

# Communion Service Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> June – led by Revd. David Aplin



*It was Father's Day, and although David told us he'd been a rather reluctant man of the house and father figure, he was a delighted great grandfather, Theo (8lb 3 oz) had been born the previous Thursday.*



*He was "lucky, lucky, lucky" not just for this, but also*

*because it was the day for the induction of Maureen Marlow as a serving Elder and a "refresher" for Janet O'Connor and Marian Poulton who were to serve a further year.*

The reading from Romans 6 - **Dead to sin, alive in Christ** – told us that If we died with Christ, we would also live with Him. We knew that since Christ was raised from the dead, He could not die again; death no longer had mastery over Him. The death He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life He now lives, He lives with God. In the same way, we were called to count ourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

David felt we should beware of reading this too literally. If dying with Christ meant that we could somehow avoid physical death altogether, our churches would soon be full. It would also create some practical difficulties—perhaps even with pensions and the triple lock—if they had to be paid out for centuries. But the reality was that our earthly lives were limited: four score years, give or take a score, notwithstanding serious illness or accident. We passed on, and succeeding generations took over.

Some wealthy people had found the idea of death unwelcome, distasteful, and unworthy of them. With their great resources, they planned to have their bodies cryogenically frozen until medical science could cure whatever had caused their death. Large sums of money were set aside for that eventuality. Yet this was as foolish as the rich man who'd filled his barns, built bigger ones, and stored up all his grain—only to die that very night, unable to take any of it with him.

When we physically died and our bodies perished, this was dying with Christ. Yet it was also living with Christ, because we lived with Him. In the resurrection, Christ had not only overcome death; He'd revealed that victory so that many might believe. Our life after death would not be displayed in the same way. We would not have to return and say, "Look at me; I am still alive." But it would be just as real and just as absolute. Our souls would live on.

We heard a great deal about near-death experiences and David hoped we did not dismiss them as mere fantasy, for many people had described what might be glimpses of the life to come.

Later in Romans, Paul said that we should not let sin reign in our bodies. This did not mean that we were expected never to sin. Jesus knew that we were sinners; that is why we had prayers of confession, in which we admitted our sins—even those we did not fully recognise. But if we were truly penitent, we should do our best to control and minimise our sins.

Jesus had died upon the cross so that the truly penitent might be saved. This was no small matter: it was our ticket to the greatest promise in heaven and on earth. Through faith in the Son and the Father, the gates of God's kingdom were opened, and there our souls might dwell there forevermore. Death had been conquered by Jesus Christ.

Did our bodies—or our souls—need to be cryogenically frozen so that we could be brought back to life at some point in the future? Not at all. Our souls passed into the loving hands of God as we died, and we remained alive through Him. The body might die, but we were alive in Christ. Our souls were alive, and they never died. That was the promise given to us through faith in Him.

David recognised that many found the concept of the soul difficult to understand. We believed it, yet we did not fully understand it, and we struggled with what we could not understand. But we were grateful that God had given us everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

*Then we moved on to the Induction of Maureen, Janet and Marian, .*

