

Sunday 18th May 2025: Fifth Sunday of Easter

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is “The challenges of change”

Opening words:

Christ is Risen! **He is risen indeed alleluia!**

Hymn StF 99 All creatures of our God and King

Opening prayers:

Glory to you, O God: you raised Jesus from the grave, bringing us victory over death and giving us eternal life.

Glory to you, O Christ: for us and for our salvation you overcame death and opened the gate to everlasting life.

Glory to you, O Holy Spirit: you lead us into the truth and breathe new life into us.

Glory to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

If we have fallen into despair, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have failed to hope in you, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have been fearful of death, **Lord, forgive us.**

If we have forgotten the victory of Christ, **Lord, forgive us.**

Silence

May the living God raise us from despair, give us victory over sin and set us free in Christ. **Amen.**

Lord of all life and power, who through the mighty resurrection of your Son overcame the old order of sin and death to make all things new in him: grant that we, being dead to sin and alive to you in Jesus Christ, may reign with him in glory; to whom with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit be praise and honour, glory and might, now and in all eternity. **Amen.**

Hymn StF 416 There's a wideness in God's mercy

Bible readings: Psalm 148 Acts 11: 1-18 Revelation 21: 1-6 John 13: 31-35

Reflection

Our reflection for this Sunday is brought to us by Pippa Cook one of our Local Preachers

In general, we, as a human race, are not very good at ‘change’. We like what we have always done, especially if it’s the way our parents did it, and we distrust those who try to introduce a new way of doing things. We are not very good at trying new flavours, accepting new music or using a new bypass when we already know where we want to go. As ‘Methodists’, it takes us time to adapt to changes of words in a new hymnbook, to learn new tunes or recognise the value of more modern versions of the Bible.

How much more difficult then, for the new Christians in Jerusalem, who had been brought up to accept the customs and rules of the Jewish tradition, to accept that one of their number, an acknowledged leader no less, had been eating with Gentiles! Peter was called to account. In his accounting he had to admit to himself first of all, and then to this company of believers, that he, and they, had to change their minds about some other people.

He had to tell them about his vision, how God was telling him to kill and eat animals that, as a good Jew, he considered unclean. He had to tell them that God pointed out to him that it was not his place to decide what was, or was not, unclean. He had to tell them how he and other believers from Joppa were taken to the house of Cornelius, how he preached to Cornelius, his family and friends, and how they witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on these Gentiles.

- I wonder how often God says to us ‘How dare you question what I do.’
- I wonder how often we question what he asks us to do.
- I wonder how often he encourages us to be prepared to change our minds on ideas, traditions and habits that we have always held dear.
- How often do we change?

‘So then. God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life.’ Acts 11 v 18 NIV.

Hymn 35: The trumpets sound, the angels sing



Prayers of Intercession:

In the power of the resurrection, we offer our prayers to God.

Let us pray.

Remember, O Lord, in your love the Church throughout the world . . . those recently baptized and confirmed . . . those who minister to others . . .

Silence

May your whole Church know your power and be a sign that Christ is risen.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love the world you have made . . . those who seek a fair and proper use of the world's resources . . . those who strive for justice and peace among the nations . . .

Silence

May the whole earth be transformed by mercy and rejoice in hope.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who suffer . . . the victims of violence and injustice . . . those who mourn . . .

Silence

May all in need find comfort, strength and freedom in the living Christ.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Remember in your love those who have died: those who have confessed the faith and those whose faith is known to you alone.

Silence

May all your children receive grace and light according to their needs and come at last to share with all the saints in life eternal.

Lord of life, **hear us in your love.**

Gracious God, we ask these prayers through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord and Saviour. **Amen.**

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 690 The Church's one foundation

Closing blessing –

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen us to walk with him in his risen life; and may almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.