

~ Notices ~

Ukraine

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal has launched a special appeal encouraging all parishes in Ireland to have a special collection this/next Sunday to support the appeal. To donate please use the link on our website: <https://clareanglicans.ie> or go direct to: www.christianaid.ie

Prayers for peace – Friday at 12.00

In solidarity with the Ukrainian people (who are largely Orthodox Christians) the Jesus Prayer is recited on Friday at 12.00 at St Columba's Church. Leaflets are at the back of church, and available in the prayer section of the website. Millions of Ukrainians will be saying this prayer as the bombs and missiles fall.

- Future events -

'Beloved' – Friday 13th May at 8.00pm

An evening concert of Arias and Song with soprano, Helen Hancock and pianist, Mark Keane.

Genie Ensemble – Saturday 21st May 2022 – from 19.00. A string quintet performing a selection of pieces from the classical and traditional Irish repertoire, plus film and jazz.

Clare Music Makers Festival Sat 28th – Sun 19th May.
Saturday 10.00 - 5.00pm, Sunday 1.00pm – 5.00pm

Sunday service with +Michael Burrows

9.30 Spanish Point & 11.30 St Columba's Ennis.
+Michael will preside and preach at both services.

Enthronement of +Michael Burrows

Kilfenora Cathedral Sunday 22nd May 4.00pm
All welcome. (On Sat 14th May from 11.00am we shall be cleaning the Cathedral chapel to make ready – if you are able to help please let me know or come on the day – refreshments will be provided).

Parish Visit of +Michael

+ Michael will be visiting all three of our churches, starting from the Rectory at 10.30am on 12th July. The intention is that we will visit each church at a pre-arranged time, to meet as many people as are available for refreshments or lunch, and if possible he would like to briefly meet with church wardens and readers as well.

Website: clareanglicans.ie

YouTube: www.youtube.com/c/clareanglicans

Facebook: www.facebook.com/clare.anglicans

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721



The 4th Sunday of Easter 2022 (Year C)

Collect

Risen Christ, faithful shepherd of your Father's sheep: teach us to hear your voice and to follow your command, that all your people may be gathered into one flock, to the glory of God the Father. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

1) Christ Triumphant, ever reigning.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MPXSILECWm0>

2) The Lord's my Shepherd

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

3) Bless the Lord my Soul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3IC2XWBxktk>

4) Immortal, Invisible, God only wise (6)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqqBu1VVHqM>

Acts 9.36-43

Now in Joppa there was a disciple whose name was Tabitha, which in Greek is Dorcas. She was devoted to good works and acts of charity. At that time she became ill and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in a room upstairs. Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, who heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him with the request, 'Please come to us without delay.' So Peter got up and went with them; and when he arrived, they took him to the room upstairs. All the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing tunics and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was with them. Peter put all of them outside, and then he knelt down and prayed. He turned to the body and said, 'Tabitha, get up.' Then she opened her eyes, and seeing Peter, she sat up. He gave her his hand and helped her up. Then calling the saints and widows, he showed her to be alive. This became known throughout Joppa, and many believed in the Lord. Meanwhile he stayed in Joppa for some time with a certain Simon, a tanner.

Psalms 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures;

he leads me beside still waters;

he restores my soul.

He leads me in right paths

for his name's sake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,

I fear no evil;

for you are with me;

your rod and your staff—

they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me

in the presence of my enemies;

you anoint my head with oil;

my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me

all the days of my life,

and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord

my whole life long.

Revelation 7.9-17

After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and

New Revised Standard Version Bible: Anglicized Edition, copyright © 1989, 1995 National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide. <http://nrsvbibles.org> The Common Worship psalter is © The Archbishops' Council of the Church of England, 2000.

before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'

And all the angels stood around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped God, singing, 'Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever! Amen.'

Then one of the elders addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, robed in white, and where have they come from?' I said to him, 'Sir, you are the one that knows.' Then he said to me, 'These are they who have come out of the great ordeal; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'

For this reason they are before the throne of God, and worship him day and night within his temple, and the one who is seated on the throne will shelter them. They will hunger no more, and thirst no more; the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat; for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.'

John 10.22-30

At that time the festival of the Dedication took place in Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in the portico of Solomon. So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, 'How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.' Jesus answered, 'I have told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name testify to me; but you do not believe, because you do not belong to my sheep. My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand. The Father and I are one.'

Post Communion Prayer

Merciful Father, you gave your Son Jesus Christ to be the good shepherd, and in his love for us to lay down his life and rise again: keep us always under his protection, and give us grace to follow in his steps; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Commentary

Acts 9:36-43

Peter is visiting people who are already Christians (near modern Tel Aviv). In Lydda, he has healed a paralysed man (Aeneas); he has said to him "Jesus Christ heals you" (v. 34). Now he visits Joppa. "Tabitha" (v. 36, an Aramaic name) and "Dorcas" both mean *gazelle*. Luke often emphasizes helping the poor ("acts of charity", v. 36). V. 37 echoes the story of Elijah reviving the widow's son; Peter's action here is in continuity with the Old Testament and with Jesus' acts of healing, especially of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:40-42, 49-56). Luke calls followers "disciples" (vv. 38, 36). Christian "widows" (v. 39) generally devoted their time to good works. As was the custom, people wept openly when someone died. The widows remember Tabitha's help to many, in sewing inner garments ("tunics") and cloaks for them. As did Jesus, Peter gets *peace and quiet* (here, by sending the mourners outside, v. 40.) With the help of the Holy Spirit, Peter commands Tabitha to rise, be resurrected, be brought back to life. In Aramaic, his command to her sounds like Jesus' words to Jairus' daughter: *talitha koum[i]*. Peter shows members of the Christian community ("saints and widows", v. 41) that Tabitha is alive again; God's action through him leads many

to faith (v. 42). We do not know whether "Simon" (v. 43) is a Christian. He is a "tanner", a person Jewish law considered defiled, for he worked with animal carcasses, which were ritually unclean. Peter has begun to disregard Jewish practices.

Psalm 23

In the ancient Near East, the king was seen as shepherd (vv. 1-4) and as host (vv. 5-6). God faithfully provides for, and constantly cares for, his sheep. He revives our very lives ("soul", v. 3), and guides us in godly ways ("right paths"). Even when beset by evil ("darkest valley", v. 4), we have nothing to fear. God's "rod" (a defence against wolves and lions) protects us; his "staff" (v. 4, for rescuing sheep from thickets) guides us. The feast (v. 5) is even more impressive, for it is in the presence of his foes. Kings were plenteously anointed with oil (a symbol of power and dedication to a holy purpose). The psalmist trusts that God's "goodness and mercy" (v. 6, steadfast love) will follow (or pursue) him (as do his enemies) throughout his life. He will continue to worship in the Temple ("dwell in the house of the Lord") as long as he lives.

Revelation 7:9-17

What will happen at the end of time? Will our persecutors be brought to justice? Will God really give us victory over death? These were important questions to early Christians. John is in the midst of a vision of God's throne and the heavenly scene around it. He describes the scene using symbols, only some of which have meanings known to us. Around God's throne are "twenty-four elders" (4:4, perhaps patriarchs and apostles), spirits, and "four living creatures" (4:6, representing creation). These are symbols from the Old Testament. A "Lamb" (Christ) is the only one worthy to open a scroll perfectly sealed with seven seals (5:4-9), containing God's plans for the end-time. Now, as each seal is opened, we learn of the events of the end-time.

Six seals are opened in 6:1-17, the last in 8:1-5. They reveal images of end-time happenings:

- a "white horse" (6:2), symbolizing liberation from the Romans by the Parthians;
- a "bright red" (6:4) horse presenting war;
- a "black horse" for death by famine, a time when basic foods will be very expensive;
- a "pale green horse" (6:8) standing for fear and death, a time of wide, but not total, devastation;
- a vision of the souls of those martyred for the faith, who ask: Lord, how long will it be before you judge, and render justice, on those who killed us? (6:10) Each soul receives a "robe" (6:11) of victory and joy, but must wait until all persecutors have been killed; and
- natural catastrophes on a huge scale (6:12), probably as vengeance for the martyrs' deaths.

At that time, the self-centred will seek refuge, for the Lamb will judge them adversely (6:14-17). Chapter 7 contains two visions, telling us that God's people will be safe from these horrors. Vv. 1-8 say that the end-time will be delayed until the godly, both Christians and Jews, have been marked with God's seal, protection from the destruction to come. The second vision, our reading, tells us that Christians will survive the troubles.

"Palm branches" (v. 9), a sign of victory and thanksgiving, were strewn on the road during victory parades. In vv. 11-12, the whole court of heaven join the "great multitude" (v. 9), the elect, in praising God, in triumph. Then v. 14: the elect are the members of the Church who have remained faithful through the end-times ("great ordeal"); they have received the gift of Christ, (purity, sinlessness), through his death ("made them white in the blood of the Lamb"). So they ceaselessly celebrate a celestial liturgy in God's presence, protected by him ("shelter them", v. 15.) Vv. 16-17 tell of their happiness, using metaphors from previous books of the Bible. Christians will no longer suffer.