

## Morning Worship – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> July - Trinity 6

### Opening Hymn – Praise my soul the King of heaven

1. Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
To His feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Who like thee His praise should sing?  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise the everlasting King.

2. Praise Him for His grace and favour  
To our fathers in distress.  
Praise Him still the same forever,  
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
praise Him, praise Him,  
Glorious in His faithfulness.

3. Father like He tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame He Knows.  
In His hands He gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
praise Him, praise Him,  
Widely as His mercy goes.

4. Frail as summer's flower we flourish  
Blows the wind and it is gone  
But while mortals rise and perish  
God endures unchanging on  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise the high eternal One

5. Angels help us to adore Him;  
Ye behold Him face to face;  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him,  
Dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise with us the God of grace.

### Confession

O God our Father, we ask your forgiveness  
for the times when we have failed you:

When we have not cared enough for your creation: in your mercy  
**Forgive us, O Lord**

When we have not cared enough for those in need: in your mercy  
**Forgive us, O Lord**

When we have been content with ourselves as we are: in your mercy  
**Forgive us, O Lord**

**Give us the will and the power to serve you and follow you,  
now and always. Amen**

### Psalm 86:11-end

- 11 Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth;  
knit my heart to you, that I may fear your name.
- 12 I will thank you, O Lord my God, with all my heart,  
and glorify your name for evermore;
- 13 For great is your steadfast love towards me,  
for you have delivered my soul from the depths of the grave.
- 14 O God, the proud rise up against me  
and a ruthless horde seek after my life;  
they have not set you before their eyes.
- 15 But you, Lord, are gracious and full of compassion,  
slow to anger and full of kindness and truth.
- 16 Turn to me and have mercy upon me;

give your strength to your servant  
and save the child of your handmaid.

17 Show me a token of your favour,  
that those who hate me may see it and be ashamed;  
because you, O Lord, have helped and comforted me.

Collect for Trinity 6

Creator God,  
you made us all in your image:  
may we discern you in all that we see,  
and serve you in all that we do;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Readings

Romans 8:12-25

So then, brothers and sisters, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, 'Abba! Father!' it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, "Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?" He answered, "An enemy has done this." The slaves said to him, "Then do you want us to go and gather them?" But he replied, "No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn." '

Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.' He answered, 'The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!

*Sermon – Rev Wendy Carter*

*God's justice is tempered with mercy and loving kindness*

Its not fair!

Children are great proclaimers of fairness. But I guess we all want life to be fair. There have been times during the pandemic when we have wanted to shout, 'that's not fair'. When we felt we are following the rules and another flouts them or interprets the regulations very differently.

The affair of Dominic Cummings travelling 260 miles from London to Durham, when the majority of people felt they were obeying the advice to stay at home

and not to travel. To isolate when we experienced coronavirus symptoms, so that no one else was exposed to the disease. His actions seemed unfair and caused an outcry.

The killing of George Floyd by police in Minneapolis brought a stronger reaction – because it highlighted the perennial injustice of being stereotyped by skin colour. The international movement to show ‘black lives matter’ highlighted the need to recognise wrongs in the past and represent historical facts, of slavery especially, with more balance. Crucially the aim now is to work for the day when nobody is disadvantaged or discriminated against because of race. We want to see justice for all.

The OT writers discerned that God was just, but they also discovered by experience that God’s nature was loving and merciful. We hear it proclaimed in today’s psalm ‘you are a compassionate and gracious God slow to anger’... In the story Jesus tells of the Prodigal Son, the father could have justly taken his youngest son’s share out of the estate, drawn a line under it and written ‘paid in full’, and made no allowance for his love or the inexperience and foolishness of his son. The older brother might have thought that ‘fair’; but the father waits for the regret, guilt and need which will bring his wayward son home and then welcomes him back to the family. Justice alone can feel cold.

Two weeks ago in our readings we heard St. Paul complain that though he knows very well the good he should do, he finds himself doing what he should not. He puts it down to the sinful nature. The human desire to gratify ‘self,’ we might call it human nature. [Romans7:15.]

If we remember his story – he was a faithful and committed Jew, a Pharisee, convinced that he was doing God’s will by persecuting Christians. On the road to Damascus, he had an awe-inspiring visionary encounter with the risen Christ which turned his life around. He became an evangelist taking the Good News of Jesus especially to the gentiles. He knows the power and strength of the Holy Spirit in his life. He teaches new Christians how to live - but admits it is difficult.

Today in another reading from the letter to the Romans, we heard again about the struggle, in this physical life, to be all we are called to be. Beloved children of God. Able to know almighty God as Just but forgiving and merciful -truly the loving Abba that Jesus showed us. This is the salvation we strive for, which will be completed at the end of time.

Human beings have a grand capacity for making mistakes and wrong choices, as our history testifies. We have been part of slavery and conquest. We are guilty of prejudice, dishonesty and selfishness, so the knowledge that God is just - but also faithfully patient and merciful is very good news.

Since I got back to Shirley I have had time to recover my neglected garden. What's the saying? One year's seeds, 7 years weeds! The back garden was full of forget me nots which have seeded everywhere and when they have only 2 or 4 leaves it is very hard to tell whether I'm pulling up forget-me-nots or something more interesting, I just have to be patient!

In today's gospel Jesus tells us a parable about wheat and weeds. In older translations it was either darnel or tares but our modern Bibles just call them weeds. Darnel is a ryegrass which looks like the wheat when its young. It is very hard to be sure which plant to pull out in the growing crop. By the time you can be sure, pulling up the darnel is highly likely to uproot the wheat at a time when the ears are filling with grain.

A parable is straight forward story with a deeper meaning which comes as we reflect on it. So we have a story of a farmer who plants good wheat in a field, but as it grows it becomes obvious that the crop is full of weeds, sown by an enemy. The farm workers suggest going to pull up the weeds, but the farmer says no, doing that will damage the precious wheat. Leave it to grow and at harvest time the reapers will cut and burn the weeds before cutting and storing the wheat.

Jesus explains that the field is the world, he is the farmer who has sown good seed - who are people who belong to the kingdom of God. The weeds are sown by the evil one and do his will. The reapers are angels who at the end of the age will collect and destroy causes of sin and all evil doers. The wheat will be gathered and shine in the kingdom of their Father God.

We are duty bound as children of God to right the wrongs which we can do something about. Things which are plain to see. 'Black lives matter' remind us equal opportunity and fair treatment is everyone's right.

So we do what we can - make our lives, opinions and actions count in the pursuit of justice in our time, pulling up weeds we can be sure of. We look honestly at ourselves, look for reactions of prejudice, examine our attitudes

prayerfully, review each day. Think about our interactions with others and mend our mistakes with the help of the Holy Spirit. But many of the world's ills, are beyond our influence

In the world good and bad grow together – often it is not easy to tell one from the other. We cannot be sure we have accurate unbiased information. The plants get entwined, grow awfully close, as individuals we feel helpless, we long for God to come and sort it out.

This parable tells us there will be a reckoning, God is aware of the evil, but he will not do anything hastily which harms the good, eventually God's holy angels will separate wheat from weeds. Like the Father in the story of the prodigal son God waits and watches. Always willing the lost to come home. Actions will have consequences; God is aware, but we live each day in hope, because we know the Father through the Son, who shows him to be Abba to us. Just, but truly loving and merciful. Amen

### *Song – Inspired by love and anger*

Inspired by love and anger, disturbed by need and pain,  
Informed of God's own bias, we ask him once again:  
"How long must some folk suffer? How long can few folk mind?  
How long dare vain self-interest turn prayer and pity blind?"

From those forever victims of heartless human greed,  
Their cruel plight composes a litany of need:  
"Where are the fruits of justice? Where are the signs of peace?  
When is the day when prisoners and dreams find their release?"

To God, who through the prophets proclaimed a different age,  
We offer earth's indifference, its agony and rage:  
"When will the wronged be righted? When will the kingdom come?  
When will the world be generous to all instead of some?"

God asks, "Who will go for me? Who will extend my reach?  
And who, when few will listen, will prophesy and preach?  
And who, when few bid welcome, will offer all they know?  
And who, when few dare follow, will walk the road I show?"

Amused in someone's kitchen, asleep in someone's boat,  
Attuned to what the ancients exposed, proclaimed and wrote,  
A saviour without safety, a tradesman without tools  
Has come to tip the balance with fishermen and fools.

### Introduction to the Peace

God calls us to peace:

**in God's justice is our peace.**

Christ calls us to be God's people:

**in Christ is our peace.**

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

### Blessing

The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing;  
and the blessing ...

### Final hymn – Go forth and tell

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!  
God's saving news to all the nations take.  
Proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour Lord and King,  
That all the world his worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;  
He will in grace respond to all who call.  
How shall they call if they have never heard  
The gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell! O Church of God arise!  
Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies.  
Go till all the nations his great name adore  
And serve him, Lord and King, for ever more.