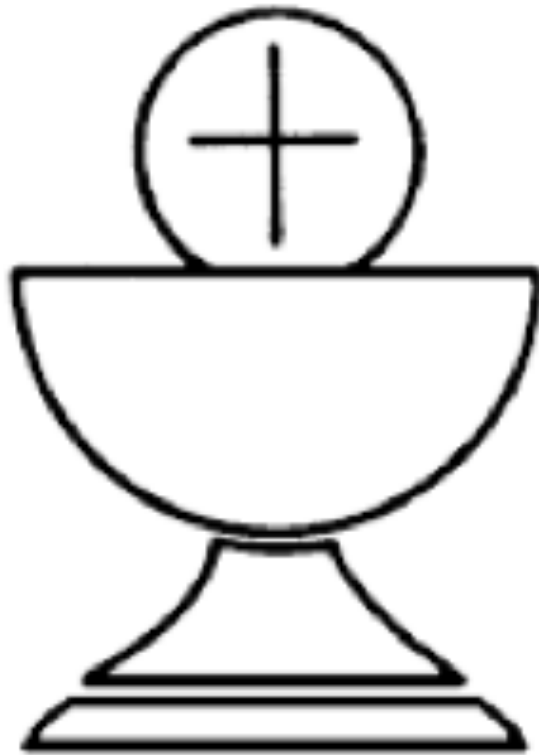


Christ Church

High Harrogate



*John 6:56-69*

As Parish service for when we're  
UNITED but APART



for the

**Thirteenth Sunday  
after Trinity**

25th August 2024

**Welcome** to Christ Church, praying and united, with the whole Church of God ; may this bring a blessing upon your home, as also upon the needs of loved ones and the world,

We build upon all that we have shared and shared still, as now we rejoice in our renewal in Christ's grace, gather as the Church, and unite in fellowship, proclamation and prayer from the place of our own homes.

Be it 8am or 10am or other \_ still, maybe, the wisdom to quieten our mobile phone  and be very much in prayer  .

Please sit very comfortably.

Please feel free to sing ; and maybe to speak some parts of this prayer time out-loud \_ you may find it surprisingly helpful.

Please, above all, simply know that we are all together ; and as we pray where we are now, so do many many more, across the town, across these towns, and across the world,

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

*Matthew*

## The Greeting

*In welcome of one-another, near or far -*

The Grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God,  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all.

*[ And also with you. ]*

## Prayers of Penitence

God so loved the world  
that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ  
to save us from our sins,  
to be our advocate in heaven,  
and to bring us to eternal life.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith,  
firmly resolved to keep God's commandments  
and to live in love and peace with all.

*- Silence is kept for a short time, in Confession and Prayer.*



**All Most merciful God,  
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
we confess that we have sinned  
in thought, word and deed.  
We have not loved you with our whole heart.  
We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.  
In your mercy  
forgive what we have been,  
help us to amend what we are,  
and direct what we shall be ;  
that we may do justly, love mercy,  
and walk humbly with you our God. Amen.**

*In sharing and receiving the Absolution of God :*

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



Almighty God,  
who called your Church to bear witness  
that you were in Christ  
reconciling the world to yourself :  
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,  
that all who hear it may be drawn to you ;  
through him who was lifted up on the cross,  
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.  
Amen.

## ***The Liturgy of the Word***

### **The First Reading**

*Joshua 24 : 1 - 2a, 14 - 18*



Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. And Joshua said to all the people ... 'Now therefore revere the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. Now if you are unwilling to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.' Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the LORD to serve other gods; for it is the LORD our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; and the LORD drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the LORD, for he is our God.'

*New Revised Standard Version*

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

## **The Second Reading**

- *Ephesians 6 : 10 - 20*



Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

*New Revised Standard Version*

This is the word of the Lord.

**All Thanks be to God.**

**CLICK** below to hear Louise from our Choir lead us

**Hymn**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sk8ytbKc5Ss>

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Come unto me and rest ;  
lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
thy head upon my breast.”  
I came to Jesus as I was,  
weary, and worn, and sad ;  
I found in him a resting-place,  
and he has made me glad.



I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Behold, I freely give  
the living waters, thirsty one ;  
stoop down, and drink, and live.”  
I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream ;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“I am this dark world’s light ;  
look unto me, thy morn shall rise,  
and all thy day be bright.”  
I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in him my star, my sun ;  
and in that light of life I’ll walk  
till travelling days are done.

*Words : Horatius Bonar (1808-1889)*

*Tune : Kingsfold*

## The Gospel Reading

John 6 : 56 - 69



The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.  
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to the crowd, 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum. When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult ; who can accept it ?' But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you ? Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before ? It is the spirit that gives life ; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him. And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.' Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away ?' Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go ? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

*New Revised Standard Version*

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All Praise to you, O Christ.**



Over the past four Sundays we've been working our way through chapter 6 of John's Gospel, starting with the feeding of the five thousand. Today, in the fifth and final passage (verses 56-69) we conclude the discussion of Jesus as the Bread of Life. In verse 56, picking up from last week's reading, Jesus says: *Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.*

*Eat my flesh and drink my blood ....* What an extraordinary statement! How is it possible to eat and drink someone's flesh and blood? Understandably enough, the Jews are deeply shocked at Jesus' invitation to eat his flesh and drink his blood. It sounds like a primitive recipe for cannibalism. If we were to put ourselves in their shoes and hear those words for the very first time, we too would find them strange, to say the least.

For the Jews it was even more shocking because they had the greatest reverence for, even a fear of, blood. It was the source of life and should never be touched. And here is Jesus inviting – even *telling* – people to drink his own blood! No wonder there were people who thought he was out of his mind, apart from the scandal his words gave!

It's not surprising that a few verses later on we read that when many of his disciples heard it, they murmured among themselves, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' And many of them turned back and no longer followed Jesus.

Yet Jesus makes no apologies for what he has said. On the contrary, he tells his disciples that if they do not 'eat' his flesh and 'drink' his blood, they will not have life. Those who do eat and drink are guaranteed life, because his flesh is 'true food' and his blood is 'true drink.' He says, *Whoever eats me will live because of me* (verse 57).



What are we to make of all this? How can Jesus give us his flesh to eat and his blood to drink? What does that mean? What are we supposed to be thinking when we hear these words?

Plainly his words are not to be taken literally. He is not encouraging us to be cannibals or vampires, or a weird combination of the two. Jesus answered his critics by pointing out that his words were to be understood *spiritually*.

The physical or literal meaning of his words was plainly ruled out. What we have in Jesus' strange language is a powerful metaphor stating that a share in the life of God (eternal life) is granted to those who in faith come to Jesus.

To 'eat' the flesh of Jesus and to 'drink' his blood is to be totally united with him, to be filled with his spirit and vision. It is to be able to say with the apostle Paul, 'It is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me.'

Just as we take physical food and drink into our bodies, so by faith we take Jesus into our hearts, and we go forward in his strength, not our own. Jesus gives us nourishment and hope through spiritual food and drink. But how? How does he feed and nourish us?

First, *by giving us his word in the Scriptures*. In this way, he feeds our minds and hearts and enriches and gives meaning and direction to our lives. His word is our spiritual food; and insofar as the Scriptures are unknown to us, we are being starved of the food that we really need.

Secondly, *Jesus feeds and nourishes us through his Church*, through the fellowship and mutual support we get through our involvement and participation in a Christian community.

Thirdly, Jesus feeds us *through every loving experience*; through other people, books, radio and television, through music, through

art, the world of nature, and so on – in short, through everything which enriches and gives more meaning and understanding to our lives, and increases our feeling of being loved and valued.

And fourthly, *Jesus feeds and nourishes us through the Eucharist (or Holy Communion)* - the great sign by which we celebrate God's love shown to us through Christ's life, suffering, death and resurrection. It is in the Eucharist that we give thanks for all the life-giving ways by which God, through Jesus, comes into our daily lives.

This is what happens when we 'eat' his flesh and 'drink' his blood. It means totally sharing Jesus' vision, his ideas, and his values. It is to be totally identified with his mission to establish the kingdom of God in this world.

When we 'receive communion', the minister says, 'The body of Christ ... the blood of Christ ... keep you in eternal life.' We respond by saying, 'Amen' – which means 'Yes' (or 'So be it'). It's not just an act of faith in the presence of the risen Christ, but a *total commitment* to Christ in the community to which we belong.

We want to be with Jesus all the way, to serve him with all our heart and mind and soul, and work with him for the making of a better world; a world of truth and love, a world of justice and peace, a world of freedom and happiness; a world where none go hungry and none are malnourished.

When we see ourselves as part of that great mission, then we know that in a very real sense we are fed and nourished by the body and blood of Christ.

Amen.

*Revd Arnold Clay*

## **The Nicene Creed**

**We believe in one God,  
the Father, the almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all that is, seen and unseen.  
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,  
the only Son of God,  
eternally begotten of the Father,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God, begotten, not made,  
of one being with the Father ;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary  
and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate ;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the Scriptures ;  
he ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son  
is worshipped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

## The Prayers of Intercession

In the power of the Spirit, and in union with Christ,  
let us pray to our Father \_

O God, the creator and preserver of all,  
we pray for people in every place and every kind of need ;  
make your ways known on earth,  
your saving health among and for the nations.  
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

We pray for your Church ; guide and govern us by your Spirit,  
that we and all who call upon your Name may be led into the  
way of Truth, and hold the faith in –  
unity of spirit, the bond of peace, in righteousness of life.  
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

We pray for, and commend into your goodness,  
all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed -  
those known to us and those known to you alone -  
those in sickness of body, mind, or spirit :  
comfort and relieve them in their need,  
give them patience in their troubles,  
bring good out of all afflictions :  
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

We remember in love and faithfulness  
all who have gone before us in the peace of Christ.  
We give you praise for all your faithful ones,  
we make our prayer with and for all who mourn.  
Lord in your mercy - **hear our prayer.**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name ; thy  
kingdom come ; thy will be done ; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our  
trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation ; but deliver us from evil. For  
thine is the kingdom the power and the glory, for ever and  
ever. **Amen.**

## **The Dismissal**

*You may wish to sing, you may wish to hum, you may wish to read.  
Together we pray, we hope and we rejoice. In the peculiarity of these  
days, and in the faithful grace and arms of God.*

**CLICK** below to hear Louise from our Choir lead us

**Hymn**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LBnkP7e58S0>



**Come, Host of Heaven's high dwelling place,  
Come, earth's disputed guest;  
Find where we meet a welcome home,  
Stay here and take your rest.**

**Surround these walls with faith and love  
That through the nights and days,  
When human tongues from speaking cease,  
These stones may echo praise.**

**Bless and inspire those gathered here  
With patience, hope and peace,  
And all the joys that know the depth  
In which all sorrows cease.**

**Here may the loser find his worth,  
The stranger find a friend;  
Here may the hopeless find their faith  
And aimless find an end.**

**Build, from the human fabric, signs  
Of how your kingdom thrives,  
Of how the Holy Spirit changes life  
By changing lives.**

**So, to the Lord whose care enfolds  
The world held in his hands,  
Be glory, honour, power and praise  
For which this company stands.**

*Words c. 1989 The Iona Community*

## The Blessing



May God the Father,  
by whose glory  
Christ was raised from the dead,  
strengthen us  
to walk with him  
in his risen life ;  
And may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among us and remain with us always.  
Amen.

## The Peace

We are all one in Christ Jesus.  
We belong to him through faith,  
heirs of the promise of the Spirit of peace.

*Please look to your ROOM and HOME \_  
--- please look from your WINDOW ---*

*In our place, heart and home, and to all the world :*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

*{ - and also with you. Alleluia }*

## The Dismissal

So let us go into the day in peace ;  
and may we love and serve the Lord  
in the name of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia ! Amen.