

**ST PETER & ST PAUL'S
CHURCH, AYLESFORD**



**A Service of the Word
with Holy Communion**

Staying Connected

Easter 5

2nd May 2021

Welcome and Gathering

Call to Worship

Come apart from your busyness.
Leave what stresses you at the door.
Come and reconnect with God.
Remain in him and grow.
Grow closer, grow deeper.
Grow and be fruitful.
Come and glorify God!

We gather here, O Lord, for you, the vine,
to nourish us.

**May we, the branches, draw our strength
from you, and grow in harmony, unity
and love. May we find nourishment
through our rootedness in the life,
teachings and love of Christ. Receive the
fruits of our worship and be glorified.
Amen.**

Hymn

Alleluia, Alleluia!
hearts to heaven and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness,
sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the Cross a victim
for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ the King of glory,
now is risen from the dead.

Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits
of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance
at his second coming yield;
then the golden ears of harvest
will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine,
from the furrows of the grave.

Christ is risen, we are risen;
shed upon us heavenly grace,
rain and dew, and gleams of glory
from the brightness of thy face;
that we, with our hearts in heaven,
here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel-hands be gathered,
and be ever, Lord, with thee.

Alleluia, Alleluia,
glory be to God on high;
Alleluia to the Saviour,
who has gained the victory;
Alleluia to the Spirit,
fount of love and sanctity;
Alleluia, Alleluia,
to the Triune Majesty.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885)

Prayer of confession

Gracious God, we come to you aware of
our failings and conscious that we have
tried to live in our own strength.

Forgive us and reconnect us to your vine.

We have resisted the challenge of change
and not trusted your truth.

Forgive us and reconnect us to your vine.

We have rooted ourselves in our wills and not in your word.

Forgive us and reconnect us to your vine.

We have looked for quick fixes and not kingdom-shaped growth.

Forgive us and reconnect us to your vine.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour.

Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness

When our faith becomes straggly,
Jesus Christ prunes it with his wisdom;
when it becomes malnourished,
he nurtures it with his grace;
when it becomes brittle,
he strengthens it with his truth;
when it becomes barren,
he restores it with his life-giving energy.
All our weaknesses are forgiven, we are
healed and we flourish within his love.

Amen.

A prayer of praise and thanksgiving

Creator God, in you we are all we need to be; through you we grow into all that we long to be; with you we bear fruits that can be used and shared and multiplied; because of you our lives are rich and blessed and fruitful: so we praise you in words, song and silence, today and every day. Amen.

The Collect

Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Acts 8.26-40

Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go south to the road - the desert road - that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza." So he started out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship, and on his way home was sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah the prophet. The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that chariot and stay near it."

Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you understand what you are reading?" Philip asked. "How can I," he said, "unless someone explains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch was reading: "He was led like a sheep to the slaughter, and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he did not open his mouth. In his humiliation he was deprived of justice. Who can speak of his descendants? For his life was taken from the earth." The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please, who is the prophet talking about, himself or someone else?" Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

As they travelled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. What can stand in the way of my being baptised?" And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptised him. When they

came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and travelled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Hymn

I will sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me;
How He left the realms of glory
For the cross of Calvary.

*Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
Of the Christ who died for me,
Sing it with the saints in glory,
Gathered by the crystal sea.*

I was lost, but Jesus found me,
Found the sheep that went astray,
Raised me up and gently led me
Back into the narrow way.

Faint was I and fear possessed me,
Bruised was I from many a fall,
Hope was gone, and shame distressed me,
But His love has pardoned all.

Days of darkness still may meet me,
Sorrow's path I oft may tread,
But His presence still is with me;
By His guiding hand I'm led.

Francis H. Rowley

Gospel Reading

Alleluia, alleluia. I am the first and the last, says the Lord, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Alleluia.

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

Glory to you, O Lord.

John 15.1-8

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Address

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

God of comfort ...

Words of prayer

God of comfort,
listen to our prayer.

God of justice ...

Words of prayer

God of justice,
listen to our prayer.

God of truth ...

Words of prayer

God of truth ...
listen to our prayer.

God of community ...

Words of prayer

God of community,
listen to our prayer.

God of hope ...

Words of prayer

God of hope,
listen to our prayer.

God of compassion ...

Words of prayer

God of compassion
listen to our prayer.

God of love, thank you that we are all connected to you our true vine. When we feel disconnected from our communities, families or even ourselves help us to picture the image of the vine and feel rooted in you and your comfort, justice, truth, community, hope and compassion.

**God of love,
listen to our prayer. Amen.**

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said, 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

Hymn

Broken one, take heart
For your king has entered in
Made your heart his home
When he washed away your sin
In the darkest day,
know your shame is all gone
When he looks at you,
God will see his son
At the throne of grace,
he says "sinner, come"

Hurting one, take heart
For your king will walk beside
With each rising sun
Every grace he will provide
In the hardest day,
he will never forsake
For he knows your grief,
and he feels your pain
When the world gives way,
Jesus will remain

Waiting one, take heart
For your king will soon return
Ending every strife
He will reign upon the earth
In the longest day,
know the vict'ry is won
Do not fear the world,
he has overcome
You are safe in him
covered by his love

Liv Chapman and Michael Morrow

Offertory Prayer

Gracious God, you are the vine grower, and we belong to you. Thank you for carefully tending us, especially in difficult times. Thank you that we are safe in you. You provide what we need in order to grow as disciples of Jesus. Help us to abide in him, the true vine. May these offerings and our lives bear much fruit and bring glory to you. We pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here.

His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

... singing the hymn of your unending praise.

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, 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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

Christ has died:

Christ is risen:

Christ will come again.

... Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **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.**

Breaking of the Bread

I break this bread and take this cup so that we all share in the life of Christ.

God's gifts for all God's people.

Invitation to Communion

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you. Eat in remembrance that he died for you, and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Giving of Communion

Alleluia.

Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.

Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.

The body and blood of Christ.

Amen.

*Please wait to be guided by a sidesperson.
There will be no words said at the altar.*

Prayer after Communion

Eternal God, whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life: grant us to walk in his way, to rejoice in his truth, and to share his risen life; who is alive and reigns, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Sending

News and Notices

Hymn

Lord for the years
Your love has kept and guided
Urged and inspired us
cheered us on our way

Sought us and saved us
pardoned and provided
Lord of the years,
we bring our thanks today

Lord for that word,
the word of life which fires us
Speaks to our hearts
and sets our souls ablaze
Teaches and trains,
rebukes us and inspires us
Lord of the word,
receive your people's praise

Lord for our land,
in this our generation
Spirits oppressed
by pleasure, wealth and care
For young and old,
for commonwealth and nation
Lord of our land,
be pleased to hear our prayer

Lord for our world,
when we disown and doubt you
Loveless in strength
and comfortless in pain
Hungry and helpless
lost indeed without you
Lord of the world,
we pray that Christ may reign

Lord for ourselves,
in living power remake us
Self on the cross
and Christ upon the throne
Past put behind us
for the future take us
Lord of our lives
To live for Christ alone

Timothy Dudley-Smith

A sending out prayer and blessing

As we leave this place, may we abide with
Christ, grafted and rooted and pruned.
May we stay connected to one another
and to him, bearing fruit wherever his
love takes us.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you
and with all those you love and miss,
this day and always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord;
In the name of Christ. Amen.

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