

Sunday 28 July 2024.

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity

Morning Prayer

Led by Philip Dean, LLM

<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>

LORDSBRIDGE TEAM
OF CHURCHES



Preparation

O Lord, open our lips

All and our mouth shall proclaim your praise.

Blessed are you, creator of all,
to you be praise and glory for ever.
As your dawn renews the face of the earth
bringing light and life to all creation,
may we rejoice in this day you have made;
as we wake refreshed from the depths of sleep,
open our eyes to behold your presence
and strengthen our hands to do your will,
that the world may rejoice and give you praise.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

All Blessed be God for ever.

Hymn - Come, people of the risen King

I Come, people of the risen King,
who delight to bring him praise;
come, all and tune your hearts to sing
to the morning star of grace.
From the shifting shadows of the earth
we will lift our eyes to him,
where steady arms of mercy reach
to gather children in.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O church of Christ, rejoice!

2 Come, those whose joy is morning sun,
and those weeping through the night;
come, those who tell of battles won,
and those struggling in the fight.
For his perfect love will never change,
and his mercies never cease,
but follow us through all our days
with the certain hope of peace.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O church of Christ, rejoice!

3 Come, young and old from every land –
men and women of the faith.
come, those with full or empty hands –
find the riches of his grace.
Over all the world, his people sing –
shore to shore we hear them call
the truth that cries through every age
'Our God is all in all'!
Rejoice! Rejoice! Let every tongue rejoice!
One heart, one voice, O church of Christ, rejoice!

Keith Getty, Kristyn Getty and Stuart Townend
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Confession

The word of God is living and active.
It judges the thoughts and intentions of the heart.
All is open and laid bare before the eyes of him
to whom we give account.
We confess our sins in penitence and faith.

cf Hebrews 4.12

**All God of mercy,
we acknowledge that we are all sinners.
We turn from the wrong that we have thought**

and said and done,
and are mindful of all that we have failed to do.
For the sake of Jesus, who died for us,
forgive us for all that is past,
and help us to live each day
in the light of Christ our Lord.
Amen.

May God our Father forgive *us our* sins
and bring *us* to the eternal joy of his kingdom,
where dust and ashes have no dominion.
Amen.

The Word of God

Psalm 145:10-19

¹⁰ All your works praise you, O Lord, ♦
and your faithful servants bless you.

¹¹ They tell of the glory of your kingdom ♦
and speak of your mighty power,

¹² To make known to all peoples your mighty acts ♦
and the glorious splendour of your kingdom.

¹³ Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; ♦
your dominion endures throughout all ages.

¹⁴ The Lord is sure in all his words ♦
and faithful in all his deeds.

¹⁵ The Lord upholds all those who fall ♦
and lifts up all those who are bowed down.

¹⁶ The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord, ♦
and you give them their food in due season.

¹⁷ You open wide your hand ♦
and fill all things living with plenty.

¹⁸ The Lord is righteous in all his ways ♦
and loving in all his works.

¹⁹ The Lord is near to those who call upon him, ♦
to all who call upon him faithfully.
All Glory to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning is now
and shall be for ever. Amen.

Let us meditate for one minute on verses 14 and 15.

Scripture Readings read by Ann Griffiths.

2 Kings 4: 42-44

Elisha Feeds One Hundred Men

⁴²A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, 'Give it to the people and let them eat.' ⁴³But his servant said, 'How can I set this before a hundred people?' So he repeated, 'Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, "They shall eat and have some left." ' ⁴⁴He set it before them, they ate, and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

John 6:1-21

Feeding the Five Thousand

¹After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' ¹⁰Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat

down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

¹⁵When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

Jesus Walks on the Water

¹⁶When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, ¹⁷got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. ¹⁸The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. ¹⁹When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. ²⁰But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' ²¹Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

Sermon by Revd Barnabas Leeke

The feeding of the five thousand is the only one of Jesus' miracles that is recorded in all four gospel accounts, so you have probably heard sermons on it many times over! I very much doubt that I have anything unique or new to share with you today, so if ten minutes rest would be more beneficial to you, feel free to lean back, close your eyes and relax...

Of course the fact that it is recorded in all four gospels should also give us cause to consider it carefully, it was clearly an important event for the early Christians. So perhaps looking at it again and again is a worthwhile practice in itself. It is also true that each time we read the scriptures we are a different person (i.e. no one can cross the same

river twice), so I hope that there is something in today's reading and reflection which speaks to you afresh of something of God. There is a lot going on in this particular account, and I could meticulously pick it apart to consider its parallels with Moses and Exodus, the Passover, the celebration of the Eucharist or Communion, and what it says about Jesus as the Lord of all creation. But I think I would rather look at the broader brushstrokes and what it tells us about God, humankind, and the Christian life. To do that we need to go right back to the beginning. In the beginning... The first Genesis account of God creating the world has them creating it out of nothing ("the earth was a formless void" Gen 1.2), God merely speaks a word and everything springs into being ("Let there be light" Gen 1.3, "Let the earth put forth vegetation" Gen 1.11, etc.). In the second Genesis account (Gen 2) God creates out of the dust of the ground (the Hebrew word for man, adam, is inextricably linked to the word for ground, adamah). From these accounts we learn that God is creative, not just able but compelled to create out of almost nothing. To take chaos or dust and turn it into order and life. There is also the very beginning of the trinity, the plural name for God and the desire(?) for relationship that is mirrored in the complementarity of male and female. And it is at this point that the narrative changes. In the second account God creates a woman from the rib of a man, no longer creating from lifeless dust, but involving humankind in their creative acts. Made in the image of God we join in with the creative dance of the trinity, we become an essential part of God's plan for the universe.

So let's fast-forward to our gospel reading for today. God has come among us in a new way, as the beginning of the gospel of John says, the Word, that creative force that existed with God from the beginning of time, has become flesh and dwelt among us. That creative force that spoke a word and the universe came into being, that creative force that formed everything out of dust and breathed life into it, that is who John is convinced that Jesus is. And this person sees a huge crowd forming, gathering in the middle of nowhere with nothing to eat except the dust of the earth. A crowd which has followed Jesus because of the

miraculous signs that he has been performing already, healing and restoring the sick and broken. Surely it would be easy for him to click his fingers, say the word, command the stones around him to become bread? We've heard that somewhere before, haven't we?

Instead Jesus turns to his disciples, the people he has been living and travelling with, the people he has developed a close relationship with, and asks them how they would provide food for all these people. Phillip is a local, from nearby Bethsaida, he would know where to go and buy bread, but a quick bit of mental arithmetic tells him there is no way that they could afford it (or perhaps no bakers that would have that much available!). Andrew is perhaps more practical, "let's see what we have already got", but still comes up short with just a few loaves and fishes from a boy's packed lunch. Is that what Jesus has been waiting for? Meet me halfway? He gives thanks, breaks the bread, and the tiny offering that humankind can come up with (nothing compared to an infinite and bounteous God) is transformed into an abundance of provision that feeds a crowd of people hungry for a lot more than just bread. The crowd, seeing this miracle would like to make him king, who wouldn't want a king that can provide abundant food for all who need it? But this isn't the sort of kingdom that Jesus has in mind so he once again slips away before he is dragged into a potentially violent revolution. The kingdom that Jesus is planning, the kingdom which will be begun through his death at the hands of a similar crowd and his resurrection through the power of God over death, will be completed in the same way that he completed this miracle: through the transformation of our meagre offerings into something "abundantly far more than... we can ask or imagine" (Eph 3.20).

We are free agents. God has created us to be in relationship with him, but not to be controlled by him, so we have the choice in how we respond to Jesus' challenge to us. We can be like Philip, counting the cost and deciding it is way too much for us to afford; or we can be like Andrew, taking the little we can find and offering it to Jesus for him to multiply into food for thousands. Because God longs to be in

relationship with us, because it is with us and in us that the kingdom will be realised. We may feel that we have nothing to offer, or that what we have to offer is small, insignificant, useless in the face of the great need that is displayed all around us. But it is exactly by offering what we have to Jesus that he is able to multiply it into the seeds of the kingdom, the bread of life, the hope of nations.

And so the Christian life is a continual re-offering to God of what little we have. A continual drawing closer to the heart of Jesus which is for the poor and the oppressed, and against violent force of arms. A continual deepening of our relationship so that we begin to see the world through Jesus' eyes, not as a world of economic imperatives and the 'haves' against the 'have-nots', but a world where small actions can make a real difference. A world where we can affect real change if we are bold enough to trust in his leading and look for him in unexpected places (like the middle of a lake!).

All the gospel writers thought it was important to record this miraculous event, because it tells us a lot about who Jesus really is and how he intends to bring about the kingdom of God. If you've had a snooze then now is the time to sit up and take notice, because Jesus is asking you, "How will we feed all these people?" and he's ready to take whatever you have to offer and multiply it to infinity.

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, help us to see the world through your eyes, to draw closer to you, and to follow your leading as we offer our meagre gifts for your incredible kingdom. Amen.

Responsory

Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead

All And Christ shall give you light.

You have died and your life is hid with Christ in God.

All Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead.

Set your minds on things that are above,
not on things that are on the earth.

All And Christ shall give you light.

When Christ our life appears you will appear with him in glory.

**All Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead,
and Christ shall give you light.**

from Colossians 3

Affirmation of Faith

We say together in faith

**All Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God almighty,
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father,
who created all things:

**All for by his will they were created
and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son,
who was slain:

**All for with his blood,
he purchased us for God,
from every tribe and language,
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:

**All the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'
Even so come, Lord Jesus! Amen.**

cf Revelation 4.8,11; 5.9; 22.17, 20

Prayers of intercessions prepared by Sue Nelms

Heavenly Father, we thank you that you have our wellbeing in your hands. We thank you for guiding us through the good times and the bad. Teach us to rest in your love and compassion. Refresh us when we falter or fail. Smile with us when we succeed in your name. Help us to care for and support each other.

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

Loving Father, we pray for your Church here on earth. We thank you for the blessings that bind us all together and pray for guidance through the issues that threaten to tear us apart. In difficult times we pray that the Church will enjoy rest and refreshment so that it can continue its work in your name. We pray for all ministers both lay and ordained and we pray for everyone who forms part of our Church life. We pray particularly for people whose lives are endangered by them speaking or simply reading your word.

In our Diocese we pray for Bishop Dagmar as she continues to guide us through the vacancy and we pray also for everyone involved in the process of searching for the next Bishop of Ely and in the Lordsbridge Team we pray for everyone involved in the search for the next Team Rector, especially as they meet on 5th August to select candidates to interview. Father God, in this time of transition, help us to see Your presence in our communities and to listen to Your will for the way ahead. May our lips speak Your words, and our hands do Your work as we wait for your kingdom to come. As we look for the Holy Spirit's leading in the appointment of a new team rector, we pray for guidance, inspiration and grace. We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ, for the sake of His Kingdom, and in sure and certain hope.

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

Creator God, you made a beautiful world for us to live in. Help us to care for and sustain it rather than simply using and abusing it. We pray for wisdom and honesty in our world leaders and people in positions of authority who make decisions that affect so many of our lives. We pray for King Charles and Queen Camilla and we pray for our government, that the decisions they make will be for the well-being of our country. We particularly pray that they will not lose sight of the poorest and most vulnerable people in society. We pray also for councillors and the other people who work for us on village, district and county councils.

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

Loving God we pray for our community, for people of all ages, young and old. We pray for young people as they consider their futures, whether in education or work and pray that they will be blessed and refreshed during the summer vacation. We thank you for the caring services and lift up people who may be ill in body, mind or spirit and the people who love and care for them, both paid and unpaid. We pray for people who might be struggling due to circumstances beyond their control and we particularly pray for people who might be struggling behind closed doors; we ask that there will be someone there to help them find the help they need but may be afraid to ask for. Lord in your mercy, **hear our prayer**

Finally we pray for people who are coming to the end of their lives on earth, particularly those for whom today will be their last day. We ask that you will welcome them into your loving arms. We pray also for people who grieve, whether that grief be new and fresh or older and suddenly sharp and painful.

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

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

The Collect of the day is said

Almighty God,
who sent your Holy Spirit
to be the life and light of your Church:
open our hearts to the riches of your grace,
that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit
in love and joy and peace;
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.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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 – Now thank we all our God

- 1 Now thank we all our God,
with hearts and hands and voices,
who wondrous things hath done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
hath blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

- 2 O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us;
and keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
in this world and the next.

3 All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son, and him who reigns
with them in highest heaven,
the one eternal God,
whom earth and heaven adore,
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Nun danket alle Gott Martin Rinkart (1586-1649)
translated by Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

Notices

Conclusion

Almighty God,
we thank you for the gift of your holy word.
May it be a lantern to our feet,
a light to our paths,
and a strength to our lives.
Take us and use us to love and serve
in the power of the Holy Spirit
and in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
And the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be amongst us, and remain with us always.

All Amen.

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life.

All Amen.

Let us bless the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.