**Morning Praise @ Home 22nd May 2022**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**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 us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Psalm 67 Acts 16: 9 – 15

**Reflection from Ruth**

In our reading today we meet Lydia. Lydia is the head of her household, it appears. She is an independent business woman; we need not assume that she is a widow. Lydia is also a worshipper of God who leads her household in worship on the Sabbath.  Other Gentile worshippers of Israel’s God in Acts include the Ethiopian eunuch and the Roman centurion Cornelius. Both hear good news in their own contexts and request or submit to baptism.

It is as a Jewish male *and* as a Roman citizen that Paul stands before Lydia’s household to preach the good news. We do not know what Paul preached; we just know that the audience gave him their eager attention and responded as expected by being baptized. However, unlike the mixed crowd at Pentecost, there is no mention of repentance. This absence could be because Lydia and her people are already worshippers of the God of Israel. Perhaps that which Lydia considers good news is partially demonstrated in Paul’s gracious administration of the baptism ritual without burdensome stipulations. God’s Spirit falls upon, fills, moves human beings as and when God desires. Some of us have often heard people say that they don’t *feel* the Spirit in certain places because the theological rhetoric does not match what they’ve been taught or they disagree with something that is being taught. Our emotions, be they feelings of annoyance or disappointment, do not determine the Spirit’s presence with others. God’s Spirit is not submissive to our feelings. Our biases against others who worship, speak, look, or live differently from us should not be taken as proof of the Spirit’s absence or presence.

It appears that Lydia wants Paul to view her submission to baptism as proof of her faithfulness to the Lord. Based on her proven faithfulness, she prevails upon Paul to accept her hospitality and visit for a while. We might imagine that during Paul’s stay with Lydia and her household, on some Sabbaths Paul was blessed to hear Lydia preach the good news. Everybody needs to *hear* good news from time-to-time. Quite possibly, Lydia’s hospitality included a mutual sharing of the gospel. Good news is not the spiritual and intellectual property of males only or of a particular religion. And true discipleship or learning involves dialogue, mutuality, and humility. We might see Lydia as a disciple like Tabitha who has taught her house gathering how to worship God in word and by acts of kindness.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by John**

Everlasting God, you made the world and everything in it, we pray with one voice, proclaiming your presence to all the earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you and give thanks for all the wonders of your marvellous creation.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

We pray for our Bishops Mark, Julie and Sam, and all your clergy that they will be guided in their ministry by the influence of the Holy Spirit.

We pray for the Church, both here in The Chester Diocese and worldwide that we may go forward together in unity and strength.

Help us to respect the beliefs of others even if we do not share them, to celebrate what we have in common and to accept our differences. Guide us all in our ministries as we live each day.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Creator God, we pray for governments and world leaders, for captains of industry and workers, for inventors and technicians, for entertainers and audiences. For those who set targets at work; in education and training; and in the pews. For all who are powerful, that they may be guided by the Spirit of Truth that your way may be known upon earth, your saving power among all nations.

We continue to pray for an end to the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Father, we pray for our family and colleagues, for our friends, for our neighbours and for strangers.

For those with whom we break bread at home, at work, in the community, and in our church.

For all who grow, harvest and prepare the food we eat and for those who cook it and serve it.

For all who share with the less fortunate through foodbanks and charities.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Merciful God, your son Jesus asked the man at the pool “Do you want to be made well?”

We pray for all those who have been ill for so long that it has become part of their life.

Help them, and those who care for them, to see all the possibilities that life still holds, despite their disabilities, and to make the most of all the wonderful aids that are now available to help people lead enjoyable and fulfilled lives.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

God of Mercy, we pray for those whose hearts have been saddened by the death of someone close and dear to them, for members of our families who have died and whose anniversary we recall.

Lord, in your mercy: **hear our prayer**

Gracious God, as we go out into the world help us to work to make your way become known upon earth and your saving power among all nations.

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

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

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