

Sunday 28 April 2024

The Fifth Sunday of Easter



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Prayers of intercession © [Lay Anglicana](#) (slightly adapted).

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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

HYMN 1 My Jesus, my saviour

[\(please click on this link\)](#)

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,

with all your soul, with all your mind,

and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed for us.

Let us therefore rejoice by putting away all malice and evil

and confess our sins in penitence and faith,

firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments

and to live in love and peace with all.

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.

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.

The Gloria

All 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.
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;
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 for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Almighty God,
who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ
have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:
grant that, as by your grace going before us
 you put into our minds good desires,
so by your continual help
we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of Acts

An angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go towards the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' (This is a wilderness road.) So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go over to this chariot and join it.' So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' He replied, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

‘Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter,
and like a lamb silent before its shearer,
so he does not open his mouth.

In his humiliation justice was denied him.

Who can describe his generation?

For his life is taken away from the earth.’

The eunuch asked Philip, ‘About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?’ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture, he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. As they were going along the road, they came to some water; and the eunuch said, ‘Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptised?’ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, 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 snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region, he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea. *Acts 8:26–end*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Old Testament reading

A reading from the first book of Moses called Genesis

God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’

‘Here I am,’ he replied.

Then God said, ‘Take your son, your only son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on a mountain I will show you.’

Early the next morning Abraham got up and loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out for the place God had told him about. On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place in the distance. He said to his servants, ‘Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you.’

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and placed it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. As the two of them went on together, Isaac spoke up and said to his father Abraham, ‘Father?’

'Yes, my son?' Abraham replied.

'The fire and wood are here,' Isaac said, 'but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?'

Abraham answered, 'God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son.' And the two of them went on together.

When they reached the place God had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. Then he reached out his hand and took the knife to slay his son. But the angel of the Lord called out to him from heaven, 'Abraham! Abraham!'

'Here I am,' he replied.

'Do not lay a hand on the boy,' he said. 'Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son.'

Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. So Abraham called that place The Lord Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the Lord it will be provided.'

The angel of the Lord called to Abraham from heaven a second time and said, 'I swear by myself, declares the Lord, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me.'

Genesis 22:1-18

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

New Testament reading

A reading from First Letter of John

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. And we have seen and do testify that the Father has sent his Son as the Saviour of the world. God abides in those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God, and they abide in God. So we have known and believe the love that God has for us.

God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness on the day of judgement, because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love because he first loved us. Those who say, 'I love God', and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also. *1 John 4:7-end*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 A new commandment [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. *John 15:1-8*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Today we have three corking Bible readings—I'm going to major on the Genesis passage, a rather unsettling reading, but also a very important one in our understanding of God and sacrifice.

If you want a different take on this that is very relevant, I think, to the present situation in the Middle East I recommend Leonard Cohen's 'Story of Isaac'.

Let's set the scene: Abraham is settled as an itinerant herdsman of quite some wealth in the land of Canaan living alongside other tribes and cities but called not to integrate. He has received remarkable promises from God and miracles to back them up, not least being the birth of his son Isaac, a child of his great old age and the focus of God's promises for a future for Abraham's line.

And here we begin. Abraham is told by God to take Isaac to Mt Moriah and sacrifice him there. Firstly, we do know that child sacrifice was known in Canaan—at least one of the Canaanite pantheon required it. However, this child, the child of promise? And is the great God, the High God, really like this? Abraham impresses here because he does not argue the case, he simply trusts and obeys. He believes that God will not fail in his promise.

And God shows himself to not be like the other gods around, he provides an alternative, a ram to die in Isaac's place. So, what are the things God is showing to Abraham and so to us too?

Firstly, what God wants is not sacrifice, and especially not children sacrificed. His desire is a trusting, obedient, heart and he will look after the details. Micah 6:6–8 reiterates this powerfully—the ritual sacrifices come a long way second and are useless without someone acting justly, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God.

But, secondly, God provides the sacrifice! Some things to note here: Mount Moriah is the site where Jerusalem was built, the site of the Temple. Then he provides a ram for the sacrifice—so prefiguring the law requirements and Jesus. But also, the most likely bush to trap an animal in was the thorn bush, those terrible long sharp thorns holding the ram by his horns – remind you of anyone?

Thirdly, we see here what drew Paul to honour Abraham in Romans Ch 4-6. Here is a man who has learnt faith and trust in God even when it is hard, and he does not understand—and God doesn't disappoint. For Paul this stressed that salvation is by faith and that faith is counted as righteousness—not our failures but God's trustworthiness and actions on our behalf.

Our other passages today fill this out. Phillip's interaction with the Ethiopian eunuch is fascinating—here is this Gentile man puzzling over what on earth Isaiah 53 means by the Suffering Servant and Phillip is at hand to show how God provides the sacrifice for our sins and failures and whoever comes is welcome. And he

comes and is welcomed. And likely from his salvation is formed one of the great early churches in Ethiopia. Finally, our gospel passage reminds us That the salvation on offer is greater than we imagine – we are grafted onto Jesus to share his life, to know we are connected to God by his Spirit, all one for us on the cross.

The Creed

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

All 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?

All 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?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

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

Prayers of intercession

The Church of Christ Lord, may we and your whole Church live as those travelling deeper into your presence and into your love. As we share the Eucharist in this church, may we also share with all parts of our Church the love that you have shown us. Lord, from whom all thoughts of truth and peace derive, set our hearts on fire with the true love of peace, and let us begin with your Church, that all those who confess your name may be united in the desire to be reconciled one with another. Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Creation, human society, all those in authority Lord, we ask you to guide your Church so that we may love others as you have loved us. Then in tranquility your kingdom may go forward and your way will be known upon earth. May all people everywhere praise you, Lord: let all the nations rejoice till the whole earth is filled with the knowledge of your love.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

The local community Lord, inspire us with your love and refresh us with the water of the river of life. Then may we in turn through you be enabled to bring light to those with whom we live and work. Daily renew in us all the sense of joy, filling every corner of our hearts with love and gladness so that we may be diffusers of life and meet all that comes with gallant and high-hearted happiness, giving you thanks always for all things.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Those who suffer Lord, we pray for all those who suffer, whether physically, mentally or spiritually. We thank you with all our hearts that, though the human condition may speak to us of hope unfulfilled, the mark missed, the fading bloom, the autumn chill and beyond that the dark, yet the Christian condition, through the promise of your son, is one of joy.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

The communion of saints Lord, your risen son came and stood among his disciples and said, 'I am the first and the last, and the living one; I was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore.' Grant to the faithful departed that they shall indeed see the face of Christ and live with him forever, where light perpetual shall shine.

Lord, by your continual presence in us may you raise us to eternal joy.

In your mercy

All Hear our prayer.

Receive these prayers, O God,
and transform us through them,
that we may have eyes to see and hearts to understand
not only what you do on our behalf,
but what you call us to do
so that your realm will come to fruition in glory.

All Amen.

Merciful Father,

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

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,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 How deep the Father's love for us ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

HYMN 4 [Amazing grace](#)

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

God the Father,
by whose love Christ was raised from the dead,
open to you who believe the gates of everlasting life.
And the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Alleluia, Christ is risen!

All He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation.
You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.
His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death.
And so we gladly thank you,
with saints and angels praising you, and saying,

**All 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.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
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.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All 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.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

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.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.