

16th September 2022
Second Sunday of Epiphany
Led by Rev Chris Westgarth

Words of welcome

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Let us worship the Lord

Hymn - Joy to the world

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 Joy to the world! The Lord is come!
Let earth receive her King;
let every heart prepare him room,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven and nature sing,
and heaven, and heaven and nature sing.

- 2 Joy to the earth! The Saviour reigns!
Your sweetest songs employ
while fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat the sounding joy,
repeat, repeat the sounding joy.

- 3 He rules the world with truth and grace,
and makes the nations prove
the glories of his righteousness,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders of his love,
and wonders, wonders, of his love.

Prayer of confession

May your loving mercy come to us, O Lord,
and your salvation according to your word:

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

Your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path:

Christ, have mercy.

All Christ, have mercy.

O let your mercy come to us that we may live,
for your law is our delight:

Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son
to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and make us holy
to serve him in the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

The Collect

Almighty God,

in Christ you make all things new:

transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace,

and in the renewal of our lives

make known your heavenly glory;

through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Readings – read by Joshua Vanneck

Isaiah 62:1-5

62 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest,
until her vindication shines out like the dawn,

and her salvation like a burning torch.
2 The nations shall see your vindication,
and all the kings your glory;
and you shall be called by a new name
that the mouth of the Lord will give.
3 You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the Lord,
and a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
4 You shall no more be termed Forsaken,
and your land shall no more be termed Desolate
but you shall be called My Delight Is in Her,
and your land Married for the Lord delights in you,
and your land shall be married.
5 For as a young man marries a young woman,
so shall your builder marry you,
and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride,
so shall your God rejoice over you.

John 2:1-11

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. ² Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." ⁴ And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." ⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." ⁶ Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷ Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸ He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. ⁹ When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom ¹⁰ and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." ¹¹ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Reflection by Revd Claire Robertson

In “The Brothers Karamazov”, Dostoevsky's great novel, a young man, called Alyosha, who had been intending to become a monk, is told instead by his beloved mentor, to go out into the world and live like Christ among the people. At first, the young man is very sad to hear this advice. However, as he reads the story of the wedding feast at Cana in Galilee he starts to embrace his true vocation with joy: to go into the world and live like Christ among the people.

Some Christians are called to a life of prayer in an enclosed order but most of us are called to go out into the world that we might share the transforming love of Jesus that way. We need to share this joy, that walking with Jesus brings by meeting people where they are in community.

So now let us go to John's Gospel to look at how Jesus' transforming presence is at work in the community in this story. John's was the last of the four gospels to be written, and has a mystical quality. The author chooses certain events in the life of Jesus, not only to enable us to believe that Jesus is Son of Man and Son of God, but also to bring us into relationship with God.

The wedding feast at Cana is not recorded by Matthew, Mark or Luke but for John, this event where Jesus turns water into wine, has a deep significance. An abundance of wine is seen in the Jewish scriptures as a feature of the messianic age to come. This sign that Jesus gave at Cana, signifies that the longed-for saviour or Messiah of God's people has arrived - the messianic age has indeed come.

We are told in John's Gospel that this was the first sign, or miracle, that Jesus performed, and it was not performed in the synagogue or the Temple in Jerusalem, but at a wedding feast. This is a reminder to us all that how we participate in our community is an essential part of being disciples of Jesus.

If we read the previous chapter in John's Gospel we find that over the past few days Jesus has invited five people to be his disciples. They will be sent out to the farthest corners of the world to spread the gospel. These people are Andrew, Peter, Philip, Bartholomew and one other disciple who is not named but may well be the writer of the gospel. Jesus needs to train them to preach the good news. We might think

that he would take them away to teach them, or even send them away to do a course at theological college. But instead, the first thing he does is to take them with him to a wedding feast to teach them how to celebrate love and community.

Jesus has come to reveal, strengthen and deepen love. Being part of a wedding feast where a couple entrust themselves to each other for life in the sight of God and their community is a great way to do that.

Participating in the joy of others is an essential part of what it means to follow Christ.

Marriage is also used as a symbol in the bible of God's relationship with his people as we heard in our first reading from the Book of Isaiah.

Mary, the mother of Jesus is at the wedding feast at Cana. The gospel writer states "There was a wedding feast in Cana and the mother of Jesus was there." Then he adds almost as an afterthought "Jesus and his disciples had also been invited".

Being introduced before Jesus and his disciples is significant and implies that she was there as helper rather than a guest. In the middle of this celebration there is a crisis. The wine has run out. This would be bad enough if the wedding feast lasted a mere day but in first century Palestine a wedding feast lasted a week.

Mary immediately goes to Jesus with the problem.

She says: "They have no more wine."

Mary's behaviour here is a masterclass in prayer. She tells Jesus the situation immediately but does not tell him what to do about it...

His reply "Woman, why are you involving me?" sounds as if it is a refusal to act but Mary continues to trust that Jesus will intervene. We know this because she then goes to the servants and says:

"Do whatever he tells you."

The servants may not be aware of Jesus' power as this is at the beginning of his ministry. Cana is some miles from Nazareth where Jesus grew up, and also some miles from Capernaum where Jesus has just moved. But Mary knows her son's extraordinary gifts and his compassion for the poor. She knows that he wishes to participate in people's struggles as well as their celebrations.

Because the servants know and trust Mary, they follow Jesus' instructions when she tells them "Do whatever he tells you". We all

have friends or family who don't know Jesus' love, compassion and power but who know and trust us. When they come to us asking for help in a situation, perhaps we can ask them if they would like us to pray with them, or for them, as Mary did.

The instructions that Jesus gave the servants are quite time consuming – it takes a long time to fill up 100 litre jars which would have been about the size of one of our wheelie bins with jugs of water. The instructions are also potentially embarrassing – taking what appears to be water to the master of the banquet. But nevertheless the servants follow Jesus' instructions and the result is an extravagantly generous answer to prayer.

So this week may we all be aware of the abundance of God's love for each one of us and of the way God answers prayer changing water into wine in our own lives and in our village communities. Amen

Affirmation of our faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**All We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.
We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith,
and fills us with his love.
We believe in God the Holy Spirit,
who strengthens us
with power from on high.
We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

cf Ephesians 3

Prayers of intercession led by John Crang

In solidarity with the body of humankind, and with the body of all creation, we bring into mind's eye and heart's care the needs of this planet and its peoples, allowing the energy of our concern to be charged with the Spirit of God and flow out from among us to their

and our greater good. And we do so in silence or whispering on our breath those needs and names that have been laid upon us.

For people forced to travel: refugees...the homeless...wayfarers.

Be with them on the road:

Be present to them.

For people beset by danger: living in war zones... victims of crime. those working on front lines.

Be with them in their anxiety:

Be present to them.

For people lacking direction: the confused...the listless... the despairing.

Show them the way:

Be present to them.

For people whose way is barred: the hungry...the prisoners...the unemployed.

Set their feet on the road:

Be present to them.

For people who want to turn back: the persecuted...the failed...the discouraged.

Encourage them and strengthen them:

Be present to them.

For people who refuse to move: the smug...the contented... the satisfied.

Give them a hunger for justice:

Be present to them.

For people who wander in darkness: the depressed...the bereaved...the dying

Shed your light upon them:

Be present to them.

For people who often walk alone: the isolated... the disabled...the housebound.

Be their companion:

Be present to them.

For people who are travelling: by land...by sea...by air.

Be the hidden energy that sustains them:

Be present to them.

For people on pilgrimage:

walking to the ancient places. facing the hazards of the road.

journeying deep within.

Be the cairns* on their path:

Be present to them.

Merciful Father

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

Joining our prayers together we pray

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 - Be thou my vision

sung by St Martin's Voices

- 1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,
be all else but naught to me, save that thou art;
be thou my best thought in the day and the night,
both waking and sleeping, thy presence my light.
- 2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,
be thou ever with me, and I with thee Lord;
be thou my great Father, and I thy true son;
be thou in me dwelling, and I with thee one.
- 3 Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight;
be thou my whole armour, be thou my true might;
be thou my soul's shelter, be thou my strong tower:
O raise thou me heavenward, great Power of my power.
- 4 Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise:
be thou mine inheritance now and always;
be thou and thou only the first in my heart;
O Sovereign of heaven, my treasure thou art.
- 5 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
O grant me its joys after victory is won;
great Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be thou my vision, O Ruler of all.

Notices

Blessing

May the love of the Lord Jesus
draw us to himself,
the power of the Lord Jesus
strengthen us in his service,
the joy of the Lord Jesus fill our hearts;

and may the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

Go in peace to love, serve and enjoy the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.

* A cairn is a man-made pile of stones. Cairns are often erected as landmarks, a use they have had since ancient times.
- Intercessions taken from *Out of the Silence... Prayer's Daily Round*
by Jim Cotter and Paul Payton