

OPENING PRAYERS AND HOLY COMMUNION ARE AVAILABLE AS A VIDEO ON OUR ONLINE SUNDAY SERVICES PAGE HERE OR ON OUR YOUTUBE PAGE HERE

PART 1 – OPENING PRAYERS

WELCOME

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

SENTENCE

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22.37–40

PRAYER OF PREPARATION

Let us pray.
Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleansing 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.

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

In penitence and faith,
let us confess our sins to Almighty God:

Merciful God,
our maker and our judge,
we have sinned against you
in thought, word, and deed,
and in what we have failed to do:
we have not loved you with our whole heart;
we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves;
we repent, and are sorry for all our sins.
Father, forgive us.
Strengthen us to love and obey you
in newness of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God,
who has promised forgiveness to all who turn to him in faith:
pardon you and set you free from all your sins,
strengthen you in all goodness
and keep you in eternal life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O God,
whose Son has taught us that love is the fulfilment of your law:
stir up within us the fire of your Holy Spirit,
and pour into our hearts your greatest gift of love,
so that we may love you with our whole being,
and our neighbours as ourselves;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.

PLEASE PAUSE THE VIDEO – PRESS THE SPACEBAR TO PAUSE

PART 2 — AN ALL AGE VIDEO SERIES ON THE 4 GOSPELS, THE FIRST BEING ON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN AND DOWNLOADABLE MATERIAL FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN [HERE](#)

PART 3 — LOOK UP AND READ THROUGH THE READINGS, LISTEN TO THE [SERMON PODCAST](#) (READ ALONG IF YOU WISH) BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE, AND PRAY THE INTERCESSIONS, TODAY BY SARNIA BIRCH.

READINGS

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

Psalm 1

Matthew 22:34-46

SERMON BY REV JENNIE SAVAGE

Available to listen online and/or download – access via Pentecost 2020 link and notice also a reasonable library of past sermons for you to listen to as you exercise or meditate...

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

Let us pray:

Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Word and as we think on the matters raised, open our hearts and our minds to hear you. Amen.

Holiness

Have you ever been called ‘holier than thou’?

It is not usually meant as a compliment.

The implication is that you consider yourself more righteous than others and come across as arrogant and condescending.

When God, through Moses, addressed the people of Israel and commanded them:

You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy

he certainly did not mean them to antagonise others by their attitude.

Rather, their holiness would be a witness, a light, and would play out in their daily way of life.

First, though, what does **holy** mean?

Literally it means to be set apart, for a purpose.

For something to be made sacred means it has a special and meaningful use as opposed to a common one. In church there are many items we consider sacred for their special use, like the vessels and materials used in Communion and worship.

In other faiths and spiritualities there are similar ideas of not only things, but places and people who are sacred and holy.

Leviticus 19 has been called the highest development of ethics in the Old Testament. Apparently, Leviticus records more words from the mouth of God than any other book of the Bible. This chapter perhaps better than any other in the Bible, explains what it meant for Israel to be a holy nation. And interestingly it goes straight into how holy people treat others.

The call to be holy is not for a few, not restricted to leaders like to Moses, or the priests but applies to the whole people of Israel. It is the same here, you, the whole congregation, is called to be holy.

In this telling of the moral law, the people’s life with God and with one another **is** the practical expression of their holiness. We are to be shaped by the one whom we worship. The behaviour that is exhorted is accompanied by the refrain: ***I am the Lord.***

It is the Lord to whom we are accountable.

Verses 15-18 exhort in the negative: how **not** to treat your neighbour. Holiness is practiced in the everyday routines and duties and connections. You are holy when you do not gossip or slander or hold a grudge. You are holy when you are fair to everyone equally, without being influenced by either pity or greed.

And this section ends with what we know as the second great commandment: ***you shall love your neighbour as yourself.***

You might be surprised to hear that it is only once in the Old Testament do we find the explicit commandment ***you shall love your neighbour as yourself*** – here in Leviticus. Who are these neighbours that we are called to love? It is said that charity, which is an act of love, begins at home, but it certainly does not end there, nor with our close friends, neighbours or community.

Later in Leviticus 19, verse 34, we find the exhortation again, but this time it says: ***you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.***

This commandment to love the alien, or the stranger is found in 37 times in the Old Testament. The stranger stands for refugees, exiles, foreigners – anyone in an alien country with no civil rights.*
Why does this come up so often?

The time of Israel's slavery in Egypt was the darkest time in their history. It took a long time for them to escape, even with God's help, and a longer time to put it behind them. God charges them though to not forget it. While things are much better for them, they are in a position to be kind and show compassion to others who are suffering as they once did.

Who is my neighbour?

So, to love my neighbour casts a very wide net.

Jesus treats this most directly in the parable of the Good Samaritan when asked ***who is my neighbour?*** (Luke 10:25-37) He also addresses it in his sermon on the mount when he calls his disciples to love their enemy. (Matthew 5:44) To love one another within our families and communities is our daily practice that conforms us to Christ.

The early church was unusual in its diverse mix, as Colossians 3:11 showed, ***there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free, but Christ is all and in all.***

A diverse community that practices love among all becomes a witness to the glory of God.

In itself it was enough for people to remark of the early church: ***look at how the Christians love one another!***

Jesus said, ***By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.*** (John 13:35)

And like the Triune God, this love breaks all barriers and extends outward and beyond.

Reproving

Holier than thou manifested as self-righteousness is not how we want to come across to other people. An awkward part in this text is in our love for our neighbour, we are not to refrain from reproving them. Who wants to do that? It is easier to look the other way, to just not want to know. Sometimes it is hard to know who or what is exactly right.

Who wants to be reproved themselves? Perhaps that is where we start. Accountability is a pressure, but it also has results. Try giving up smoking, losing weight, keeping a health regime – if we are reporting to someone, we are more mindful of sticking to it, getting the job done. So, there are times we willingly make ourselves accountable. So, maybe we should be more willing to be spiritually accountable ourselves, prior to holding others to account?

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

You shall love your neighbour as yourself.

It seems to be that way round.

As much as we need and receive forgiveness and love, we recognise that others, known and unknown to us, do as well.

Let us pray.

***Teach us to love, Lord,
as you have loved us
that this world might be
a better neighbourhood
in which to live and share.
Bless the paths that cross today;
the old friends and strangers
with whom we might share***

***a pleasant greeting, a smile
or maybe something deeper.
Grant us a word in season
that might resonate within
and bring a blessing to these,
your precious children, in Jesus' name we pray.
Amen.
(Prayer: John Birch.)***

INTERCESSIONS BY SARNIA BIRCH

Heavenly Father, your love for us is without end and you teach us to love you in return: hear the prayers we bring for all your people.

We pray for the peoples of the world, for those whose lives are made miserable by the coronavirus epidemic, poverty, homelessness, oppression, disaster or war.

Lord, guide us in our struggles for justice and peace and give to those in authority wisdom, courage and common sense.

Lord, teach us your ways that we may love our neighbours as ourselves and in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for the worldwide church and for our parish.

We pray especially for our parish while we are physically separated from each other, that we will foster our care for each other and continue a sense of community. We ask your blessing on Jenny, Sam and Libby and all who minister to us even though we are separated for a while longer. We give thanks for the technology and expertise which allows us to worship together while in our homes.

Lord, help us to work towards unity and faithful service to you. Grant us your peace of heart and mind. Nourish eternal life in each of us and may we be examples of your life to others.

Lord, teach us your ways that we may love our neighbours as ourselves and in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all in this community, for our neighbours, for the disadvantaged, for our families, our friends and for ourselves.

We pray for comfort and healing for the sick, for those whose bodies are in pain or whose minds are confused; those who are friendless or grief-stricken; those without hope for the future; those especially who are separated from family support.

Work with nurses, doctors, paramedics and administrative staff, especially those known to us, as they care for the sick and protect them from harm.

Give skill and fruitful research to scientists as they search for treatments, prevention and a cure for the coronavirus.

To public health authorities, give wisdom to decide the best ways to manage both this crisis and our anxieties. To us in isolation, give patience, determination and initiative.

When communities are fearful, give a calm spirit, and kindness to neighbours and strangers.

Through this testing time, and through all the risks we face together, teach us once again how we can love one another as you have loved us.

Lord, help us to rebuild true community and fellowship in the light of your love and with welcoming hearts.

Lord, teach us your ways that we may love our neighbours as ourselves and in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We remember your faithful servants of every age, all who have followed your law of love. We remember particularly those whose anniversaries occur at this time, including Col. Charles Weir (28 October 1979).

Lord, help us to learn, to worship you with deeper meaning and to serve you sincerely. Help us to be more faithful in our stewardship of the lives you have given us.

Lord, teach us your ways that we may love our neighbours as ourselves and in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We ask these things in the name of Jesus who taught us to 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.
Save us from the time of trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

PLEASE RESUME THE VIDEO FOR HOLY COMMUNION BY PRESSING THE SPACEBAR

GREETING OF PEACE

We are the body of Christ.
His Spirit is with us.
The peace of the Lord be always with you.
And also with you.

OFFERTORY PRAYER

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation.
Through your goodness we have these gifts to share.
Accept and use our offerings for your glory
and for the service of your kingdom.
Blessed be God for ever.

HOLY COMMUNION

The Lord be with you,
And also with you.
Lift up your hearts;
We lift them to the Lord.
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God
It is right to give our thanks and praise.

All thanks and praise, glory and honour,
be yours at all times, in every place,
holy and loving Father, true and living God.

We praise you that through your eternal Word
you brought the universe into being and made us in your own image.
You have given us this earth to care for and delight in,
and with its bounty you preserve our life.
We thank you that you bound yourself to the human race with the promises of a gracious covenant
and called us to serve you in love and peace.
Above all, we give you thanks for your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ: born as one of us, he lived our common life and offered his life to you in
perfect obedience and trust.
By his death he delivered us from sin, brought us new life, and reconciled us to you and to one
another.
Therefore with angels and archangels,
with apostles, and prophets,
with holy men and women of every age,

we proclaim your great and glorious name:
Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

Holy God, we thank you
for these gifts of your creation, this bread and wine,
and we pray that we who eat and drink them
in obedience to our Saviour Christ,
by the power of the Holy Spirit,
may be partakers of his body and blood,
and be made one with him and with each other
in peace and love.
On the night he was betrayed Jesus took bread;
and when he had given you thanks
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Take, eat. This is my body given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.'
After supper, he took the cup,
and again giving you thanks
he gave it to his disciples, saying,
'Drink from this, all of you.
This is my blood of the new covenant
shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.'
Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.

Therefore we do as our Saviour has commanded:
proclaiming his offering of himself
made once for all upon the cross,
his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension,
and looking for his coming again,
we celebrate, with this bread and this cup,
his one perfect and sufficient sacrifice
for the sins of the whole world.

As we eat and drink this holy sacrament,
renew us by your Spirit
that we may be united in the body of your Son
and serve you as a royal priesthood
in the joy of your eternal kingdom.
Receive our praises, Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord, with whom and in whom, by the
power of the Holy Spirit, we worship you in songs of never-ending praise:
Blessing and honour and glory and power,
are yours forever and ever. Amen

THE BREAKING AND SHARING OF THE BREAD AND WINE
We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
We who are many are one body,

for we all share in the one bread.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in one God,
who made and loves all that is.
We believe in Jesus Christ,
God's only Son, our Lord,
who was born, lived, died and rose again,
and is coming to call all to account.
We believe in the Holy Spirit,
who calls, equips and sends out God's people,
and brings all things to their true end.**

This is our faith, the faith of the Church:

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

POST COMMUNION PRAYER

**Living God,
in this holy meal you fill us with new hope.
May the power of your love,
which we have known in word and sacrament,
continue your saving work among us,
give us courage for our pilgrimage,
and bring us to the joys you promise.**

**Most loving God,
you send us into the world you love.
Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage
in the power of your Spirit.**

BLESSING

**The peace of God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. Amen.**

DISMISSAL

**Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:
In the name of Christ. Amen.**

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