

**BRIDE VALLEY TELEPHONE SERVICE FOR SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> MAY 2022**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER/EASTER 3**

*We say together the words in bold*

**The Greeting**

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**He has given us new life and hope. He has raised Jesus from the dead.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

**Hymn: Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices raise**

1. Alleluia, Alleluia!  
hearts to heaven and voices raise;  
sing to God a hymn of gladness,  
sing to God a hymn of praise:  
he who on the Cross a victim  
for the world's salvation bled,  
Jesus Christ the King of glory,  
now is risen from the dead.
2. Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits  
of the holy harvest field,  
which will all its full abundance  
at his second coming yield;  
then the golden ears of harvest  
will their heads before him wave,  
ripened by his glorious sunshine,  
from the furrows of the grave.
3. Christ is risen, we are risen;  
shed upon us heavenly grace,  
rain and dew, and gleams of glory  
from the brightness of thy face;  
that we, with our hearts in heaven,  
here on earth may fruitful be,  
and by angel-hands be gathered,  
and be ever, Lord, with thee.
4. Alleluia, Alleluia,  
glory be to God on high;  
Alleluia to the Saviour,  
who has gained the victory;  
Alleluia to the Spirit,  
fount of love and sanctity;  
Alleluia, Alleluia,  
to the Triune Majesty.

*Christopher Wordsworth (1807-1885)*  
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**Opening Prayer**

**Faithful one, whose word is life: come with saving power  
To free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives,  
For the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## **Prayers of Penitence**

Jesus Christ, risen Master and Triumphant Lord, we come to you in sorrow for our sins, and confess to you our weakness and unbelief.

We have lived by our own strength, and not by the power of your resurrection. In your mercy, forgive us. **Lord hear us and help us.**

We have lived by the light of our own eyes, as faithless and not believing. In your mercy, forgive us. **Lord hear us and help us.**

We have lived for this world alone, and doubted our home in heaven. In your mercy, forgive us. **Lord hear us and help us.**

## **Absolution**

May the God of love and power forgive you and free you from your sins, Heal and strengthen you by his Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

## **The Collect**

**Risen Christ, your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father. Amen**

## **Readings**

**Gen 7.1-5, 11-18, 8.6-18, 9.8-13**

## **The Great Flood**

Then the Lord said to Noah, 'Go into the ark, you and all your household, for I have seen that you alone are righteous before me in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of all clean animals, the male and its mate; and a pair of the animals that are not clean, the male and its mate; and seven pairs of the birds of the air also, male and female, to keep their kind alive on the face of all the earth. For in seven days I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty

nights; and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.’ And Noah did all that the Lord had commanded him.

In the six-hundredth year of Noah’s life, in the second month, on the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great deep burst forth, and the windows of the heavens were opened. The rain fell on the earth for forty days and forty nights. On the very same day Noah with his sons, Shem and Ham and Japheth, and Noah’s wife and the three wives of his sons, entered the ark, they and every wild animal of every kind, and all domestic animals of every kind, and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth, and every bird of every kind—every bird, every winged creature. They went into the ark with Noah, two and two of all flesh in which there was the breath of life. And those that entered, male and female of all flesh, went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in.

The flood continued for forty days on the earth; and the waters increased, and bore up the ark, and it rose high above the earth. The waters swelled and increased greatly on the earth; and the ark floated on the face of the waters.

At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.

In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, on the first day of the month, the waters were dried up from the earth; and Noah removed the covering of the ark, and looked, and saw that the face of the ground was drying. In the second month, on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry. Then God said to Noah, ‘Go out of the ark, you and your wife, and your sons and your sons’ wives with you. Bring out with you every living thing that is with you of all flesh—birds and animals and every creeping thing that creeps on the earth—so that they may abound on the earth, and be fruitful and multiply on the earth.’ So Noah went out with his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives.

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him, 'As for me, I am establishing my covenant with you and your descendants after you, and with every living creature that is with you, the birds, the domestic animals, and every animal of the earth with you, as many as came out of the ark. I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.' God said, 'This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.'

### **Acts 9. 36-end**

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner

### **Gospel Reading**

#### **John 10:22-30**

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

## Sermon

### Choose life and life in all its fullness!

The story we have of Noah's Ark from Genesis 6, begins with the emphasis on those who are about to perish, those who have chosen not to follow God's way. But ... it very quickly shifts and in the sections we are reading today, it's about the preservation of the just. The point is very much about renewal and not destruction. Most retellings of the story tend to dwell on the details of life on board the ark while the waters raged all around it. But the editor who brings us the final version we have in Genesis is not so easily distracted ... his story moves us quickly to the climax, to the finale, when the covering of the ark is removed, and the passengers can get on with what they were saved for, which is the restoration of the earth to its proper fullness and variety of life, but not only that ... to a proper covenant relationship with God, our maker.

The story of Noah and Jesus' words in John's gospel make it very clear that God's purpose is salvation, and that we were all created to choose life, though the choice is genuinely ours.

But the temptation is, of course to get into the ark mentality and to think that salvation is all about getting our people in, battening down the hatches and keeping us all safe from the raging of the world outside. But the point of the ark is the actual moment where the saved people and the animals troop out into the ravaged world and help it to start all over again and I genuinely believe this is a metaphor for us as church. The ark is only a good metaphor for church though if we remember that the point is not getting into the ark, staying in the safe place, but venturing out, letting the life from the inside of the ark flow out into the world.

**Choose life!** Listen again with me to the words of Jesus: "My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. **No one** will snatch them out of my hand."

Again, using the metaphor of Jesus as shepherd. **The Lord is my shepherd.**

Such reassuring words aren't they! And don't you think that beautiful story of Tabitha in Acts reinforces its message to us. Tabitha is clearly someone who has chosen Jesus, and helped share his life and love with all around her. She chooses the living God and her reward is life.

Choose life resonates across all three of today's readings. The choice is ours, of course it is. But clearly God wants us to choose life in all its fullness. So, when we leave church this morning, let's do it as if we were leaving the ark, desperate to get out there and restore. Bright eyed and bushy tailed, full of the joys of Spring, rejoicing. Living life to the full.

**Amen.**

### **Affirmation of Faith**

Let us declare our faith in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Christ has died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures; he was buried; he was raised to life on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures; afterwards he appeared to his followers, and to all the apostles: this we have received, and this we believe. Amen.**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Asked if he really is the Christ, Jesus directs his questioners to look at his life in action and see for themselves that he and the Father are one.

As members together of the body of Christ, let us pray to the true and living God.

We pray for the nurture of each member of your Church; for the newly baptised and for all in ordained and lay ministry, that our love for one another may show as we work for the coming of the kingdom. Help us to choose life and live it to the full.

*Silence*

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for the gift of discernment, so that we recognise God's presence, and reverence his face in the faces of those we meet.

*Silence*

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We hold before you our monarchy and all those who govern our country and make its laws, that we may act responsibly and with compassion, attentive to real needs and good values.

*Silence*

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray particularly for homes filled with suspicion and envy, and ask for the healing of old hurts, together with hope and perseverance as people set out on paths of reconciliation.

*Silence*

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for those whose capacity for trust and love has been damaged by other people's sin. We long for your healing so that all who are imprisoned by their past may walk freely into your future.

*Silence*

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We remember those whose earthly life has come to an end, among them Joyce Hyde and Mary Anderson and we pray for those who mourn them.

*Silence*

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We thank you that we can live in the joyful freedom of your love, as we dedicate ourselves to serving others.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Gathering our prayers and praise into one, let us pray as our Saviour taught us:

**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. Lead us not into temptation but**

**deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.**

### **Gloria in Excelsis**

**Glory to God in the highest and peace to his people on earth.**

**Lord God, heavenly King, Almighty God and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.**

**For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

### **Hymn: The King of Love my Shepherd is**

1. The King of love my shepherd is,  
whose goodness faileth never;  
I nothing lack if I am his  
and he is mine for ever.
2. Where streams of living water flow  
my ransomed soul he leadeth,  
and where the verdant pastures grow  
with food celestial feedeth.
3. Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,  
but yet in love he sought me,  
and on his shoulder gently laid,  
and home rejoicing brought me
4. In death's dark vale I fear no ill  
with thee, dear Lord, beside me;  
thy rod and staff my comfort still,  
thy cross before to guide me.
5. Thou spread'st a table in my sight;  
thy unction grace bestoweth;  
and O what transport of delight  
from thy pure chalice floweth!
6. And so through all the length of days  
thy goodness faileth never:  
good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise  
within thy house for ever.

*Henry Williams Baker (1821-1877)*  
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### **Praise**

**Alleluia. Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

**Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**He has given us new life and hope. He has raised Jesus from the dead.**



God has claimed us as his own.

**He has brought us out of darkness. He has made us light to the world.**

Alleluia. Christ is risen. **He is risen indeed. Alleluia.**

### **The Peace**

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples and said 'Peace be with you.' Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia.

The peace of the Lord be always with you **and also with you.**

Sources: New Patterns for Worship. Copyright @ The Archbishops' Council 2002. Intercessions adapted from Susan Sayers: Prayers of Intercession, 1999.