

+ Crowe Hill + Fordingbridge + Horton Heath + Ringwood +

## Sunday Service 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021

### Welcome to this Sunday's Service

## Today's Lectionary Texts:

Acts 10:44–48   Psalm 98   1 John 5:1–6   John 15:9–17

**Theme:** “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 15:12)

## Keeping in Touch

### GENERAL

The churches under the leadership of Revd Mike Shrubsole have opened for worship. Please refer to details under each church. Mike will continue to produce email or paper copies of the weekly worship on a weekly basis for the foreseeable future.

### TRINITY RINGWOOD

**SUNDAY WORSHIP 10.45am every Sunday.** Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May Worship with Communion led by Revd Mike Shrubsole. The Communion Charity is for the work of Christian Aid. Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May Worship led by Dr Chris Slade.

Drink-Chat-Pray each Thursday at 10.30am. Zoom details will be circulated.

Wellbeing Course – This course has now come to its conclusion. Thank you to all who have faithfully attended the Wellbeing course. I trust you have found it beneficial.

TRINITY AND WESLEY CENTRES The centres are being prepared for opening by our Centres Manager Alan Ball and groups will begin using it after 17<sup>th</sup> May. Please do adhere to all guidelines to keep yourself and others safe.

Please pray for Jackie Burgess as she begins to think through ways of opening up the families and children work in a safe and controlled way. Little Lambs is planning to open on Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May with restricted numbers so booking is essential.

Continue to hold in our thoughts and prayers Ann Waddington following the death of John whose funeral took place this week. We think of their four grown up children: Andrew, Matthew, Tim and Martin and their nine grandchildren.

## **CROWE HILL**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP on a weekly basis, alternating 10.30am and 3.00pm.** Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May Worship with Communion led by Revd Mike Shrubsole at 3.00pm; Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May worship led by Liz Ward 10.30am.

The Church will open for PRIVATE PRAYER each Wednesday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. You will be made most welcome.

Bible Study group continues by zoom every Tuesday evening at 8.00pm. (Note no Bible Study on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> May)

## **HORTON HEATH**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP on a weekly basis at 10.45am.** 9<sup>th</sup> May worship will be led by Diane Middleditch; 16<sup>th</sup> May worship with Communion led by Revd Mike Shrubsole.

WORDSHOP will meet by Zoom at 7.30pm on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> May and look at the Sunday's gospel reading.

## **FORDINGBRIDGE**

**SUNDAY WORSHIP 10.30am on a twice monthly basis thereafter (1st and 3rd Sundays).**

Next Worship Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> May, 10.30am led by Mrs Mandy Hibbert.

TEASTOP Support Group – each Thursday afternoon from 2.00 – 4.00pm. You will be made most welcome.

Our thoughts and prayers continue for the family of Ina Stewart whose funeral was held this week. The family spoke of the support and fellowship she found at the church.

Please pray for Eileen Winter who is in hospital. Give thanks that David is able to visit for a short period each day.

# Call to Worship

The Spirit is coming to bless us all with a new song:

Let our joy be complete!

Gifts for the good of all, poured out on all to teach us a new song:

Love one another!

Strangers and neighbours, foreigners and family will join in the new song:

No longer servants but friends!

Come, let our worship make a joyful noise,

Rejoicing in the friendship of God. *(Based on today's lectionary readings.)*

**Song:** 'Let us build a house' (STF 409)

<https://youtu.be/mTdxFRfEoMs>

1. Let us build a house where love can dwell  
and all can safely live,  
a place where saints and children tell  
how hearts learn to forgive.  
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,  
rock of faith and vault of grace;  
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

*Chorus*

*All are welcome, all are welcome,  
all are welcome in this place.*

2. Let us build a house where prophets speak,  
and words are strong and true,  
where all God's children dare to seek  
to dream God's reign anew.  
Here the cross shall stand as witness  
and as symbol of God's grace;  
here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:

3. Let us build a house where love is found  
in water, wine and wheat:  
a banquet hall on holy ground  
where peace and justice meet.

Here the love of God, through Jesus,  
is revealed in time and space;  
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

4. Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
bear the image of God's face;  
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

5. Let us build a house where all are named,  
their songs and visions heard  
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed  
as words within the Word.  
Built of tears and cries and laughter,  
prayers of faith and songs of grace,  
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:

Words: Marty Haugen (b. 1950)  
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## Prayer

Eternal God, in these moments of quiet we thank you for your presence in our lives. We thank you for all of the testimonies of your profound love for your children. We especially thank you this day for the holy one Jesus. We thank you for his humility. We thank you that rather than elevating himself above us he instead would lift us up and as with his disciples call us "friends." We thank you for his many reminders that we are to love one another. But we confess that we have great difficulty following his command to love.

We become upset with others and find it easier to reject them than to seek to understand and to love them.

We struggle with the almost impossible command to love our enemies.

We become driven to meet our own needs and become blind to the needs of others.

We are driven to succeed which becomes all-consuming and trumps our command to love.

Forgive us our foolish ways. Help us to keep in our awareness this command to love which Jesus repeated so many times. Help us especially to hear it in those hard times when it is most difficult to love.

Help us to love others when they are power hungry.

Help us to love others when they are inconsiderate.

Help us to love others when they are angry and lash out blindly.

Help us to love others when they are selfish and insensitive.

Help us, O God, to love others so that we may abide in your love and act like the friends of Jesus. Amen.

*(Inspired by John 15:9-17. Written by Richard J. Einerson.)*

## Prayer for Understanding

Lord, speak to us once more your message of love in action. Inspire us to love and serve, in your name and for your glory. Amen.

## Bible Reading: John 15:9-17 (ESV)

<sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

<sup>12</sup>"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. <sup>13</sup>Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. <sup>14</sup>You are my friends if you do what I command you. <sup>15</sup>No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. <sup>16</sup>You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. <sup>17</sup>These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

## Bible Reading: Acts 10:44-48 (ESV)

<sup>44</sup>While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. <sup>45</sup>And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. <sup>46</sup>For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared, <sup>47</sup>"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" <sup>48</sup>And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.

## Sermon: All are one in Christ

Today I am focussing on the Bible reading from the book of Acts. The lectionary only gives us a few verses from the end of the story. You need to read Acts 10:1 through to 11:18 to hear the whole story. Peter has had a very strange dream. The text calls it a vision. Peter knew it was different, it was a special experience, he sensed and understood that it had come from God, but what did it mean? Now the obvious understanding is that this was a dream about food and diet. We need to remember that Peter was a Jew and he had grown up to experience food prepared according to Jewish dietary laws and customs. Today we would summarise it by the word 'kosher'. I'm not sure if Peter 2000 years ago would have used that word, but he and his family would certainly always adhere to the requirements of Torah law as they found it in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. In those days women did most of the cooking. So Peter would have been served kosher food all his life, served by his mother, by his wife and by his mother-in-law. So let's remind ourselves what that probably looked like. No pork, no bacon, no mixing of meat and dairy products, so no chicken in a cream sauce, no blood, so no black puddings, only to eat fish with scales, so no jellied eels, no shellfish, no lobsters, and only to eat meat animals with hooves cloven in two which chew the cud.

So, Peter receives a vision, when he is shown all the different kinds of animals which Jewish Torah law called 'unclean'. In the dream the voice of God challenges Peter to eat, God tells Peter not to call these animals unclean. The natural understanding for Peter would be to think that this was an instruction, a freedom, to change his diet and menu. Just imagine what that might look like for Peter; crispy bacon filled baps for breakfast, a lunch of pizza with stringy mozzarella cheese and pepperoni sausage on it, a prawn cocktail starter, followed by a game pie containing rabbit and hare, a dessert of strawberry gelatine jelly and dairy ice cream. All of these things are forbidden by Torah law, are they now being permitted for Peter?

That would be exactly how the dream could be understood. But circumstances cause Peter to quickly come to the conclusion that the dream needed a wider understanding. He is invited to have fellowship with Cornelius and his household, a God-fearing but gentile family. Peter understands that his dream also authorises him to go to that family's house, he goes beyond a dream merely about food, he extends the meaning into new areas. And then the family receive the Holy Spirit, and then Peter baptised them into the church. And Peter quickly sees that this is right and good. He extends the meaning of the dream to explain and support this too. Because of this dream and because of this incident, the new thing we call the church changed hugely. For a little while in the first days of the church it was a Jewish Christian church. It was a movement within Judaism. But this dream and this event changed everything. Our Christian faith became a faith for the world, a faith which reaches out to include you and me too.

All because of a dream, and all because Peter understood that the message of the dream was so much bigger and wider ranging and more inclusive than it first seemed. Peter went

beyond the dream in the confidence that God was leading him onwards and outwards into bigger and bolder and more inclusive situations.

You do see, don't you, that if Peter had been a Christian literalist, he would have continued to insist that his God-given dream was only about food. He would have supported a new Jewish Sect which was released from their traditional dietary requirements. Jewish Christians whose distinctive Jewish mark was that they weren't Kosher. He could have insisted in that narrow view. But he didn't. He grasped the bigger, bolder, more open and inclusive vision. A vision which welcomed Cornelius and his household, and which welcomes and includes people like you and me.

Peter said: 'Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people?' And that is a challenging question, because the disciples who were with him, and we, could answer: 'Yes we could withhold, we do withhold, we believe we have the right and the power to exclude people and to refuse to welcome them into the church.' But Peter challenges us to agree with him, and to come to a different conclusion – we cannot withhold, we must welcome and include.

I think that the apostle Paul had a similar eye-opening moment, when he saw the bigger picture too. And Paul wrote his hope for the church down in the form of a list. He wrote:

"There is neither Jew nor gentile,  
Neither slave nor free,  
Neither male nor female,  
For all are one in Christ." (*Galatians 3:28*)

And my question for you is, do you get the bigger picture of a list like that? Or do you hold to the list in a narrow and restrictive way, refusing to embrace it's wider potential, denying that it has any wider consequences? Remember that the list ends with a very big claim indeed that: 'all are one in Christ'.

But the narrow interpretation would be to say things like this:

"Jews and gentiles can be one in Christ, but Paul doesn't mention stateless persons, there is no place for refugees or for illegal immigrants in the church."

"Slaves and freemen can be one in Christ, therefore we don't have to worry about trying to get rid of modern slavery and abuse, it must be OK to have slaves and to underpay people unfair wages, it's OK, all you have to do is tell these poor people that they are one in Christ, you don't have to do anything about their dreadful situation."

"Males and females can be one in Christ, but only if the women know their place!"

"Paul didn't mention homosexuals nor gender transitioned people in this list, so they certainly can't be one in Christ."

I call you to reject such narrow interpretations.

So what is the bigger picture? It should surely be to allow for Paul's argument to take us into other areas of human life and diversity. To see where the idea of all being one in Christ leads us. Not to limit ourselves by the exact words which Paul wrote, but to see the wider potential for unity and welcome which these words open up to us:

Neither Jew nor gentile,  
Neither slave nor free,  
Neither male nor female,  
Neither black nor white,  
Neither young nor old,  
Neither homosexual nor heterosexual,  
Neither rich nor poor,

... and now add any other pairs of potentially opposing human conditions to the list that you can think of ... and then conclude, as Paul does, with his final statement, 'all are one in Christ'.

Or to get back to Peter and his telling of his story. Peter says: "I now realize that it is true that God treats everyone on the same basis." (Acts 10:34) That's how the Good News Bible puts it. Some other modern translations say: "God does not show favouritism." Older translations say: "God shows no partiality." King James' Authorised Version says that: "God is no respecter of persons." Which to modern readers seems to say the opposite of what modern English means! It doesn't matter which translation you read it from. Peter and Paul both come to the same conclusion, all are one in Christ. God opens us up to see God's plan for the church in Christ which is always bigger and more open than we humans can easily see or accept.

In the hymn: 'There's a wideness in God's mercy' by Fredrick William Faber, (R+S 353, STF 416) the author laments that:

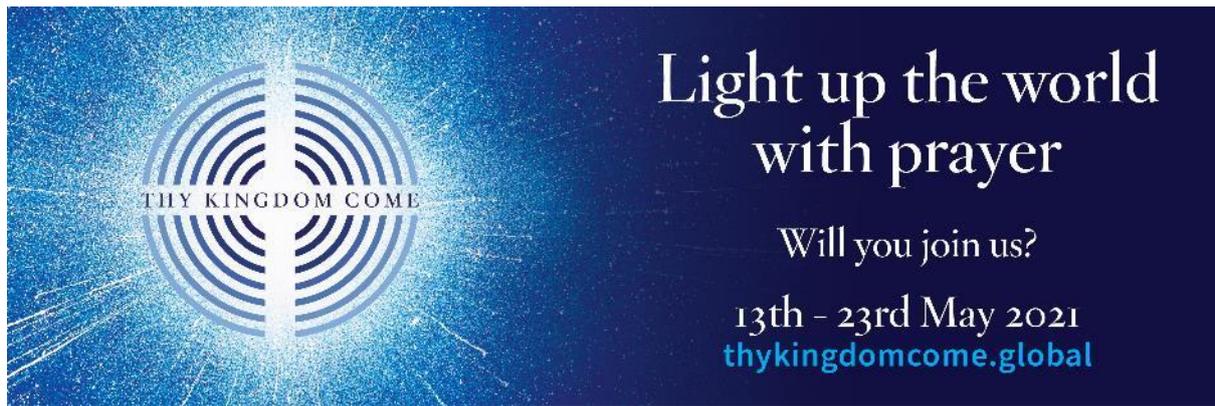
"We make his love too narrow by false limits of our own;"

and he asks us to acknowledge that:

"The love of God is broader than the measures of our mind;"

I haven't included that hymn today, but we will end with "In Christ there is no East nor West" and celebrate with the author, John Oxenham: "one great fellowship of love".

**Song:** 'We seek your kingdom' (not in our usual books)



*The theme song chosen for this year's 'Thy Kingdom Come' season of prayer from Ascension to Pentecost, 13<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May, takes the ideas from the Lord's Prayer and firmly applies our prayer for God's Kingdom onto today's world. Go to the websites for more information, resources and encouragement to pray. There are lots of resources for adults and young people and the 'Cheeky Pandas' resources for young families:*

<https://www.thykingdomcome.global/>

<https://licc.org.uk/resources/we-see-your-kingdom/>

*The music video is here:*

<https://youtu.be/2Lp2mMpSa1E>

1. We seek your kingdom throughout every sphere  
We long for heaven's demonstration here  
Jesus your light shine bright for all to see  
Transform, revive, and heal society

2. Before all things, in him were all things made  
Inspiring culture, media, and trade  
May all our work serve your economy  
Transform, revive, and heal society

2. Peace, truth, and justice reigning everywhere  
With us be present in our public square  
Fill all who lead with your integrity  
Transform, revive, and heal society

3. Forgive us Lord, when we have not engaged  
Failing to scribe your heart on history's page  
Make us again what we were made to be  
Transform, revive, and heal society

4. Faithful to govern ever may we be  
Selfless in service, loving constantly

In everything may your authority  
Transform, revive, and heal society

Words: Noel Robinson, Andy Flanagan, Graham Hunter

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# Praying with the Lord's Prayer

## **Our Father in heaven,**

Thank you God that you love us like a parent. Thank you that from your divine power you want to have a relationship with each one of us.

## **Hallowed be your name,**

I praise you God. I praise you for the created world, for your justice and mercy, for the gift of Jesus, and for all your goodness in my life.

## **Your kingdom come,**

I pray for the transformation of the world, for peace, for justice, for compassion, for an end to poverty and sickness, for each global or local situation where the presence of God can set things right.

## **Your will be done, on earth as in heaven.**

I pray that people will do God's will. And I start with myself, help me to understand what you, Lord, are calling me to do, and help me to be brave enough and strong enough to do it.

## **Give us today our daily bread.**

I pray for my own needs, which I share with others, for the needs of my family, my friends, as well as those of my church.

## **Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.**

I pray for my general sins – I don't love God or my neighbours as much as I should. And I am also conscious of specific sins that are on my heart. I ask for God's help to become more patient and forgiving towards others.

## **Save us from the time of trial**

There are things that worry me, things that make my life difficult, things that cause me pain or struggle, and things that test my ability to do the right thing. Help me and save me Lord.

## **And deliver us from evil.**

God protect me from the evil in the world. I pray that others I am concerned for would also receive this same protection.

## **For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

God, I know I can bring these things to you, for I trust in your powerful loving presence, for me, for my loved ones, and for the world.

**Amen.**

Amen.

## Song for Communion: 'Put peace into each other's hands'

(R+S 635, STF 712)

[https://youtu.be/5VI\\_sd5A-h8](https://youtu.be/5VI_sd5A-h8)

1. Put peace into each other's hands  
and like a treasure hold it,  
protect it like a candle-flame,  
with tenderness enfold it.

2. Put peace into each other's hands  
with loving expectation;  
be gentle in your words and ways,  
in touch with God's creation.

3. Put peace into each other's hands  
like bread we break for sharing;  
look people warmly in the eye:

our life is meant for caring.

4. As at communion, shape your hands  
into a waiting cradle;  
the gift of Christ receive, revere,  
united round the table.

5. Put Christ into each other's hands,  
he is love's deepest measure;  
in love make peace, give peace a chance,  
and share it like a treasure.

Words: Fred Kaan (1929-2009)

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## Communion *(using URC Second Order of Holy Communion)*

Jesus was often a guest. He shared many meals with his friends, and they long remembered his words at the table. Though some disapproved of the company he kept, Jesus ate and drank with all kinds of people and showed everyone the love of God. Wherever people met together Jesus was glad to be welcomed and to be fed. Today, we are the guests of Jesus. He welcomes us, whoever we are and whatever we bring, and he will feed us at his table. Old or young, rich or poor, joyful or in sorrow, Jesus invites us to share bread and wine with him, to remember the story of his life and death, and to celebrate his presence with us today.

On the night before he died, Jesus shared a meal with twelve of his disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem. The Gospel writer tells us what happened that night:

"While they were eating, he took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to them, and said, 'Take; this is my body'. Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, and all of them drank from it. He said to them, 'This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. Truly, I tell you, I will never again drink the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'" (Mark 14:22-25)

We are the friends and disciples of Jesus today. He invites us to break bread together, to remember him and to pray that God's Kingdom will come.

Let us pray:

Loving God, the world you made is beautiful and full of wonder. You made us, with all your creatures, and you love all that you have made. You gave us the words of your prophets, the stories of your people through the generations, and the gathered wisdom of many years. You gave us Jesus, your Son, to be born and to grow up in difficult times when there was little peace. He embraced people with your love and told stories to change us all. He healed those in pain and brought to life those who had lost hope. He made friends with anyone who would listen and loved even his enemies. For these things, he suffered. For these things, he died. And he was raised from death and lives with you forever.

You give us your Holy Spirit, to teach and to strengthen us, to remind us of Jesus Christ, and to make us one in him. For all these gifts we thank you.

We praise you that we are here today, around the table of Jesus. We have heard the good news of your love; the cross is the sign of your arms stretched out in love for us and the empty tomb declares your love stronger than death.

Send your Holy Spirit upon this bread and wine, and upon your people, that Christ may be with us, and we may be made ready to live for you and to do what you ask of us, today, and every day to come. We make this prayer through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, in the love of the Creator, one God, to whom be glory and praise forever, Amen.

*Distribution and sharing of bread and wine.*

Eat this bread. It is the bread of life.

Drink this wine. It is the cup of blessing.

Let us pray.

Loving God, you have fed us generously at this table, as we have remembered Jesus and rejoiced that he is with us today. We are ready now to follow him, and to be your people in the world. May your Holy Spirit show us the way, make us holy and fill us with love. Amen

## Our Offerings



This Sunday marks the start of Christian Aid Week. In these coronavirus days it is difficult to promote charities effectively. Traditionally CA Week has been a very important fundraiser for CA. I encourage you to please make a donation to CA. Here is their website donations page:

<https://www.christianaid.org.uk/appeals/key-appeals/christian-aid-week>

Or call: **020 7523 2269** to donate by telephone.

## Hymn: 'In Christ there is no east nor west' (R+S 647, STF 647)

<https://youtu.be/tEwLle8Ue4Y>

1. In Christ there is no East or West,  
in him no South or North,  
but one great fellowship of love  
throughout the whole wide earth.

3. Join hands, then, all the human race,  
whate'er your nation be;  
all who my Father's image bear  
are surely kin to me.

2. In him shall true hearts everywhere  
their high communion find,  
his service is the golden cord  
close-binding humankind.

4. In Christ now meet both East and West,  
in him meet South and North,  
all Christlike souls are one in him,  
throughout the whole wide earth.

Words: John Oxenham (1852-1941) altd.  
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## Dismissal and Blessing

As Christ has loved you, so love one another,  
and abide always in God's love, that your joy may be complete.  
We go in peace to love and serve the Lord,  
**in the name of Christ. Amen.**

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