**Morning Praise@ Home 5th June 2022**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Psalm 104: 26 – end Acts 2: 1 – 21

**Reflection from Ruth**

**The disciples take up Jesus’ ministry of the Kingdom**

Jesus has twice told the disciples that they would take up Jesus’ ministry of witness once they have been empowered by the Spirit, first in Luke 24:48-49 and then again in Acts 1:1-8. But we often speak of the “witness” the disciples are to embrace as simply or primarily their **verbal** proclamation of the good news. But the witness the Spirit activates is to the very arrival of the Kingdom of God among them (see Acts 1:3), and not just for Israel, but for all of humanity (see Acts 1:6-8).

This is why Luke presents as integral to the early believer’s testimony the very same kind of counter-cultural community (see 2:43-47; 4:32-37) and healing Jesus initiated among his disciples. Theirs is a Spirit-baptized ministry of word **and** deed that continues Jesus’ work of establishing the reign of God “in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (1:8). Simply put, the disciples are to pick up where Jesus left off. As with Jesus, their witness to the Kingdom unfolding among them will soon elicit deadly animosity from those who zealously guard the status quo.

**A tough proclamation to swallow**

There are multiple indications in this and preceding episodes that the “good news” was rather difficult news for Jesus’ disciples and many of his followers to initially wrap their heads around—and for good reason. There simply was no precedent in Israelite tradition (at least none that we are aware of) for the notion that God’s messiah would be crucified. In fact, this was counter-intuitive to the extreme. The messiah was to cast down the Romans and their elite allies from their lofty thrones, and banish their oppressive ways, not fall victim to them!

It is thus no surprise that the primary activity Luke attributes to the risen Jesus is helping his disciples make sense of this very strange good news. In three successive episodes of Luke 24, Jesus presents an initial moment of disclosure, leading to confusion/misunderstanding, leading to corrective instruction, leading to understanding, leading to proclamation by those who initially misunderstood. That same pattern is replicated here in Acts 2 and in passages to follow. The corrective instruction that first an angel (Luke 24:6-7), and then the risen Jesus (Luke 24:25-27; 24:44-49; Acts 1:1-8), and now Peter, and then others will provide is grounded in the testimony of Israel’s Scriptures to the incredible events that have unfolded and are still unfolding in their midst.

**Babel undone**

The story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11 is a strange one. But set within the context of the Primeval History (Genesis 1-11) it functions as a parallel to the fall story of Genesis 3. Once again humanity chooses to resist God’s intentions for humanity—this time God’s command to “be fruitful and multiply, abound on the earth and multiply in it” (Genesis 9:7). They also again choose to “play God”:

“Come, let us build ourselves a city with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad on the face of the whole earth” (Genesis 11:4)

Humanity’s primordial calling was to fill the earth and care for it so that God’s intentions for creation to be blessed with abundant life could be realized. Now, humanity wants to stake its camp in one corner of creation and build walls and towers. They also brazenly attempt to stake their claim in heaven. But God confounds their tongues, and scatters them abroad to foil their evil designs. As a result, the Primeval History ends with creation in a state of desperate alienation, between humanity and God, and between humanity and one another. God’s attempt to salvage creation through flood and a new beginning is in serious jeopardy.

In Genesis 12, we see God embark on a new strategy for reconnecting with humanity and returning creation to blessing. God covenants with Abram and Abram’s descendants so that someday “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). The Spirit’s incredible miracle at Pentecost, where the tongues of all nations are made intelligible to all present—as the early believers make ready to return blessing “to the ends of the earth”—signals both an end to the curse of Babel and the fulfilment of God’s promise to Abram. For now, with the advent of God’s new age made possible through a descendant of Abraham, “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). The promise of repentance, forgiveness and a life empowered by the Holy Spirit is “for you, for your children, and for all who are far away” (Acts 2:39).

This really was part of God’s plan! But even now, and even with a spectacular miracle occurring right before them, many will not believe (see Acts 2:13). For to do so is to embrace a major paradigm shift in how the Kingdom was to arrive and what it means to welcome God’s saving reign in their midst.

***Affirmation of faith***

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Philip**

Today, this village gathers to give thanks for the reign of our Queen, Elizabeth.

We thank you Lord for her life of service to this country and the Commonwealth.

We thank you for her sense of duty, for the 70 years and more that she has served this country.

We ask for your comfort to her, Lord, as she grieves the loss of her husband, as she has seen difficulties in the lives of her family, as she experiences the frailties of old age, but still continues to serve as our Queen.

Although this country has changed so much in the years of her reign, to a far less deferential, to a celebrity and digital media focussed society, she has continued to serve.

We thank you, Lord, for the strength and resilience she has shown us all. We thank you for her life.

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

We thank you, Father, for the energy and enthusiasm shown by so many to celebrate the Jubilee over these past few days. We thank you for the community spirit and the friendships strengthened, for new friends made.

After the trauma of Covid and lockdowns, we give thanks for the chance to celebrate together once again. We will not complain about the weather, we just thank you for the chance to come together as a community.

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

So, Father, we pray for this community, we pray for all who live here, so many of us living busy lives in different places – at work, at school, looking after family and relatives. Also recognising that many find their community online, in social networks, in work video calls, in the gaming community.

We pray for our people however and wherever they consider their ‘community’ to be.

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

We pray for this church and its role in this community. Help it to adapt to the modern world, to the complex sense of community, in person and online, help us to adapt to people’s needs today.

We ask for your strength, Lord, as we continue in this period of vacancy. We look forward to the selection of a suitable candidate and ask that your hand will be visible to us and to the Diocese as this matter progresses.

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

We pray for the wider world. For those directly affected by the war in Ukraine. For those countries affected by the disruption to global food supplies, facing hardship and famine.

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

We pray for any we might know who are sick or in any way in need of your help. Give them comfort Lord. We pause to pray for any known to us individually.

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

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

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