



# Morning Worship

30 August 2020

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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our Morning Worship here at the Parish churches of Coxley with Godney, Henton, and Wookey. Although we are currently apart due to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) it is hoped that following this liturgy knowing that others in the benefice will be doing so at the same time might help provide a spiritual connection between us.

It is suggested that alongside this liturgy you have a means to listen to the suggested hymns which have links to videos with lyrics within this document. There is a mixture of traditional hymns and contemporary worship songs. If you do not know the tune then why not listen to the hymn/song and worship through reading the words alone.

The service is designed to be used easily by one person. If there is more than one person participating, either one can lead with others joining in with the responses in **bold** OR everyone present may join in with all the words.

The sections in *red italics* are rubrics: these explain what needs to happen at various points.

Materials in this booklet are drawn from *Common Worship: Times and Seasons* which is copyright © The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England 2006; *New Patterns for Worship* copyright © The Archbishop's Council of the Church of England 2002. All Bible quotations are from the English Standard Version.



# MORNING WORSHIP

## GREETING

Praise God! For even though we are apart the Lord is in our midst!  
**Let us rejoice and be glad and give him the glory.**

## CALL TO WORSHIP

The Lord is here!  
**His Spirit is with us!**

Though we find ourselves isolated  
in homes, apartments, and residential places,  
**we look out our windows and remember,  
the heavens declare the glory of God,  
all creation rejoices in our creator.**

*Psalms 19:1*

Though we cannot be present with our church community,  
**we rejoice that Christ is in our midst,  
he is with us always, until the end of the age!**

*Matthew 28:20*

Though we have to stand at a safe distance from others,  
giving space to those who pass us by,  
**we recall we are all made in the image of God,  
connected to one another,  
connected to God.**

*Genesis 1:27*

## HYMN: I THE LORD OF SEA AND SKY

[Listen here](#)

## CONFESSION AND WORDS OF COMFORT

The Spirit of the Lord fills the world  
and knows our every word and deed.  
Let us then open ourselves to the Lord  
and confess our sins in penitence and faith.

**Father, we have sinned against heaven and against you.  
We are not worthy to be called your children.  
We turn to you again.  
Have mercy on us,  
bring us back to yourself as those who once were dead  
but now have life through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

*A period of silent reflection follows*

Hear the words of comfort, our Saviour Christ says to all who truly  
turn to him:

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son,  
that whoever believes in him should not perish  
but have eternal life.*

*John 3:16*

## COLLECT

Let us pray.

*A period of silent prayer is kept.*

Almighty and everlasting God,  
you are always more ready to hear than we to pray  
and to give more than either we desire or deserve:  
pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy,  
forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid  
and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask  
but through the merits and mediation  
of 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.**

## HYMN: WILL YOU COME AND FOLLOW ME

[Listen here](#)

## THE WORD OF GOD

Hear what God is saying to his people according to the gospel of Matthew.

**18**<sup>15</sup> “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

## A REFLECTION

*By Karl Jacobson*

Here's a question I'm sure you've been asking yourself: Is the "real presence" really present in the biblical material?

The answer is "yes," but we don't find it where we might expect, either in the Gospel narratives of the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26, Mark 14, or Luke 22, or in 1 Corinthians 11; rather it is here in the middle of Matthew 18. The declaration of the real presence of Jesus "where two or three are gathered" in his name, is the heart and soul of Matthew -- both chapter 18 and the book as a whole.

Matthew 18:15-20 begins with an all too likely hypothetical situation: "If your brother sins against you....," which is followed by a second hypothetical, "If your brother refuses to listen..." which bears the not-purely-hypothetical truth to all of us who have brothers. If you have a brother (or sister) he (or she) will sin against you sooner or later; this is the nature of brothers (and/or sisters).

The NRSV translates this opening phrase "If another member of the church sins against you...." On one level this translation is a little unsatisfying, as it favours inclusivity over intimacy; thinking of the sinner here as a brother, or sister, or close companion brings the need for resolution to an immediacy, a sense of importance that may be lost in thinking only generally of another "member of the church." And, ironically, the perceived inclusivity of "member of the church" may actually serve to limit the application of Jesus' teaching by focusing one on church-relationships, and not all relationships.

But it should also be noted that the community is in play, the word "church" (or better "assembly") does follow in verse 17, and the tensions and trials which arise from the sins we commit against one another do have an impact not just on individual relationships, but on the community as a whole. At stake in this issue of sin, confrontation, repentance and forgiveness is the presence of God and what it means for us.

The flow of the passage is important to make note of, as there is movement from the individual to the communal. Where there is sin, Jesus says, confront it directly, one-to-one, face-to-face. If this does not solve the problem, include someone else in the conversation, and if all else fails take it to the community as a whole. From individual confrontation to communal attention, the movement of the passage is a progression that follows the development of the hypothetical conflict from its origins in individual matters to its conclusion at the community level. At each point along the way sin has implications for everyone involved.

The harmony of Jesus' teaching about conflict and the role of witnesses with both Deuteronomistic and Levitical codes (see chapter 19:15ff in both books) is often noted. But there is something subtly different here. Jesus is not instructing us to bring witnesses to testify against our "brother" who has sinned against us, but to testify to the exchange between brother and sister.

This is not just about safety in numbers, but the safety of the numbers. The health and welfare of the community are part and parcel of the problem of sin between two of the community's individual parts. At each point along the way, from the start as two individuals are together to the inclusion of witnesses and supporter to the involvement of the assembly as a whole, there is something else at stake.

Back, now, to the real presence of Christ. Following his teaching on the progression of the confrontation of sin in an attempt to reconcile, Jesus teaches that any sinner so committed to his/her position that they will refuse to listen even to the church is to be treated like "a Gentile and a tax collector." It is ironic (and probably intentionally so) that this line follows the parable of the lost sheep and precedes the response to Peter's question about how often one has to forgive a brother who sins (repeatedly) against you.

Jesus says, essentially, that being a member of the church means you have a responsibility. If your sheep gets lost you don't look for an hour and call it quits. You get out there and find that sheep. If

your brother sins against you seventy-seven times (another hypothetical certainty), that's how many times you forgive him. And of course, we know from the Gospel of Matthew how Jesus treated the Gentiles and tax collectors.

Notice that Jesus follows this with talk about the power of agreement, saying that anything that is agreed upon by two on earth will be done for them by the Father in heaven. This is a promise. But notice as well that this is not where Jesus ends. Jesus says last, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." There is no question of agreement at this point. Jesus is present, really present, where two or three are gathered in the Divine Name, not just where two or three agree in Jesus' name, but where two or three are gathered; presumably this includes the two who cannot listen to each other about a matter of sin, and how to handle it. Even there, perhaps especially there, Christ Jesus is present.

The subject matter of this passage could not be more fitting for Christian communities in every age, place, and situation. One of the things that plagues most Christian communities (and other communities no doubt) is the inability to handle confrontation, disagreement and our mutual accountability when it comes to sin. We simply don't know how to live together, fight together, and stay together. And this is because we all of us -- and not just our brother or sister -- are sinners.

Jesus offers a simple guide to help us handle our sin and its consequences here. But far more importantly Jesus promises us that he is present, that his presence is real for us, when we are gathered in his name -- both in agreement, and in sin. Within the context of the overarching narrative of Matthew, which is governed by the promised real presence of God, in the promise of child named Emmanuel, God With Us (1:23) and in this God's parting assurance to us that he is with us always (28:20), this is the Good News for us who are members with one another of Christ's church.



## HYMN: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

[Listen here](#)

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

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

## INTERCESSIONS

*Use the silence to bring before God your own concerns around that topic.*

Jesus, our exalted Lord, has been given all authority.

Let us seek his intercession that our prayers may be perfected  
by his prayer.

Jesus Christ, great high priest,  
living for ever to intercede for us,  
pray for the Church and its leaders, your broken body in the world...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, King of righteousness,  
enthroned at the right hand of the majesty on high,  
pray for the world and its leaders, and make it subject to your gentle rule...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Son of Man,  
drawing humanity into the life of God,  
pray for your sisters and brothers in need, distress, or sorrow...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus, pioneer of our salvation,  
bringing us to glory through your death and resurrection,  
surround with your saints and angels  
those who have died trusting your promises...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ, Lord over all things,  
ascended far above the heavens and filling the universe,  
pray for us who receive the gifts you give us for work in your service...

*Silence is kept.*

Lord, hear us.

**Lord, graciously hear us.**

Jesus Christ,  
keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit  
and in the bond of peace,  
and bring the whole created order to worship at your feet;  
for you are alive and reign with the Father  
and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

## **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## **HYMN: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS**

[Listen here](#)

## **DISMISSAL**

God the Father,  
who first loved us and made us accepted in the beloved Son,  
bless you.

God the Son,  
who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood,  
bless you.

God the Holy Spirit,  
who sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts,  
bless you.

The blessing of the one true God,  
to whom be all love and all glory for time and for eternity,  
come down upon you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**