31st May 2020 6:30 pm Pentecost – Taizé service

Service led by Rob Cheetham, reading of letter from Brother Roger by Lynda Howells, Bible readings by Denise and Andrew Cheetham

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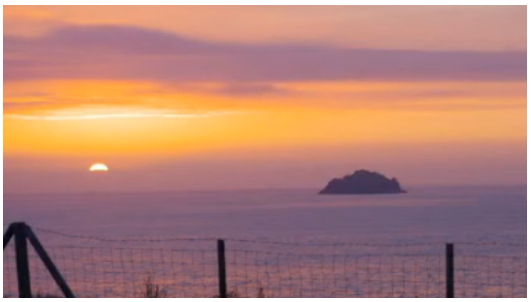
Notices

Good evening and welcome to this Churches Together in Kenilworth and District service. I'm Rob Cheetham, and it's my pleasure to lead this Taizé service, especially on this Pentecost Sunday. This service will have readings, songs you can join in with, and periods of reflection. It may be useful to have a pen and paper handy to jot down any thoughts. Let's begin with a prayer.

Father God, you know all things. We thank you for your Holy Spirit. I pray that all will go well with this service, that the technology works, and that people will be able to find the correct link. Bless this time together as we praise you in song and meditate on your Word.

Let’s begin with a reading by Denise.

Psalm 104: 10-18, 24, 27-31, 33-35 [CEV]



10 You provide streams of water
in the hills and valleys,
11 so that the donkeys
and other wild animals
can satisfy their thirst.
12 Birds build their nests nearby
and sing in the trees.
13 From your home above
you send rain on the hills
and water the earth.
14 You let the earth produce
grass for cattle,
plants for our food,

15 wine to cheer us up,
olive oil for our skin,
and grain for our health.
16 Our LORD, your trees
always have water,
and so do the cedars
you planted in Lebanon.
17 Birds nest in those trees,
and storks make their home
in the fir trees.
18 Wild goats find a home
in the tall mountains,
and small animals can hide
between the rocks.

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24 Our LORD, by your wisdom
you made so many things;
the whole earth is covered
with your living creatures.

---

27 All of these depend on you
to provide them with food,
28 and you feed each one
with your own hand,
until they are full.
29 But when you turn away,
they are terrified;
when you end their life,
they die and rot.
30 You created all of them
by your Spirit,
and you give new life
to the earth.
31 Our LORD, we pray
that your glory
will last forever
and that you will be pleased
with what you have done.

---

33 As long as I live,
I will sing and praise you,
the LORD God.
34 I hope my thoughts
will please you,
because you are the one
who makes me glad.

35 Destroy all wicked sinners from the earth
once and for all.
With all my heart I praise you, LORD!
I praise you!

Song: Bless the Lord, my soul

Bless the Lord, my soul
And bless God's holy name
Bless the Lord, my soul
Who leads me into life

[more music accompanied by the pictures above]

[Rob:]

You might be wondering what on earth pictures of a few tulips and daffodils have to do with the service. What I should have said was, “For the reflection,” which is what that video was, we were meant to be thinking about, “in what ways does God provide for you through his creation.”

Now spring seems a long time ago. And I hope the tulips and daffodils reminded you of how we can do the planting, but it is God who makes them grow. Isn't His creation beautiful?

We now have another reading this time by my son, Andy, followed by another song. Then Lynda will read part of a letter written by Brother Roger. And just in case I didn't put the reflection question [on the video] it is, “What do you have to be thankful for?”

Over to Andy.

Psalm 67 [NIVUK 1984]

1 May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine upon us,
2 that your ways may be known on earth,
your salvation among all nations.

3 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.
4 May the nations be glad and sing for joy,
for you rule the peoples justly
and guide the nations of the earth.

5 May the peoples praise you, O God;
may all the peoples praise you.

6 Then the land will yield its harvest,
and God, our God, will bless us.
7 God will bless us,
and all the ends of the earth will fear him.

Song: Wait for the Lord

Wait for the Lord,
whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord:
keep watch, take heart!

Extract from letter by Brother Roger

[Lynda Howells reads from an unfinished letter by Brother Roger [1]:]

Are we sufficiently aware that God trusts us so much that he has a call for each one of us? What is that call? God invites us to love as he loves. And there is no deeper love than to go to the point of giving oneself, for God and for others.

Whoever lives a life rooted in God chooses to love. And a heart resolved to love can radiate goodness without limits.

Life is filled with serene beauty for whoever strives to love with trust.

All who choose to love and to say it with their life are led to ask themselves one of the most compelling questions of all: how can we ease the pain and the torment of others, whether they are close at hand or far away?

But what does it mean to love? Could it be to share the suffering of the most ill-treated? Yes, that's it.

Could it mean having infinite kind-heartedness and forgetting oneself for others, selflessly? Yes, certainly.

And again: what does it mean to love? Loving means forgiving, living as people who are reconciled. And reconciliation always brings a springtime to the soul.

Reflective Music and Pictures: What do you have to be thankful for?

1 https://www.taize.fr/en_article2964.html

For those who have not been outside for some time, I hope that a walk along the Cornish coast path has lifted your spirits and reminded you of holidays you have enjoyed in the past. Did you guess where the walk was? If not, it started in Bude and finished at St Ives.

Before Denise reads to us again, I shall read today's Taizé daily reading. The reading is from John chapter 20, verses 19 to 23.

John 20:19-23 [BFE]

Jesus and the Disciples

19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors were shut, where the disciples
were, for fear of the Judeans. Jesus came and stood in the middle of them. “Peace be with you,” he
said. 20 With these words he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were overjoyed
when they saw the Master. 21 “Peace be with you,” Jesus said to them again. “As the Father has sent

me, so I am sending you." With that, he breathed on them. "Receive the Holy Spirit," [23] He said, "If you forgive anyone sins, they are forgiven. If you retain anyone sins, they are retained."

Romans 8:26-30 [CEV]

[Denise Cheetham:]

[26] In certain ways we are weak, but the Spirit is here to help us. For example, when we don't know what to pray for, the Spirit prays for us in ways that cannot be put into words. [27] All of our thoughts are known to God. He can understand what is in the mind of the Spirit, as the Spirit prays for God's people. [28] We know that God is always at work for the good of everyone who loves him. They are the ones God has chosen for his purpose, [29] and he has always known who his chosen ones would be. He had decided to let them become like his own Son, so that his Son would be the first of many children. [30] God then accepted the people he had already decided to choose, and he has shared his glory with them.

Song: Spirit of the Living God

Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me;
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me;
fill me anew,
fill me anew;
Spirit of the living God,
fall afresh on me.

Second extract from letter by Brother Roger

[Lynda Howells reads:]

Shortly before his death, Christ assured his friends that they would receive a consolation: he would send them the Holy Spirit who would be a support and a comfort for them, and who would always remain with them.

In the heart of each person, Christ still whispers today, "I will never leave you all alone; I will send you the Holy Spirit. Even if you are in the depths of despair, I remain alongside you."

Welcoming the comfort that the Holy Spirit gives means seeking, in silence and peace, to surrender ourselves to him. Then, though at times dire events may occur, it becomes possible to go beyond them.

[...]

There are times when all of us are shaken by a personal trial or by the suffering of others. This can go so far as to undermine our faith and extinguish our hope. Rediscovering the trusting of faith and peace of heart sometimes involves being patient with ourselves.

One kind of suffering leaves a particularly deep impression: the death of someone we love, someone we may have needed in order to keep going forward here on earth. But such a trial can sometimes be transfigured, and then it opens us up to a communion.

A Gospel joy can be restored to someone in extreme distress. God comes to shed light on the mystery of human suffering, going so far as to welcome us into an intimacy with himself.
And then we find ourselves on a path of hope. God does not leave us all alone. He enables us to advance towards a communion, that communion of love which is the Church, at one and the same time so mysterious and so indispensable …
The Christ of communion offers us this enormous gift of consolation.

To the extent that the Church is able to bring healing to our hearts by communicating forgiveness and compassion, it makes a fullness of communion with Christ more accessible.

[...]

To be bearers of communion, will each of us walk forward in our lives on the road of trust and of a constantly renewed kind-heartedness?

On this road there will be failures at times. Then we need to remember that the source of peace and communion is in God. Instead of becoming discouraged, we shall call down his Holy Spirit upon our weaknesses.

And, our whole life long, the Holy Spirit will enable us to set out again and again, going from one beginning to another towards a future of peace.

Amen.

Time of reflection: Do I have faith in the Holy Spirit?

I hope you like the Holy Spirit reflection video. I use a sculpture, made by Margaret Lovell named *Perasma Field*. It is meant to represent grass moving in a field and “Perasma” means journey. So it’s fitting for a walk with Jesus.

Intercessions

Now we move to a time of prayer with Ann.

[Ann Gibbons:]

The readings and pictures that we have heard and seen remind and encouraged us to praise God for His creation. In the times we find ourselves in now, praise can sometimes feel difficult to do. So we come to a prayer time now. For a few moments, try to think of one thing to praise God for.

[Music:]
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
When I call, answer me,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me.

And so we pray.

Thank you for your creation, Lord, in these difficult times. As we have had a long time staying in our homes, nature has been boldly bursting into life, giving us hope that season will follow season. We hear the sound of birdsong, see the many shades of green on trees and plants, and the colours of spring flowers and marvel at the beauty that surrounds us. We thank you for our gardens. And we pray for those who do not have this luxury, that they may be able to look up. Help us all to look up, Lord. Psalm 19 says “The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship.” Those living in high-rise flats or apartments – may they see something new in the view from their window and the shapes of the clouds, the wonderful sunrise, and sunsets, that we have experienced this year.
Amen.

[Music:]
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
When I call, answer me,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me.

Lord, we pray for those who battle with the coronavirus. We bring to you the medical teams caring for them. We pray for those recovering from the virus, that strength will return to their bodies. We pray for those who mourn the loss of family members and friends.

Lord, we sometimes don't know how to pray but we turn to you. Thank you, that we can come to you and that you will guide and be with us and give us hope and peace that is beyond our understanding.
Amen.

[Music:]
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
When I call, answer me,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me.

In you your love, keep us, Lord.
With your trust sustain us,
With your peace rest us,
With your joy, lift us up.

You are a God of love. With your love you cover the whole world, enfold in your love, which is warmth, protection, and light, so that we feel secure, happy, and part of you, Lord.
Amen.

[Music:]
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
When I call, answer me,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
O Lord, hear my prayer,
Come and listen to me.

Concluding prayers and blessing

[Rob Cheetham:]

Thank you, Ann.

Let’s say the Lord's prayer together.

Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore.

Before our final song, I hope you've enjoyed this service. Thanks to all who have contributed.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding,
keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
Amen.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
Amen.

So, our final song,

Song: Jesus, remember me.

> Jesus, remember me
> when you come into your Kingdom.
> Jesus, remember me
> when you come into your Kingdom.

repeat ad lib

[Transcribed by https://otter.ai with help from Hamish Blair]

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