



CHRISTCHURCH ILKLEY  
Service on Sunday March 7th 2021  
'Under construction'

**Opening Prayer**

Holy God, as we meet together today, we ask that you renew our love for you. Open our eyes to see fresh things, open our ears to hear with more clarity, open our minds to recognise new ideas – that we may be willing to grow and change

and to become more like your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**Hymn** (690 *Singing the Faith*)

The Church's one foundation  
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;  
She is his new creation  
by water and the Word.  
From heaven he came and sought  
her  
to be his holy bride;  
With his own blood he bought her,  
and for her life he died.

Elect from every nation,  
yet one o'er all the earth;  
Her charter of salvation,  
one Lord, one faith, one birth;  
One holy name she blesses,  
partakes one holy food,  
and to one hope she presses,  
with every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder  
we see her sore oppressed,  
by schisms rent asunder,  
by heresies distressed.

Yet saints their watch are keeping;  
their cry goes up, "How long?"  
and soon the night of weeping  
shall be the morn of song.

Mid toil and tribulation,  
and tumult of her war,  
she waits the consummation  
of peace forevermore;  
Till, with the vision glorious,  
her longing eyes are blest,  
and the great church victorious  
shall be the church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union  
with God the Three in One,  
and mystic sweet communion  
with those whose rest is won.  
O happy ones and holy!  
Lord, give us grace that we  
like them, the meek and lowly,  
on high may dwell with thee.

*Samuel John Stone (1832-1900)*

**A prayer of adoration**

Father God, we adore you for your patience with your wayward children; for bearing with us when our understanding is skewed and our behaviour wrong. Jesus, we adore you for being with us always, your humanity entwined with ours; for showing us the way in your life and through the Word.

Holy Spirit, we adore you for working through us despite our failings; for living in us and enabling us with a strength greater than our own.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you are wisdom in our world; you flow through creation and consciousness.

Our attempts to house you in bricks and mortar are foolish. Come to us as we gather here within this church made to honour you, and lift the stones from our hearts, so that we may be your Church in word and in deed.

**Amen.**

## **A prayer of confession and an assurance of forgiveness**

Lord God, our ancestors turned the Temple into a marketplace; where are the marketplaces in our lives, O Lord? We confess that we are driven by the need to possess. In our greed, we plunder the earth of resources and fail to share the good things you have provided for our needs. We are obsessed with the work of human hands, making idols of our houses – and yours. Forgive us, and help us to see that your Church is eternally under construction – in us.

**Amen.**

It's hard O Lord, when the message hits home;  
when we see, in the sins of our forebears, our own;  
when getting real has toppled our self-styled crowns  
and the weight of guilt drags us down.

But you, dear Lord, always forgive,  
when in the Holy Spirit we choose to live.

And so, we lift our heads bare and humbled,  
casting aside thinking that was dark and jumbled.

In your forgiveness we find the light  
to walk again in the path that is right.

**Amen.**

## **Bible Reading:- John 2 v 13-22**

<sup>13</sup> The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. <sup>15</sup> And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. <sup>16</sup> And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." <sup>17</sup> His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

<sup>18</sup> So the Jews said to him, "What sign do you show us for doing these things?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." <sup>20</sup> The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple,<sup>[c]</sup> and will you raise it up in three days?" <sup>21</sup> But he was speaking about the temple of his body. <sup>22</sup> When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

## **Hymn StF: 662**

1/ Have you heard God's voice; has  
your heart been stirred?  
Are you still prepared to follow?  
Have you made a choice to remain  
and serve,  
though the way be rough and  
narrow?

*Refrain (except the last time)*  
*Will you walk the path that will cost*  
*you much*  
*and embrace the pain and sorrow?*  
*Will you trust in One who entrusts to*  
*you, the disciples of tomorrow?*

2/ Will you use your voice; will you  
not sit down  
when the multitudes are silent?  
Will you make a choice to stand your  
ground  
when the crowds are turning violent?

3/ In your city streets will you be  
God's heart?  
Will you listen to the voiceless?  
Will you stop and eat, and when  
friendships start,  
will you share your faith with the  
faithless?

4/ Will you watch the news with the eyes of faith and believe it could be different? Will you share your views using words of grace? Will you leave a thoughtful imprint?

*We will walk the path that will cost us much and embrace the pain and sorrow. We will trust in One who entrusts to us, the disciples of tomorrow.*

*Jacqueline Jones arr Martin V. Clarke*

**A Reflection** on the gospel reading: **'Under Construction'**

Can you imagine the scene? A young man, with a group of his friends, strides into the Temple purposefully. He then turns over the tables of the moneychangers and releases the animals lined up to sell as sacrifices. He is obviously very angry and makes himself a whip with which he proceeds to drive the moneychangers and salesmen out of the Temple. When apprehended he insisted they were defiling the Temple and all they were interested in was moneymaking and not worship. When questioned he answered that he would destroy the Temple and raise it again in three days. The Temple authorities were incensed! This man is crazy but he could also be dangerous. They had not understood his words.

Imagine a similar scene in our church or in one of great cathedrals. Can you picture the scenes that might come on to the TV News or the headings in our papers? I wonder what our own reaction would be - horror, judgment, disinterest or maybe there is more to this than the public outcry?

John places this event at the beginning of Jesus' ministry but the other gospel writers place it at the end. Neither do they have Jesus visiting Jerusalem during his ministry but John does. Tom Wright in his commentary feels Jesus may have done this act twice which would explain why the Temple authorities kept their eyes on him during his time preaching and teaching, so they had a case against him to bring him to trial.

The Temple was central to Judaism- it was its heart- it's where heaven and earth met. It was the centre for worship, music, politics, society and national events. You went there to meet God and it was the focal point of the nation. Therefore what Jesus did was shocking. We cannot be surprised at the reactions this act produced. However it was being defiled by putting profit before people- it had become a marketplace where thoughts of welcome and love and care of the community had become almost forgotten.

John's reflections on Jesus' words are that he is talking of his coming death and resurrection- his body being the Temple where heaven and earth meet.

What is our reflection on this incident and how it relates to ourselves and our church? Do we need a specific place to be in touch with God? What do we think of when we talk of church? Is our church under construction?

Isn't the church always under construction? After Jesus' death Christians realised they didn't need a Temple to be in touch with God- although we often feel nearer to God in certain places. We are with God and He with us wherever we are.

Last Good Friday Tom, a Methodist living in Co. Durham, was feeling he should mark it- but he was in lockdown. He decided he would stand outside his house and play a Good Friday hymn on his euphonium. He was inspired by the Italians he had seen on TV singing from their balconies. He warned his neighbours and let them have the words of the hymn beforehand! He hoped they would join him and to his surprise they did! He then played hymns on Easter Day at 10.00am and a Methodist neighbour sang the words! Lots of neighbours participated and what has followed is amazing to Tom- there has been a regular Sunday gathering whatever the weather of 30-40 people! Gradually he has included all aspects of worship. 'It's been humbling' says Kathy the Methodist neighbour.

'We realise there must be a desire to know more of God and we weren't seeing the need! We would probably not have had that response if we had invited them to church'. A deep sense of community has developed and there is conversation about God. Where is God taking them? They just know he is leading them forward- they are under construction!

Perhaps we are too!!

## **Prayers of Intercession**

Today as we pray let us think about the church- the body of Christ- us.  
Let us pray that we are:-

- welcoming and open to all
- listening to your voice and following the indicators you give to us
- willing to be 'under construction' in your hands
- wanting to be present in the community showing your love
- able to move into new ways and purposes as we become aware of the needs in the place where we are
- able to set our eyes on new horizons and move towards them perhaps leaving our comfortable surroundings behind.

We think of those struggling in the pandemic- disheartened, with little hope of vaccinations, recovering from the virus and those bereaved.

We pray for wisdom for all in the coming weeks; for patience for those who want things back to normal and for strength and purpose for politicians, scientists and doctors.

We bring all these prayers, and many more in our hearts, to you O God.

In the name of Jesus we pray.

Amen

## **The Lord's Prayer**

### **Hymn**

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul.  
Oh my soul, worship his holy name.  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul.  
I'll worship your holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day  
dawning.  
It's time to sing your song again.  
Whatever may pass and whatever  
lies before me  
let me be singing when the evening  
comes

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul.  
Oh my soul, worship his holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy name

You're rich in love and You're slow to  
anger.  
Your name is great and Your heart is  
kind.  
For all Your goodness, I will keep on  
singing.  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart  
to find

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul.  
Oh my soul, worship His holy name.  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy name

And on that day when my strength is  
failing;  
the end draws near and my time has  
come,  
still my soul will sing Your praise  
unending;  
ten thousand years and then  
forevermore

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul.  
Oh my soul, worship His holy name.  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul.  
I'll worship Your holy name.

*(Jonas Myrin and Mark Redman)*

**A sending out prayer**

We came together to worship God.

We have read God's Word.

We have prayed and sung songs.

Now we go into God's world:

to be God's people wherever we are called to go.

Let us go in Christ's name.

**Amen.**

**Questions to think about**

'Do we feel as though we are under construction- and willing to be?'

'Is there anything God wants us to leave behind or rid ourselves of?'

