is delayed and who are ground down
by the mental and physical pain that can't yet be treated;
for those who live with darkness
and yet dread their waking moments.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For those without meaning and purpose in their lives,
who wake to the morning light and dread the empty day that lies ahead;
for those who dread the dark nights of wakefulness, tossing and turning;
for those who feel there is no hope for tomorrow,
no vision for the future, no plan for their lives;
for those without a stable home life, without meaningful work and prospects.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For those without the shelter of a home, with no roots to a place,
who are constantly forced to move on, change direction
through war or violence, political unrest, prejudice,
religious hatred and so much more;
for those who seek refuge in new places and new lands
with new languages and new 'norms'.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For the countries who make news headlines
and then slip from view with little changed;

for the people of Myanmar, Mozambique, and Ethiopia
whose struggle goes on to keep life together
against so much hatred, prejudice greed and violence.

We cannot imagine or comprehend the lives these people are forced to live,
the challenges they face, the fragility and fear and destitution of their lives.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For those who are victims of modern slavery,
who are all but imprisoned, abused, made to feel worthless,
undervalued, inhuman, who are frightened and bewildered
and a long way from home, family and support.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

For those areas in our country where unrest and unhappiness
with government plans or police tactics or religious divides
bring people out onto the streets in protest.

For those who want to peacefully make their stand

but who are overtaken by the violent few who go armed for violence;

for those who perpetrate the unrest that they may be helped to see
that violence is not the answer and will often only fuel more problems;

for those who make plans and laws and those who need to police society –
may they and we seek unity, purpose and love.

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

The disciples gathered behind closed doors

not only for fear of the Jewish authorities but they gathered to grieve the loss
of their friend, their leader, their visionary, their Lord.

We pray for those who mourn the loss of family or friends

and especially those who have had to grieve alone in these Covid times
without the support of those who love them -

may the gentle easing of restrictions and the lengthening of the days
bring them light and hope for the life ahead.

We pray especially this day for the family and friends of Margery Seed,
we thank you for her life and witness and for the fun, joy and positivity
she brought to people's lives

God, in whom we believe:

Bless them.

And for ourselves we pray, that we might banish those shadows
that hold us back and keep us fixed to what we are familiar with,
even the new familiar, when we can be afraid
to step out, step on, step forward, step up -

we pray that we might know the wisdom of the psalmist,
the grace of God, the blessing of the Spirit,
the love and companionship of each other
and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ.
These are our prayers this day.

Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us so we pray

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Hymn: Thine be the glory

- 1 Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won;
angels in bright raiment rolled the stone away,
kept the folded grave-clothes where Thy body lay.
*Thine be the glory, risen, conquering Son,
endless is the victory Thou o'er death hast won.*
- 2 Lo! Jesus meets us, risen from the tomb;
lovingly He greets us, scatters fear and gloom;
let the Church with gladness hymns of triumph sing,
for her Lord now liveth; death hath lost its sting.
Thine be the glory . . .
- 3 No more we doubt Thee, glorious Prince of life;
life is nought without Thee: aid us in our strife;
make us more than conquerors, through Thy deathless love:
bring us safe through Jordan to Thy home above.
Thine be the glory . . .

A Closing Prayer

**Lord Jesus, when I sit behind the closed doors
of inadequacy, of anxiety, of doubt,
speak to me through the life and witness of Thomas,
that I may not withhold my love, praise and adoration,
but in humility, joy and trust
proclaim you as my Lord and my God. Amen.**

The Blessing

Christ's peace be with us in all that we do.
Christ's peace be with us in all that we are.
Christ's peace be with us in all that we will be.
This day and for evermore.
Amen.

Bonus track

*This is the Apostles Creed sung by this young couple. I thought it was really nice and
the more I've listened to it the more it has stuck in my mind.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTG2hLu6ZcA&t=6s>