

Service for Sunday 14 May 2023, Caversham Park URC: 6th Sunday of Easter

Preparing to hear God's Word

Call to Worship

Jesus invites us to a way of celebration,
meeting and feasting with the humble and poor.
Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus beckons us to a way of risk,
letting go of our security.
Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus challenges us to listen
to the voices of those who have nothing to lose.
Let us walk his way with joy.

Jesus calls us to follow the way of the cross,
where despair is transformed by the promise of new life.
Let us walk his way with joy.

Hymn

All my hope on God is founded

Prayers of Approach, Adoration and Confession

All-holy God,
you call us together to be your holy people,
and so we join to give you praise
 for the joy of our creation;
 for our redemption in Christ;
 for the empowerment of your Spirit.

Gracious God,
fill our hearts with your love
and our lives with your glory
as we come before you in worship and prayer
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

**God of love and mercy,
we come before you
knowing that we are in need of forgiveness.**

**We have sinned against you
in our speaking and in our silence;
in our thinking and in our thoughtlessness;
in our actions and in our inaction.**

**We have sinned against you,
in not loving you with our whole heart and soul and strength;
in not loving our sisters and brothers in Christ.**

**Grant us, O Lord, your forgiveness,
restore us in the image of your Son,
and lead us along the way to your kingdom,
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

Assurance of Pardon

O God,
your heart is full of mercy.
May we hear and trust your words to each of us:
'Your sins are forgiven.'
May we forgive each other
and forgive ourselves.
Thanks be to God.
Amen.

Hearing God's Word

Theme Introduction

Today we will hear two readings, which between them sum up a lot of the New Testament. First we will hear Paul's sermon to the Athenians, in which he explains to them who the unknown God is that they have been worshipping. And then we have Jesus telling his disciples at the Last Supper that he will give them his Holy Spirit, and that he, the Father, and the Spirit are united with the disciples and with us in love.

Collect for the Day

God our redeemer,
you have delivered us from the power of darkness
and brought us into the kingdom of your Son:
grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life,
so by his continual presence in us he may raise us
to eternal joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen

Reading from Scripture

Acts 17.22-31

Hymn

We have a gospel to proclaim

Reading from Scripture John 14.15-21

Hymn Come down, O Love divine

Sermon

Responding to God's Word

Hymn Be still and know that I am God

Affirmation of Faith

Christ is the image of the unseen God,
the first-born of all creation,
**for in him all things were made,
in heaven and on earth.**

Through him and for him
all things were made;
**he exists before all things,
and holds them in unity.**

The Church is his body,
and he is its head;
he is the beginning,
the first-born from the dead.

**God made all his fulness
to dwell in him,
to reconcile through him
all creation to himself,**

everything on earth,
and everything in heaven,
**when he made peace
by his death on the cross.**

From Colossians 1:15-20 – Rejoice and Sing 752

Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession

Loving God,
we give you thanks and praise
for all that you have done for us.

For your whole created universe
bursting with life and infinite possibilities,
a universe created and yet still being created.

For the beauty and fragility of our spinning planet,
the blue oceans, swarming with life,
and the green and verdant earth.

For our fellow human beings,
people of many colours, of many languages,
of many abilities, yet all your children.

We give you thanks
for the life, death, and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ,
for the message which he brings,
for the life in us which he renews,
and the example he has given us to follow.

We give you thanks for the Holy Spirit,
sweeping through all of life with boundless energy,
at once as gentle as the breath of a child,
and yet as fierce as a raging storm,
lifting us up in your grace.

Hear us, Lord,
as in our own hearts and minds
we give you thanks for your presence in our lives....

Silence

For all these things we give you our joyous praise,
through your Son, Jesus Christ
and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

The Offering

Generous God
we bring our gifts to you
with cheerfulness and joyful hearts.
Give us courage that with these gifts
we may also offer our minds, bodies and spirits,
ready and willing to show the truth of the Gospel in our lives.
Amen.

Hymn

Great is thy faithfulness

The Blessing

May the God of hope
fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Amen.