

## ***Morning Worship for Trinity 11***

### ***Preparation***

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:  
**the whole earth is full of his glory.**

Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength;  
ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name.

**The whole earth is full of his glory.**

The Lord shall give strength to his people;

**the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.**

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:

**the whole earth is full of his glory.**

### ***Opening Prayer***

**Holy God,**

**faithful and unchanging:**

**enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,**

**and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,**

**that we may truly worship you,**

**Father, Son and Holy Spirit,**

**one God, now and for ever.**

**Amen.**

Cast your burden upon the Lord:

**And he will sustain you.**

Create in us clean hearts O God:

**And renew a right spirit within us.**

Cast us not away from your presence:

**And take not your Holy Spirit from us.**

Give us the joy of your saving help:

**And sustain us with your life-giving Spirit.**

Blessed be the Lord day by day:

**The God of our salvation who bears our burdens.**

*We confess our sins.*

God the Father forgives us in Christ

and heals us by the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore put away all anger and bitterness,

all slander and malice,

and confess our sins to God our redeemer.

*(cf Ephesians 4.30,32)*

Come, let us return to the Lord and say:

**Lord our God,**

**in our sin we have avoided your call.**

**Our love for you is like a morning cloud,**

**like the dew that goes away early.**

**Have mercy on us;**

**deliver us from judgement;**

**bind up our wounds and revive us;**

**in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

May almighty God,

who sent his Son into the world to save sinners,

bring you his pardon and peace,

now and for ever. **Amen.**

### ***Praise***

O Lord, open our lips:

**And our mouth shall proclaim your praise.**

Let us worship the Lord:

**All praise to his name.**

*Gloria in Excelsis*

**Glory to God in the highest,**

**and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King,**

**almighty God and Father,**

**we worship you, we give you thanks,**

**we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,**

**Lord God, Lamb of God,**

**you take away the sin of the world:**

**have mercy on us;**

**you are seated at the right hand of the Father:**

**receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One,**

**you alone are the Lord,**

**you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,**

**with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### ***The word of God***

A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgement, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another. We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; 8 the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness.

This is the word of the Lord; **thanks be to God** (Romans 12:1–8)

### ***Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew.***

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' And Jesus answered him, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.' Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

(Matthew 16:13–2)

This is the Gospel of the Lord; **Praise to you O Christ**

### ***A reflection by Rev'd Joy Cousans***

It is wonderful that we are now able to meet together on a Sunday in St Mary's church as well as continuing our online worship. Today's readings lead us to think about the church and what it means. That conversation has become particularly pertinent over the past six months. What does it mean to be the church today? Jesus rarely spoke of the church. In fact, the only appearances of the word 'church'

in any gospel occurs in Matthew chapters 16 and 18. Today's story of Peter's confession is recalled in all four gospels, but only Matthew connects Peter's confession of Jesus as Messiah to the reality of the church.

To Matthew's Jewish readers, the concept of church was not completely new. In the Old Testament, the people of Israel formed a community of believers. And they gathered as a congregation for worshipping God and celebrating festivals together. We see this too in the life of Jesus when his parents took him to the Temple as a boy, together with their friends and neighbours. The Hebrew word for congregation or community, used in the Hebrew Scriptures (our Old Testament) would also describe the 'Messianic community' of the disciples of Jesus. So the growth of the church was a natural development of that embryonic community who followed Jesus. In this passage from Matthew 16, Jesus promises Peter that he will use him 'to build my church.' (Matthew 16:18) Earlier on in the gospel, Jesus gives Simon the name Peter which means 'rock'. The word is 'petros' in Greek and 'Cephas' in Hebrew. In this passage, the reason for the name is made clear. Peter is to be the rock on which Jesus will build his church. A Rock is not descriptive of Peter's character, for we know that he is anything but a steady character. Rather, it is descriptive of his function in the early church. It was Peter who took the lead amongst the disciples after Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension. It was Peter who became the leader of the church in Jerusalem. It was Peter who established the early Christian community which became the Church which spread world-wide.

What do we think of when we hear the word 'church'? It is often associated with a particular building, or with services or with clergy. For many people, 'church' means a particular denomination. The church is, of course, all of these things, but it is much more. The Greek word used in the Bible is 'ekklesia' meaning an assembly or gathering of people. That connects much more strongly with its Jewish roots. So the church is essentially the assembly or gathering of the people of God.

Jesus rarely spoke of the church. St Paul often referred to it. And he used a series of images to describe the church. He called it the bride of Christ; living stones; the body of Christ. All these are dynamic images, which make us think of growth and change. In Romans 12, Paul explores the image of the body of believers. All are linked together and co-dependent. Each one has different gifts, but all gifts

are necessary for the body to grow, develop and be healthy. The church is not perfect and makes many mistakes. If you read Paul's letters to the early church, you will see that has always been the case because the church is made up of human beings who are fallible and don't always do the right thing. But the church is also a gift of God, rooted in Jesus. Hans Kung writes: 'The Church owes to the Spirit its origin, existence and continued life, and in this sense the Church is a creation of the Spirit.' As with so much of the Christian life, the Church is a work in progress. Paul refers to the Church as 'the Bride of Christ' which will be perfected by God at the end of time.

In recent months, church has taken place in a very different form for many of us due to the coronavirus pandemic. Online worship has become part of the offering of many church communities. Whether we worship in a church building or online, or a mix of both, it is important for each individual to be a part of the whole and to use their gifts to build up the whole. As St Paul writes: 'For as in one body we have many members, and not all the members have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members of one another.' (Romans 12:4-5)

As we approach our Annual Parochial Church Meeting, I would encourage you to think about ways in which you can participate in the life of the church in our four villages. I would also encourage you to pray regularly for the church, its leaders and its witness, that the church may more fully reflect the glory of Christ.

Lord Jesus, you have redeemed us and called us to share in the life of your Church.

We thank you for our fellow Christians, travellers with us on the way of life, who worship and work with us in the life of our church.

Bind us together in your service, and always keep us close to you as well as to one another, for your name's sake. Amen.

### ***Our faith***

*Let us declare our faith in God Father, Son and Holy Spirit*

**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.**

*Prayers of Intercession led by Barbara Morton*

Everlasting God, we thank you for the gift of your Son Jesus Christ and for revealing him as Messiah and Saviour of the World. Thank you that you allow us to be part of your family and to do your work here on earth, and that we have a glorious hope for the future when we will be with you for all eternity. Help us to remember this hope when we are despairing, or when evil seems to triumph.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Holy God, we pray for your church and ask that it might always provide a solid foundation upon which we can anchor our lives. We especially pray for Christians who pay a heavy price for their faith; who daily experience hostility, from their governments, employers and neighbours, as a result of their identification with Christ. We think of all those living in countries where unfairness seems to be becoming entrenched, and especially for those whose lives are ruined by harsh policing and inequitable division of wealth. Help us to see how we can increase fairness in our own society.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Creator God, you made us to be stewards of your creation but we have not always been good stewards. Help us change our ways so that we can look after the world, and make it the way that you want it to be. Help us to stop our profligate ways, buying more than we need and wasting much of it, so that there may be enough for everyone. We ask for blessing for our Open Gardens day this afternoon, that all who attend will be refreshed by the beauty of your creation.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Father God, help us be reliable and honest in what we do, and friendly to all we meet in our daily lives. Help us always to give our best, to work to our fullest and never be ashamed to confess your name. In our leisure time, help us to be kind and fair to all. Help us to win without boasting, and to lose graciously without making excuses.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Gracious God, We remember all who are ill, lonely or distressed, especially those tormented by fear arising from the Global Pandemic. We ask for healing and wholeness in their lives and we ask that we may bring life and love, joy and hope, to those who live in despair and give help to all those treating the effects of Covid-19 and those working to find a cure. We think of those suffering from dementia who may be confused and frightened. Show us how we may best help them. We think of all on our prayer list and any known personally to us, and we remember them now in a time of silence.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Merciful God, remember the souls of your servants who have recently died and for those who are saddened by their passing. Be with the bereaved in their loneliness and give them the faith to look beyond their present troubles to your Son Jesus Christ who died and rose again and who lives forevermore.

*(Short Silence)*

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

Faithful God, forgive us when we only turn to you when things trouble us and when we forget to thank you for your blessings and bounty. Help us to recognise all the wonderful things in your world for which we should be grateful and send us out into the coming week ready to show our gratitude in all that we do and say.

Merciful Father: Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

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

*A prayer for the coronavirus pandemic*

Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

*We join together with Christians throughout the world in the prayer that Jesus taught us.*

**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.**

***Conclusion***

*The Collect for the day*

O God, you declare your almighty power most chiefly in showing mercy and pity: mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace, that we, running the way of your commandments, may receive your gracious promises, and be made partakers of your heavenly treasure; 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. **Amen**

You are worthy, our Lord and God,

**to receive glory and honour and power.**

For you have created all things,

**and by your will they have their being.**

You are worthy, O Lamb, for you were slain,

**and by your blood you ransomed us for God.**

From every tribe and language and nation,  
**you have made us to be a kingdom and priests  
serving our God.**

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb  
**be blessing and honour and glory and might  
for ever and ever. Amen. (Revelation 4.11;5.9b,10,11)**

*We end with the words of the Grace, an ancient Christian prayer of  
fellowship, remembering that although we are not together in person,  
nothing can separate us from the love of God found in Christ Jesus  
our Lord.*

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with us all evermore. Amen.**

*Please let us know if you want us to pray for you either individually or  
if you would like to be included on the Prayer Chain.  
([admin@stmaryseatonbray.org.uk](mailto:admin@stmaryseatonbray.org.uk))*

Reverend Joy Cousans; Reverend Stephen Burge

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