Fourth Sunday of Easter
3 May 2020
Preparing for Worship

In this season of Easter, amid pandemic and lockdown, much has changed. But the central truth of Christian faith remains the same: Christ, risen, ascended and glorified, is the same yesterday, today and forever. So, although we cannot meet to celebrate, we know that Christ is risen. Although we may find it hard to rejoice, the joy of the Resurrection fills the universe. And although we are many, physically distanced and isolated, we are one body. We worship our risen Lord Jesus, not ignoring the pain of many and the needs of the world, but because we trust that Christ’s victory over death gives hope for all.

Eucharist is celebrated by the Succentor, the Revd Philippa White. The preacher is the Revd Canon Graham Ward, Regius Professor of Divinity. Responses are made by voices from the Cathedral community, recorded in their homes and with their families. Music is from archive recordings, or recorded by Lay Clerks, Sub Organist Benjamin Sheen, and Organist, Professor Steven Grahl, in their homes. The setting is the sixteenth-century chant, Missa lux et origo, for the Easter season.

Entering into worship through audio broadcast is more familiar to some of us than to others. If this is new to you, try to actively share in the service, not just have it on in the background; and join in the words in bold. You may not want to stand or kneel as usual but find a comfortable position that helps you to pray, and to receive the love of God in your heart.

It may still feel strange and sad to meet ‘virtually’ for worship, unable to gather in our cathedral for our familiar pattern of prayer. Yet as we listen, we are united in worship and prayer despite the distance between us. Please continue to pray for one another, as we at Christ Church continue to pray for you.

May the love of the risen Christ meet all of you to empower and strengthen and sustain you; and may God bless you as we worship him together.

You can find our Sunday worship, alongside other resources for worshipping at home, at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship

Music before the service

*Lied* (24 Pièces en style libre)  
Louis Vierne (1870-1937)  
*recorded by the Organist, Professor Steven Grahl, at home.*
The Gathering

President In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
All Amen.

President The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

President Alleluia, Christ is risen!
All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The President welcomes the congregation.

Confession

Christ our passover lamb has been sacrificed for us. Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil and confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

You may like to adopt a prayer posture such as sitting with your head bowed, as we remember our brokenness and call to mind our sins.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you and against our neighbour in thought and word and deed, through negligence, through weakness, through our own deliberate fault. We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins. For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, who died for us, forgive us all that is past and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.
Kyrie

Kyrie eleison  
Christe eleison  
Kyrie eleison  

Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy  
Lord, have mercy

Absolution

President

Almighty God,  
who forgives all who truly repent,  
have mercy upon you,  
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,  
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,  
and keep you in life eternal;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All

Amen.

Gloria

Gloria in excelsis Deo  
et in terra pax  
hominibus bonae voluntatis.  
Laudamus te, benedicimus te,  
adoramus te, glorificamus te,  
gratias agimus tibi  
propter magnam gloriam tuam,  
Domine Deus, Rex caelestis,  
Deus Pater omnipotens.

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.

Domine Fili unigenite, Iesu Christe,  
Domine Deus, Agnus Dei,  
Filius Patris, qui tollis peccata mundi,  
miserere nobis;

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;
Qui tollis peccata mundi,
suscipe deprecationem nostram.
Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris,
miserere nobis.

Quoniam tu solus Sanctus,
tu solus Dominus,
tu solus Altissimus,
Iesu Christe,
cum Sancto Spiritu
in gloria Dei Patris.
Amen

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 Collect

President Let us pray.

Silence is kept.

President Almighty God,
whose Son Jesus Christ is the resurrection and the life:
raise us, who trust in him,
from the death of sin to the life of righteousness,
that we may seek those things which are above,
where he reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.
The Liturgy of the Word

Sit comfortably to listen to God speaking through the Scriptures.

First Reading
Acts 2: 42–end (NRSV)
read by Lilly Haines-Gadd


The new believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved.

Reader This is the word of the Lord.
All Thanks be to God.
Alleluia, alleluia; I came that you might have life, says the Lord, and have it in abundance. Alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

All Glorious to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the crowds, ‘Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.’ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them.

So again Jesus said to them, ‘Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All Praise to you, O Christ.

Reflection

Revd Canon Graham Ward
Regius Professor of Divinity

You can find the text of the reflection at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship

After the reflection, we keep silence together for a few moments before affirming our faith together in the words of the Creed – words which have been said across the world for over fifteen hundred years in times of sorrow and of joy.
We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.
Prayers of Intercession
led by
the Revd Canon Dr Grant Bayliss
Diocesan Canon Precentor.

Minister Let us pray.

You may like to adopt a prayer posture with your eyes closed, or focused on an image that helps you; with your hands open or lifted up to God as we hold out all the prayers of our hearts to him.

Minister Let us pray to the Lord:
All Lord, have mercy.

The prayers end with:
Minister … for Jesus Christ’s sake.
All Amen.
The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Peace

President

Jesus stood among his disciples and said ‘Peace be with you.’

Then they were glad when they saw the risen Lord.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

We know that Christians have shared a sign of peace since the very earliest days of the Church. In these times, it may seem strange to ‘share the Peace.’ But peace is from the heart and from God. God’s peace in the Spirit moves among us and unites us, physically distanced yet one in the Body of Christ.

Hymn

The hymn was recorded by the boys of Christ Church Cathedral School before the closure of schools. Please join in with the singing if you’d like.

Alleluia! Sing to Jesus;
His the sceptre, His the throne.
Alleluia! His the triumph,
His the victory alone.
Hark! The songs of peaceful Zion
thunder like a mighty flood;
"Jesus out of ev'ry nation
has redeemed us by His blood."

Alleluia! Not as orphans
are we left in sorrow now.
Alleluia! He is near us;
faith believes, nor questions how.
Though the cloud from sight received Him
when the forty days were o'er,
shall our hearts forget His promise,
"I am with you evermore"?

Words: William Chatterton Dix (1837-1898)
Music: Hyfrydol, RH Pritchard (1811-1887)
Preparation of the Table

President As we offer you these our gifts,
with all that we have and all that we are,
in the joy of Easter and in supplication for our world:
may the light of your Love be seen in the darkness;
the whispers of your healing be heard in empty streets;
the flowers of your hope blossom in many hearts.

All Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

President The Lord be with you
All and also with you.

President Lift up your hearts.
All We lift them to the Lord.

President Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give thanks and praise.

President It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
almighty and eternal Father;
for in his perfect love
Jesus your Son gave himself up to death for us all;
and in your perfect compassion
you raised him from death for our salvation
and made him shine like the sun with your radiance.
And although the light of Easter is veiled by darkness
and the shouts of praise obscured by cries of pain,
you bring your people back to your generous heart
and promise that the risen Christ is with us on our way.

As we walk the path of suffering,
you draw us into the promise of new life;
as we weep for renewal
you restore in us the image of your glory;
as we cry out for healing and hope
you gather up our voices to join the angels’ song:
Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus
Dominus Deus Sabaoth:  
pleni sunt cœli et terra gloria tua.  
Hosanna in excelsis.  
Benedictus qui venit  
in nomine Domini.  
Hosanna in excelsis.

Holy, holy, holy
Lord God of hosts:  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is He who comes  
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

President

Accept our praises, heavenly Father,  
through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ,  
and as we follow his example and obey his command,  
grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit  
these gifts of bread and wine  
may be to us his body and his blood;  
who, in the same night that he was betrayed,  
took bread and gave you thanks;  
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper  
he took the cup and gave you thanks;  
he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it,  
in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father,  
we remember his offering of himself  
made once for all upon the cross;  
we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension;  
we look for the coming of your kingdom,  
and with this bread and this cup  
we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.
President  Jesus Christ is Lord.

All  Lord, by your cross and resurrection you have set us free. You are the Saviour of the world.

President  Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

All:  Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.
In times of hope, in times of trouble, in times of sorrow, in times of praise, 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.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.
President: Alleluia. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.
All: Let us feed on him in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.

Even several weeks into the suspension of public worship, the fact that we cannot receive bread and wine together may still be strange, painful, or alienating. Yet, alone or isolated, alienated or sorrowful as we are, the risen Jesus comes to meet us. Jesus invites us to receive him in our hearts by faith; to unite our prayers and our wills with his; and to rest in his perfect and eternal love.

There are no special words or prayers for this. All the Church has ever thought necessary is true desire, lively faith and genuine love. So you are invited to come honestly before God the way you know how. You may like to close your eyes, or to look at a picture; to pause the recording in order to find stillness; to empty your mind, or to pray quietly.
As we rest in the presence of Christ all around us, the Agnus Dei is sung.

Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.
Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, dona nobis pacem.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, grant us peace.

and an organ improvisation is played by Professor Steven Grahl.

You may also like to pray one of the following prayers:

In union, O Lord with the faithful at every altar of thy Church, where the Holy Eucharist is now being celebrated, I desire to offer thee praise and thanksgiving. I present to thee my soul and body with the earnest wish that they may always be united to thee. And since I can not now receive thee sacramentally, I beseech thee to come spiritually into my heart. I unite myself to thee, and embrace thee with all the affections of my soul. Let nothing ever separate thee from me. May I live and die in thy love. Amen.

Lord, you stand at the door of my heart and knock. You wait for me and only I can let you in. I believe and trust in you and ask you now to fill me with your presence. Feed me with your body and unite me in your blood, that I may be your blessing to a world in need. Amen.
Prayer after Communion

President Let us pray.

A time of silent prayer is kept.

All You have opened to us the Scriptures, O Christ, and you have made yourself known in the breaking of the bread. Abide with us, we pray, that, blessed by your royal presence, we may walk with you all the days of our life, and at its end behold you in the glory of the eternal Trinity, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

The Dismissal

Blessing

President May Christ the Good Shepherd, who knows you by name, call you tenderly, hold you gently, and restore your soul; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

All Amen.

All Go in the peace of Christ, alleluia, alleluia!

All Thanks be to God, alleluia, alleluia!

Music after the service

Toccata (10 Pièces) Eugène Gigout (1844-1925)

recorded by the Organist, Professor Steven Grahl, at home.
During these difficult times, please be assured that the prayers of the clergy and people of Christ Church continue. Please let us know if we can pray for you, or if you need our support. You are warmly invited to continue to participate in our community worship, prayer and spiritual life, whether you are a longstanding member of our congregations or new to us. You can find resources for prayer and contact details at:

www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
www.chch.ox.ac.uk/cathedralblog
@chchcathedralox

Online worship resources from Christ Church Cathedral

You can find all our archive of sermons and services on the Cathedral blog: www.chch.ox.ac.uk/cathedralblog.
We offer a daily reflection on a Psalm and a weekly reflection on a piece of music on our blog.
On Sundays, there is a weekly recorded service available at 9 am and an additional standalone sermon by one of the canons, on the readings of the day, available at www.chch.ox.ac.uk/onlineworship
There is a booklet of prayers for use at home, a recording of the service of Compline, and other prayer resources on the Online Worship webpage.
Prayer for the Week

Merciful Father,
you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd,
and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again:
keep us always under his protection,
and give us grace to follow in his steps;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Blessed Frideswide, pray for us. May all the saints pray for us.