



# ST NICHOLAS CHURCH, SUTTON

**10 MAY 2020 5<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER**

Please join me for our

**Service on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter at 10.30am**

(or at another convenient time) by following the Order of Service and singing in your own home.

I will be thinking of you all and praying for you at The Rectory at the same time and longing for our future reunion in Church.



Christ is risen  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**  
*Frances*

Duty Warden: Geoff Rendall

Server: Diane Young

Musician: Pam Affleck

Sidespersons: Alistair Cruickshank, Richard West

Welcomers: Sylvia Cowling, Kaushalya Jeyaraj

Sound desk: Jennifer Emptage

Refreshments: Gill Ayres, Doreen Kennett

*Here is a view of St Nic's from The Rectory garden at 10.28am on Easter Day*



**St. Nicholas, Sutton**  
**Worship on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**at 10.30am on 10 May 2020**  
led by Revd Frances Arnold, Priest-in-Charge

*The Gathering*

**The Greeting**

*President*

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen.  
**He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

*Hymn* O Jesus, I have promised

**Prayer of Preparation**

*We sit or kneel*

**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.**

### **Prayers of Penitence**

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.'

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.

**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 confessing our sins with a sincere and true heart.

*1 Corinthians 5.7,8*

**Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be;  
that we may do justly,  
love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

*President*

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. **Amen.**

*Glory to God is said or sung*

**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**

*President says 'Let us pray'.*

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. **Amen.**

## *The Liturgy of the Word*

### **Readings**

*First reading* Genesis 8.1-19

**The Flood Subsides**

*read by Jean Chappell*

*Second reading* Acts 7.55-end

**The Stoning of Stephen**

*read by Jean*

*At the end the reader says*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Hymn* How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

**Gospel Reading** John 14.1-14

**Jesus the Way to the Father**

*read by Alistair Cruickshank*

*The reader says*

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *Luke*.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the end*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

### **Sermon** *The Revd Frances Arnold*

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father (Jn 14.9)

Each week I include a list of 'blessings' in the Pastoral Letter. One of the recent additions to the list is 'theological reflection.' We seem to be thinking more about faith questions during the pandemic and, in my experience, we are also discussing them more. I have been stimulated by phone conversations I have with people, both in the congregation and from outside. They frequently turn to matters of faith. The conversation will often end up being about the problem of suffering and the nature of God.

One of the difficult things about the pandemic is the uncertainty about what it means. It is tempting to try to find a reason for what is happening. Is it punishment for sin? If, like me, you are making your way through the Book of Exodus at the moment, you will just have read about the punishment of the Israelites after they worshipped the Golden Calf in the wilderness. But this is the beginning of the search in the Bible for the revelation of what God is like. The turning point is the Passion and Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our recent gospel story of the road to Emmaus reminds us that we can't simply take Bible passages at face value and in isolation. The disciples on the road to Emmaus only recognised the Risen Jesus after he

interpreted to them the things about himself in *all* the scriptures. He explained things to the dejected Cleopas and his companion, led them forward and warmed their hearts by applying scripture to the questions they were asking. It sounds as if this took some time! It wasn't a quick explanation - indeed it was nightfall by the time they got to Emmaus. The key thing is that he explains the sufferings of the Christ in the light of the loving purposes of God for the redemption of the world.

A few days before the encounter on the road to Emmaus, Jesus had been speaking with the disciples at the Last Supper. He said the words in today's gospel shortly after Judas went out into the night. Now he is going away and the disciples are naturally anxious about where he is going and whether they will be able to follow him. So he speaks of his Father's house. Heaven and earth will meet again when God renews the world and at that time there will be room for everyone in the 'new' house. Jesus himself is going ahead to see that all is ready. Remarkably, he is ministering like a servant at an inn in an oasis.

It is easy to understand why this passage is often chosen at funerals. We can't see the way ahead and we need to know not only that there is a way into the unknown future, but that we will be able to find it. Jesus is clear: he is the way to the Father. It is his life and teaching that show us what God is like. And the crucifixion makes it absolutely clear that God is not remote and only concerned with punishing us for our sins. God himself shares in human suffering. He suffers alongside us in Jesus.

And the truth, the life, through which we know and find the way, is Jesus himself: the Jesus who washed the disciples' feet and told them to copy his example, the Jesus who was on his way to give his life as the shepherd for the sheep.

We know God through the Jesus who reassured and comforted the disciples on their last night together by promising them that though he would not be physically present with them, he would be 'around' with his people from that day to this. He promised to send us his own spirit, his own breath, his own inner life. Jesus uses a special word to describe the spirit. He says the Father will give us 'another helper' (John 14.16). This helper is the spirit. That word for spirit is rich and many-sided. It can also be translated 'comforter.' The 'comforter' was there for the disciples to give them extra strength in the dark days after the Last Supper. And the 'comforter' is with us too in these days of bereavement and tragedy, alongside us, giving us strength for the next moment, then the one after that and the one after that.

So we can with confidence ask God to come into the situations we find ourselves in and ask for his help, protection and guidance. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit - the 'comforter'.

**Amen.**

## The Creed

*We stand*

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

In the power of the Spirit and in union with Christ,  
let us pray to the Father.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father,  
you promised through your Son Jesus Christ  
to hear us when we pray in faith.

Strengthen *Christopher & Jonathan* our bishops and all your Church in the service of  
Christ,  
that those who confess your name may be united in your truth,  
live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world.

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

Bless and guide *Elizabeth our Queen*; give wisdom to all in authority;  
and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace;  
that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy...

Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours,  
that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Lord, in your mercy...

*We hold in prayer all those affected by the Coronavirus and especially our chaplains,  
volunteers and NHS health workers, nursing and medical staff caring for increasing  
numbers....*

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit ...;  
give them courage and hope in their troubles;  
and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord, in your mercy...

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ ...;  
according to your promises,  
grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord, in your mercy...

Rejoicing in the fellowship of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Nicholas and all your saints,  
we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

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

## **The Peace**

*President*

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.

*John 20.19,20*

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

*Let us 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.**

**Almighty God, Father of all mercies,  
we your unworthy servants, give you most humble and hearty thanks  
for all your goodness and loving kindness.  
We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life;  
but above all for your immeasurable love  
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,  
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.  
And give us, we pray, such a sense of all your mercies  
that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful,  
and that we show forth your praise,  
not only with our lips but in our lives,  
by giving up ourselves to your service,  
and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord,  
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit be all honour and glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

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

*Blessing*

The God of peace,  
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,  
that great shepherd of the sheep,  
through the blood of the eternal covenant,  
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,  
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;  
and the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**