**1st August 2021 Communion Service 10.30 am Andrew**

**Call to worship** Psalm 9:1-2

**Hymn No. M.P. 560 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven**

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;

to His feet thy tribute bring;

ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven

who like thee His praise should sing?

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise the everlasting King!

Praise Him for His grace and favour

to our fathers in distress;

praise Him still the same for ever,

slow to chide, and swift to bless:

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father-like He tends and spares us;

well our feeble frame He knows;

in His hands He gently bears us,

rescues us from all our foes.

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Widely as His mercy flows

Angels, help us to adore Him;

ye behold Him face to face;

sun and moon, bow down before Him;

dwellers all in time and space:

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise Him! Praise Him!

Praise with us the God of grace!

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847) CCLI 150801

**Prayer and Lord’s Prayer**

Dear Lord, Loving God, as we come together in your presence this morning we thank you that we have your promise to not only be here with us but to walk with us each day of our lives. Your promises never change, your love for us is always constant and true and your strength to face each day is always there when we need it.

As we worship this morning speak to us through your Holy Spirit and through the hymns and readings from scripture. Open our hearts and minds to your word for each one of us, teach us your truth and guide us in the paths that you have set for us. Forgive us when we don’t listen or wander from your path and quickly bring us back to the right way and help us to more ready to listen to you, to learn from you and to serve with you in the community in which you have set us.

May our time together with you be the inspiration to make us more effective in our witness for you and bring you the glory which is rightfully yours.

We ask all our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord as we share together in the prayer he taught us…

**Lord’s Prayer**

**Notices, Mission Prayer, Dedication of Offering**

**Reading** Exodus 16:1-5, 9-18 (73)

**Sermon** Never satisfied

The Israelites were in the early days of their escape from Egypt so you would expect them to be in high spirits after having been rescued by God from slavery but we don’t find quite such a positive picture when we look at the OT story from Exodus. Having been led by Moses into the wilderness to escape the Egyptian army, most of which was drowned when the waters of the Red Sea closed together after the crossing of the Israelites, they soon began to complain about the conditions they were travelling and living in.

There wasn’t the fresh water they had had in Egypt or the variety of food they had there too, in fact they were short of food and water and it was not long before Moses became the one to be blamed for the troubles which some, despite the way the Egyptians treated them, would have put behind them by returning to Egypt straight away.

It shows the fickleness of human nature that despite the most amazing way in which God had enabled them to escape from captivity and the promise in the future of a land of their own running with milk and honey, it didn’t take long for the moaning to start when things were not quite as good as before. Yes, the water at Mara was bitter, but after their moaning God provided them with clean fresh water. Then, when the water was fine they began to moan about the shortage of meat and so again God spoke to Moses and provided quails and manna to give them the meat and the bread they needed.

There is no doubt that God knew he would have to provide for the Israelites during their journey through the wilderness but when we look at the picture we have of them it is not one of a grateful people, thanking God for the freedom he has given them and the hope for the future, but one of a people thinking only about themselves, moaning about what they haven’t got and then taking for granted what God supplied to meet their needs.

It is not that God was not aware of his people’s needs and he clearly showed that he always provides more than we need, but the sadness he must have felt was the lack of trust or faith they had in him despite what he had done for them. There was no way that he was going to lead them out into the wilderness with the promise of a new land and then leave them to die without food or water and his provision for his people showed two things:

1. he had not abandoned them

2. that they could not survive without him.

Yet, they were never satisfied and only saw their need for God in the practical sense of providing food and water.

Recognising our spiritual need for God we are going to sing...

**Hymn No. M.P. 37 As the deer pants for the water**

As the deer pants for the water,

so my soul longs after You.

You alone are my heart’s desire

and I long to worship You.

You alone are my strength, my shield,

to You alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart’s desire

and I long to worship You.

I want You more than gold or silver,

only You can satisfy.

You alone are the real joy giver

and the apple of my eye.

You alone.....

You’re my friend and You’re my brother,

even though You are a king.

I love You more than any other

so much more than anything.

You alone.....

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**Reading** John 6:24-35 (1070)

**Sermon** Jesus, the Bread of Life

Following on from the food and water God provided for his people as they travelled through the wilderness for 40 years we pick up on the ministry of Jesus after he had fed the 5000, walked on the water and calmed the storm. The story of the feeding of the 5000 men plus women and children is the most amazing picture of how God provided for the physical needs of his people so it is not surprising that the people followed Jesus and his disciples back around the lake hoping that he would continue to feed them and stop them having to worry about where their next meal would come from. In other words they hoped to take advantage of what Jesus had done and continued to follow him so he could provide food for them again and again not because of his wonderful teachings or the amazing healing miracles he did.

It was clear Jesus knew their intentions and he said so because he knew he was not there simply to provide enough food to fill their stomachs but to be their spiritual teacher and guide. If we had continued the Exodus reading the Israelites were warned to trust God and only gather enough manna for each day but there were those who did not listen and when they took too much found it went rotten and stunk. In that same way, when Jesus spoke to the people he explained that the physical food they were demanding from him would go bad but the spiritual food he offered was that which would last for eternal life because he was the chosen one sent by God. As the people would normally have to work for their food and their way of life was governed by the Jewish Law their question to Jesus about receiving spiritual food was “What did they have to do to get it?” and we see his response is neither about works nor about keeping rules but about faith.

It is faith from which a godly life comes not obedience to the Law and good works must then follow on from that and so Jesus response was that all they had to do was to believe in him as the one sent by God. However, it is clear that, for the people, this new revelation had no link with the recent events that had just happened and despite having followed Jesus firstly because of his teaching and his miracles and then because he fed them the previous day the reaction to his challenge to take the step of believing in him shows their true expectations of the one God was to send and how they did not want the equivalent of a shepherd but expected him to be a warrior to lead them to freedom.

So they asked for another miracle and one which they could compare to the way God fed the Israelites in the wilderness. Aren't people incredible. They were happy to be fed by him with bread and fishes every day, but they needed more proof to believe that he was sent by God as the provider of their spiritual food. That is the modern day, perhaps more scientific approach, prove it and I will believe.

Why did they want proof of who he was, despite all the miracles they had already seen?

Why do we always talk about wanting proof?

I believe that the reason people ask for proof is that it gives them the easy option. If God will not do things on our terms, in ways we understand, then when he challenges us, as Jesus challenged those people, we can take the easy way out and say it hasn’t been proved. It was so much easier for them to see him as a food provider.

The challenge to take a step of faith was a bigger step than they wanted to take yet this was really what they needed. Jesus is the only one who can permanently satisfy the spiritual hunger and thirst of all men and women, yet, this bread of life is only available to those who see the Son of God as he really is and then commit themselves unreservedly to Him in faith.

They are the ones who will receive the bread of life. Through his death and resurrection Jesus is the 'living bread', His body was given as a sacrifice to take our punishment and his blood was shed to pay for our sins so that whenever we celebrate Communion: the bread symbolising his body has to be broken so it can be shared out to all who would receive it.

The wine symbolising his blood has to be poured out so we can share in receiving its life giving properties.

Jesus does not just offer salvation, He is our salvation.

If we come to Jesus believing in him as our Saviour and Lord then we will receive him, the Bread of Life, the food of eternal life.

The food that enables us to grow in faith and understanding to grow closer to God and so grow in grace, love and peace.

The food that builds us up that we might be inspired to go and tell others of this wonderful God and all he has done for us.

The food that gives life which takes us beyond the barriers of our physical state so we will be with him forever.

Jesus promised: "I am the bread of life, He who comes to me will never be hungry; and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” God doesn’t offer proof, he offers life in all its fullness, life to be lived and experienced, and will give us all we need to live it to the full and no one who has experienced God working in their lives ever needs to talk about proof again.

**Hymn No. M.P. 66 Broken for me, broken for you**

Broken for me, broken for you,

the body of Jesus broken for you.

He offered His body, He poured out His soul,

Jesus was broken that we might be whole:

Broken for me, broken for you,

the body of Jesus broken for you.

Come to My table and with Me dine,

eat of My bread and drink of My wine:

Broken for me, broken for you,

the body of Jesus broken for you.

This is My body given for you,

eat it remembering I died for you:

Broken for me, broken for you,

the body of Jesus broken for you.

This is My blood I shed for you,

for your forgiveness, making me new:

Broken for me, broken for you,

the body of Jesus broken for you.

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**Prayers of Intercession**

Please use the Monthly prayer sheet prepared by Neil.

**Shine share**

**Communion**

We come to God’s table because Jesus said “Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” He also said “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. Anyone who comes to me I will never turn away.” So, we come to God’s table at his invitation. We come not because we must but because we may. We come as individuals but not alone. We come as the people of God open and ready to receive the gifts of God.

Let us hear again the words of Institution of this feast as recorded by the Apostle Paul: *(1 Corinthians 11:23-26)*

For I received from the Lord the teaching that I passed on to you: that the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took a piece of bread, gave thanks to God, broke it, and said “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in memory of me.”

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup and said, “This cup is God’s new covenant, sealed with my blood. Whenever you drink it, do so in memory of me.” This means that every time you eat this bread and drink from this cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. Therefore , whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup

in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who east and drinks without recognising the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgement on himself. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and following his example, we take this bread and this cup and give our thanks to God.

**Prayer**

Take a few moments to reflect on how you stand before God….

Loving God, through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. May we know your presence in the sharing of this bread so that we may know your presence in our lives.

Loving God, through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and the work of human hands. May we know your presence in the sharing of this wine so that we may know the refreshing of your Holy Spirit in our lives.

We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared among his community through the centuries, and shares with us now. Made one in Christ and one with each other we offer the bread and the wine and with them we offer ourselves, a single, holy, living sacrifice. **Amen.**

**The bread** which we break is the communion of the body of Christ.

Take, eat, it is the body of Christ given for you. Do this in remembrance of him.

**The cup** of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ.

Take it and drink , it is the new covenant in the blood of Christ shed for you and for all, for the forgiveness of sin: drink of it.

**Prayer**

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise, that when we were still far off you met us in your Son and brought us home. Dying and living, he declared your love, gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.

May we who share Christ's body live his risen life; we who drink his cup bring life to others; we who the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us; so that we and all your children may be free, and the whole earth live to praise your name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Hymn No. M.P. 435 Lord Jesus Christ**

Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us,

You are one with us, Mary's Son;

cleansing our souls from all their sin,

pouring Your love and goodness in:

Jesus, our love for You we sing,

living Lord!

Lord Jesus Christ, now and every day

teach us how to pray, Son of God;

You have commanded us to do

this, in remembrance, Lord, of You:

into our lives Your power breaks through,

living Lord!

Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us,

born as one of us, Mary's Son;

led out to die on Calvary,

risen from death to set us free:

living Lord Jesus, help us see

You are Lord!

Lord Jesus Christ, we would come to You,

live our lives for You, Son of God;

all Your commands we know are true,

Your many gifts will make us new:

into our lives Your power breaks through,

living Lord!

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**Blessing**

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with each one of us today and for ever more.