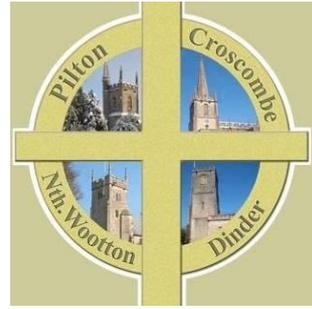


***Pilton with Croscombe, North
Wootton and Dinder.***

Morning Worship for 11th July



Grace, mercy and peace
from God our Father
and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with us all. Amen

We come from scattered lives to meet with God.
Let us recognize his presence with us.

Silence is kept.

As God's people we are together even if physically
apart so
let us worship him together.

Hymn: Judge Eternal Enthroned in Splendour

<https://youtu.be/jipsMdu6UkE>

Prayers of Penitence

Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our
sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore to us the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

May the Father of all mercies
cleans us from *our* sins,
and restore us in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Praise

Let everything be said and done in the name of the
Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.
Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:
let us sing to God with thankful hearts.
Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name. Amen.

The Collect

God of our pilgrimage,
you have led us to the living water:
refresh and sustain us
as we go forward on our journey,
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Word

Psalm 85: 8-end

*This week we listen to a complete version of psalm 85
sung by Marian Karvonen*

<https://youtu.be/CHfakEyfc3U>

Thanksgiving for Recovery from Grave Illness

⁸ Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people,
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their
hearts.

⁹ Surely his salvation is at hand for those who
fear him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

¹² The LORD will give what is good,
and our land will yield its increase.

¹³ Righteousness will go before him,
and will make a path for his steps.

Reading Ephesians 1: 3-14

Spiritual Blessings in Christ

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him in love. He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,

according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance, having been destined according to the purpose of him who accomplishes all things according to his counsel and will, so that we, who were the first to set our hope on Christ, might live for the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance towards redemption as God's own people, to the praise of his glory

Hymn: Before the world began by John Bell
<https://youtu.be/WiBATpUKYI8>

The Gospel Reading Mark 6: 14 -29

The Death of John the Baptist

King Herod heard of it, for Jesus' name had become known. Some were saying, 'John the baptizer has been raised from the dead; and for this reason these powers are at work in him.' But others said, 'It is Elijah.' And others said, 'It is a prophet, like one of the prophets of old.' But

when Herod heard of it, he said, 'John, whom I beheaded, has been raised.'

For Herod himself had sent men who arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because Herod had married her. For John had been telling Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.' And Herodias had a grudge against him, and wanted to kill him. But she could not, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and he protected him. When he heard him, he was greatly perplexed; and yet he liked to listen to him. But an opportunity came when Herod on his birthday gave a banquet for his courtiers and officers and for the leaders of Galilee. When his daughter Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his guests; and the king said to the girl, 'Ask me for whatever you wish, and I will give it.' And he solemnly swore to her, 'Whatever you ask me, I will give you, even half of my kingdom.' She went out and said to her mother, 'What should I ask for?' She replied, 'The head of John the baptizer.' Immediately she rushed back to the king and requested, 'I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.' The king was deeply grieved; yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent a soldier of the guard with orders to bring John's head. He went

and beheaded him in the prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl. Then the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard about it, they came and took his body, and laid it in a tomb.

Sermon by Chris

So today we have very contrasting readings. The tragic story of John the Baptist on one hand, on the other our psalm and the reading from Ephesians make much more pleasant reading, and it is there we will start.

Over the next few weeks as we make our way through Ephesians, all our readings won't be quite as uplifting so let's celebrate this one. It's an amazing litany, the Author showing the fantastic scope of what God has revealed through Jesus.

Blessing, election, adoption, redemption, forgiveness inheritance. Phew

The author's ideas tumble over themselves to be heard. In ancient Greek it is all one sentence giving a real sense of excitement of the wonder of the love of God in Jesus. He wants the Ephesians to share his excitement.

So we need to hear it like a pouring out of all his ideas, his excitement, his wonder . One of his purposes is to tell the Christian gentiles and the Jewish readers alike how the Gentiles have also been adopted into Christ's family as his children and this was his plan from the beginning of creation. That gives unity between gentiles and Jews which is one of the major themes of the letter.

There is also a crucial reminder that the adoption is not because of anything we do but is because of God's grace and love.

The Author wants us to stretch our imaginations, to open our minds to see the cosmic plan in place from creation and to understand we are part of that plan. No wonder he gets a bit carried away at the beginning.

All believers are adopted into Christ's family and as part of that family we are all part of God's plan is for the whole created world. Tom Wright says: 'God intends to flood the whole cosmos, heaven and earth together with his presence and his grace and when that happens that will be our inheritance'

It's a big inheritance. what sets us apart as people of faith it isn't our "perfect" lives, but the presence of God with us on the best of days and

the worst of days and the promise of God for the future whatever happens in this life.

I want to bring the psalm in at this point. Again it is a lovely uplifting reading (at least the bit we have read today) a picture that God is totally for us. But there is a part we didn't read:

LORD, you were favorable to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
² You forgave the iniquity of your people;
you pardoned all their sin.
³ You withdrew all your wrath;
you turned from your hot anger.
⁴ Restore us again, O God of our salvation,
and put away your indignation toward us.
⁵ Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?
⁶ Will you not revive us again,
so that your people may rejoice in you?
⁷ Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

So the part of the psalm we read this morning it is not all it seems. It begins from the place of lamenting that God seems far away and a prayer for forgiveness and restoration.

Then finally we have our Gospel reading. We might hear an echo of the passion narrative in

the death of John. Jesus died on the cross, which was considered humiliating John died at the say so of a young girl which would also be seen as humiliating.

It is a reading about honour and shame, Herod gives a badly thought through honour to Herodias but she publicly forces him to either shamefully break a promise or do a shameful act which he knows is wrong. It appears he is reluctant but he doesn't have moral courage to do the right thing.

John becomes a pawn in a game and victim of Herod's public persona and lack of courage.

Are we shocked or not by this reading. We only have to watch the news to see that people do monstrous acts.

Maybe we think we could never get ourselves in that position. We could never act like Herod

Whilst preparing this I remembered an incident in my life. I was about 14 and had two friends that hated each other so badly that they fought at my birthday party. One was a friend I had for years, another had newly arrived in the school, she was foreign and to me very different and almost exotic. I didn't know how to cope with this and to my shame went along with her

negative comments against my original friend, pretending that I wasn't really her friend (I hope she never knew) I didn't know how to cope with that situation and didn't have the wisdom to ask for advice. .

It was so easy to get caught up in the moment and not have the courage to say she was a friend and important to me. How would I deal with that now – better I hope but can you see how easy it is to find ourselves in such situations and to take the easiest way out.

Strangely next week I am going to stay with my original friend as somehow me acting in that way didn't damage our friendship

Thank goodness God and friends forgive us.

Thank goodness if we do ever act out of shame or abuse our power we can come to God on our knees and ask for forgiveness and restoration.

¹⁰ Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

¹¹ Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

We continue with the Apostles' Creed

This week there is also a slightly less traditional sung version of the creed:

<https://youtu.be/vZqX13gEbCM>

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the
dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession by Sue

**Let us pray to the Father through the Son and in
the power of the Holy Spirit.**

Lord, God, we give thanks for John the Baptist and the way he stood against the evil of his times. We pray for Christians who today stand against the evil and corruption of present-day societies and governments. May our own lives be upright and holy, and our church communities will be examples of love, humility and truth.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, we give thanks for peacemakers and peace-keepers in our world, and for groups and organisations including Amnesty International who work to bring justice and freedom where there is persecution and danger. Hear our prayers for our own government and for leaders and influential people across the world that they will act with wisdom for the good of all.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, we pray for all who speak out for the communities to which we belong, for councillors and community workers. Bless the social workers who are under additional pressure as a result of the pandemic and its consequences. We pray for people in homes where there is trouble and oppression.

Bless our homes, our families and friends and our local communities. We look to the future with hope that life will develop and open up, perhaps in new ways, but enabling us to be true communities of support and affirmation.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, we bring to you our particular concerns for people we know and know about: Ron and Lysbeth Ballantine, Jim and Eileen Govier, Wendy Lynn, Jane Bovey, Helena Bowditch, Jeff Macklin and Michael and Ros

Comer; we pray for them and for others who are suffering in other ways: the sick, the lonely, the bereaved, the anxious, all who are in any kind of need. Grant your healing and your peace to all in need.

Lord in your mercy, *hear our prayer.*

Lord, we remember with thanksgiving those who have died recently and in the more distant past. We thank you for the life of David Blackett of Croscombe. We rejoice in the fellowship of John the Baptist and all your saints and pray that we may come to share with him in life eternal in your kingdom.

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

We continue in prayer as we say the prayer Jesus taught us all:

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 the kingdom, the power,

and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.

Hymn: Sing of the Lord's wisdom

https://youtu.be/xzTXI_jA-XQ

Conclusion

The service ends with a Grace.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,
be with us all evermore.
Amen.