

**Welcome to this Service of Holy Communion for 10.00am
Sunday 3rd May 2020**

We hold in our thoughts and prayers Everyone throughout the world in these extremely challenging times. We may be reassured that God is with us and we are all in this together, doing our very best, as his worldwide family.

Today is the Day of Prayer for Vocations (also known as Vocations Sunday). The theme of our Service is based on John 10: 10b "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full". Whoever we are, we're called to seek both to live out God's purposes for us and to reach out to others in love of Him and for Him.

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God.

**All: May God fill us with truth and joy.
Lord, direct our thoughts,
teach us to pray,
lift up our hearts to worship you
in Spirit and truth
and hope
in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

We say together Psalm 23 in the King James version:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

We sing a song based on that Psalm:

Hymn: 'You never let go' by Matt Redman

Even though I walk through the valley
Of the shadow of death
Your perfect love is casting out fear
And even when I'm caught in the middle
Of the storms of this life
I won't turn back I know You are near

And I will fear no evil
For my God is with me
And if my God is with me
Whom then shall I fear
Whom then shall I fear

*Oh no You never let go
Through the calm and through the storm
Oh no You never let go
In every high and every low
Oh no You never let go
Lord You never let go of me*

And I can see a light that is coming
For the heart that holds on
A glorious light beyond all compare
And there will be an end to these troubles
But until that day comes
We'll live to know You here on the earth

And I will fear no evil
For my God is with me
And if my God is with me
Whom then shall I fear
Whom then shall I fear

Oh no You never let go ...

Yes I can see a light
That is coming for the heart that holds on
And there will be an end to these troubles
But until that day comes
Still I will praise You
Still I will praise You (x2)

Oh no You never let go ... (x2)

Beth Redman | Matt Redman

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Preparation for Confession

Let us return to the Lord our God and say to him:

All:

Father we have sinned against heaven and against you.

We are not worthy to be called your children.

We turn to you again.

Have mercy on us,

bring us back to yourself,

as those who once were dead,

but now have life,

through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Absolution

May God who is both power and love,

forgive us and free us from our sins,

heal and strengthen us by his Spirit,

and raise us to new life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We sing the Peruvian Gloria

Glory to God, glory to God,

Glory to the Father.

Echo: Glory to God, glory to God,

Glory to the Father.

To him be glory for ever.

Echo: To him be glory for ever

Alleluia! Amen.

Alleluia! Amen.

Alleluia! Amen

Glory to God, glory to God,

Son of the Father,

*Echo: Glory to God, glory to God,
Son of the Father*

To him be glory for ever.

Echo: To him be glory for ever.

Alleluia! Amen.

Alleluia! Amen.

Alleluia! Amen

Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory Holy Spirit.

*Echo: Glory to God, glory to God,
Glory Holy Spirit.*

To him be glory for ever.

Echo: To him be glory for ever.

Alleluia! Amen.

Alleluia! Amen.

Alleluia! Amen.

We say together the 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.

Hymn: 'I stand amazed'

I stand amazed in the presence
Of Jesus the Nazarene
And wonder how He could love me
A sinner condemned unclean

*How marvellous how wonderful
And my song shall ever be
How marvellous how wonderful
Is my Saviour's love for me*

For me it was in the garden
He prayed not my will but Thine
He had no tears for his own grief

But sweat drops of blood for mine.

How marvellous how wonderful ...

He took my sins and my sorrows
He made them His very own
He bore the burden to Calvary
And suffered and died alone

How marvellous how wonderful ...

When with the ransomed in glory
His face I at last shall see
It will be my joy through the ages
To sing of His love for me

How marvellous how wonderful ...

*Charles Hutchinson Gabriel | Chris Tomlin
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Readings

**The first New Testament reading is taken from
Acts chapter 2: verses 42 - 47**

Those who believed in Jesus Christ devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

The second New Testament reading is taken from

1 Peter 2: 19 - 25

For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God.²⁰ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

²² “He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth.”^[a]

²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴ “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.” ²⁵ For “you were like sheep going astray,”^[b] but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

This is the Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

Hymn:

‘What a friend we have in Jesus’

What a friend we have in Jesus
All our sins and griefs to bear
What a privilege to carry
Everything to God in prayer
Oh what peace we often forfeit
Oh what needless pain we bear
All because we do not carry
Everything to God in prayer

Have we trials and temptations
Is there trouble anywhere
We should never be discouraged
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Can we find a friend so faithful
Who will all our sorrows share
Jesus knows our every weakness
Take it to the Lord in prayer

Are we weak and heavy laden
Cumbered with a load of care

Precious Saviour still our refuge
Take it to the Lord in prayer
Do thy friends despise forsake thee
Take it to the Lord in prayer
In His arms He'll take and shield thee
Thou wilt find a solace there

Charles Crozat Converse | Joseph Medlicott Scriven
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Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John 10: 1 - 10

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.^[a] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; **I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.**

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, O Christ.

Talk for Sunday 3rd May

John 10: verse 10 “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”

That verse on Vocations Sunday, is God’s call to each and every one of us – to live life according to God’s will, to fulfil his purposes, plans and pleasure in us and through us. To remember God is the great and loving shepherd of the sheep – he knows His sheep and they listen out for his guiding voice, in every circumstance.

I have come that they may have life and have it to the full could sound so hard and so hollow to peoples around the world in devastatingly critical circumstances, whether through being cramped in camps or prisons, or feeling forgotten in remote locations.

I was struck by the news report concerning the Navajo nation in the United States, which statistics indicate is disproportionately affected by the Coronavirus, showing the highest recorded outbreak/deaths in the country after New York and New Jersey. The younger generation have started a campaign for ‘Protecting the sacred’. This isn’t about shrines and historical buildings, but crucially, honouring their elders, their language and culture, all under terrible threat.

The threat of health and safety to our Residential Homes Staff and those who live there, has been shocking, especially for those of us with loved ones who are living in care. I have just heard that in April 2020 the highest ever number of total deaths (not just in Residential Homes), has been recorded. 80% of those people are aged 65 years or over. We want to **protect our sacred**, our elders and all they mean to us and our shared history. A longing’s been realised in us for all those involved in the NHS and caring in any way, to be resourced, not just in this crisis.

Benjamin Franklin (January 17, 1706 – April 17, 1790) was an American statesman and scientist who was attributed as writing: **‘Nothing** is more certain in life than death *and taxes*’.

If we’re courageous enough to open our minds to it, in order ‘to live life to the full’, we need to be open to our mortality too. When I was working professionally in the Specialism of Palliative Care, we were always striving for patients to ‘die well’ ie to have the best possible symptom relief, to facilitate the best quality of life, leading to the best, peaceful death’.

Living in and, for so many, dying in these times of the Coronavirus Pandemic, has certainly prompted us to face our mortality. This of course was central to Jesus, whose whole life, from his very birth was lived with the threat of death. We read in Matthew’s Gospel chapter 2:

‘Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

Having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country

by another route.

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi’.

All through Jesus’s earthly ministry, he was living with the threat of those who would plot his death and betray him. Yet, even though Jesus was born to die on Good Friday, breaking the power of sin and death, he rose on Easter Day, to prove that mission of love had been accomplished. He was and is the Saviour and we can all be saved from death, when we choose to be in God’s Family.... When we choose our response to his bidding “Come, follow me” to be “Yes, I will”.

On Thursday evening rainbows were photographed, when people were outside clapping the NHS at 8.00pm. I’ve added two below. The first one taken in Thetford indicates the two ends. We can picture our lives in terms of one end signifying our birth and the other, our death, when we believe we meet our Maker. Reputedly, the end of the rainbow is where we find the ‘pot of gold’. For those who say “I will” to be followers of Jesus, death is a place of not just gold, but glory for which we can prepare now, but which lasts for ever.



This double rainbow could be seen in Thetford, Norfolk



This rainbow appeared above a building in Wickford, in Essex, where the word "hope" can be seen in the window

The second photograph shows the letters of HOPE in a window, which is what the rainbow represents...God's promised, abiding and eternal presence with us.

In Lockdown, some are clinging on to hope, for what will happen as we come out of these uncertainties and fears.

For some, life hardly looks any different, while for others it's hugely stressful.

Some people are taking hold of opportunities to do the spring cleaning and get the garden in order and to do the jobs they've been meaning to get round to, whether sorting out or decorating.

For some it's a time to learn how to participate in zoom conference calls with colleagues, or to catch up with friends and family; for others it is a time of isolation with accentuated challenges and even boredom.

I would like to prompt us to use this time, whatever our circumstances, **to give thanks for what we do have and not what we don't have.** Also to consider what life in all its fullness really means, now we have experienced these challenging times and to **let that change our behaviour and our perspectives on life, through our belief in our faithful God...**as we say "I will" to his bidding "Come, follow me".

The Apostles finally understood that following in Jesus's footsteps might lead to premature death in this life, but then on to the reward of glorious, everlasting life with Him, in its total and complete wholeness. In the meantime, they valued meeting together to share

worship and fellowship and to pray. Perhaps we will make that an even greater priority, when we are able to do so, but for now we can do our prayers as part of God's worldwide family, at home or by following all we're putting on the website or can be found online, or TV and radio.

In order to really take hold of **John 10: verse 10 "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full"**, means to discover our vocation, as individual people, who make up the family of God. It requires us to take hold firmly with hope that this life is only part of the whole of life. Let's make the most of each day as a gift, not to put off tomorrow what we can do today, but rather to discover or rediscover the faith which is strong in the face of 'there is nothing more certain in life than death'.

The Songs and Hymns chosen for today are, as always, are not random. They have inspired words like:

**'Oh no, You never let go,
Lord, You never let go of me
Yes, I can see a light that is coming,
For the heart that holds on
And there will be an end to these troubles
But until that day comes,
still I will praise You'.....**

Amen.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
who made all things?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ,
who redeemed the world?

We believe and trust in him.

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

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

Musical Reflection to lead us into our Intercessions:

'Jesus draw me' (Words by Margaret Becker; music by Keith Getty; recorded by Alicia and Lorraine Eldridge)

Jesus draw me ever nearer
As I labour through the storm.
You have called me to this passage,
And I'll follow, though I'm worn.

*May this journey bring a blessing,
May I rise on wings of faith;
And at the end of my heart's testing,
With Your likeness let me wake.*

Jesus guide me through the tempest;
Keep my spirit staid and sure.

When the midnight meets the morning,
Let me love You even more.

*May this journey bring a blessing,
May I rise on wings of faith;
And at the end of my heart's testing,
With Your likeness let me wake.*

Let the treasures of the trial
Form within me as I go -
And at the end of this long passage,
Let me leave them at Your throne.

*May this journey bring a blessing,
May I rise on wings of faith;
And at the end of my heart's testing,
With Your likeness let me wake.*

Intercessions

We pray for God's faithfulness to be known in our world.

The response to 'Faithful God' is 'glorify your Name'.

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

On this Vocations Sunday, help us to open our hearts and minds to your call to each and every one of us today.

Stir us to take hold of you and your love and purposes,
as your people of faith.

Help us to understand what it means to live in the fullness of life

Faithful God:

glorify your name.

In a world of change and hope,
of fear and discovery;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

In human rebellion and obedience,
in our seeking and our finding;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

In the common life of our society, throughout the world,
in prosperity and need;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

As your church proclaims your goodness
in words and action;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

Among our Family, Friends and Neighbours,

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

In our times of joy,
in our days of sorrow;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

In our strengths and our triumphs,
in our weakness and at our death;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

With your saints in glory
and on the day of Christ's coming;

Faithful God:

Glorify your Name.

Almighty God,

By your Holy Spirit, you have made us one

with your saints in heaven and on earth:

grant that in our earthly pilgrimage

we may ever be supported by this fellowship of love and prayer,

and know ourselves surrounded by their witness,

to your power and mercy;

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Peace

The risen Christ came and stood among his disciples

and said, "Peace be with you".

Then were they glad when they saw the Lord. Alleluia!

Alleluia!

Hymn: 'Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of Creation'

Praise to the Lord the Almighty

The King of creation

O my soul praise Him

For He is your health and salvation

Come all who hear now to His temple draw near

Praise Him in glad adoration

Praise to the Lord above over all things

So wondrously reigning

Sheltering you under His wings

And so gently sustaining

Have you not seen all that is needful has been

Sent by his gracious ordaining

Praise to the Lord who will prosper
Your work and defend you
Surely His goodness and mercy shall daily attend you
Ponder anew what the Almighty can do
If with His love He befriends you

Praise to the Lord
O let all that is in me adore Him
All that has life and breath
Come now with praises before Him
Let the amen sound from His people again
Gladly forever adore Him

Catherine Winkworth | Joachim Neander
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The Lord is here.

All: His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.

All: We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation;

in your love you made us for yourself.

When we turned away

you did not reject us,

but came to meet us in your Son.

**All: You embraced us as your children
and welcomed us to sit and eat with you.**

In Christ you shared our life

that we might live in him and he in us.

**All: He opened his arms of love upon the cross
and made for all the perfect sacrifice for sin.**

On the night he was betrayed,
at supper with his friends
he took bread, and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to them, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

**All: Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his body is the bread of life.**

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine,
he gave you thanks, and said:
Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins;
do this in remembrance of me.

**All: Father, we do this in remembrance of him:
his blood is shed for all.**

As we proclaim his death and celebrate his rising in glory,
send your Holy Spirit that this bread and this wine
may be to us the body and blood of your dear Son.

**All: As we eat and drink these holy gifts
make us one in Christ, our risen Lord.**

With your whole Church throughout the world
we offer you this sacrifice of praise
and lift our voice to join the eternal song of heaven:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.

We say together The Lord's 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.

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
**Though we are many,
we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

The body of Christ given for us. **Amen.**

The blood of Christ shed for us. **Amen.**

God of truth,
thank you for feeding us with the body
and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Strengthen our faith,
that we may grow in love for you
and for each other;
through Jesus Christ our risen Lord.
Amen.

Song: 'Indescribable' by Story/Reeves

From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea
Creation's revealing Your majesty
From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring
Every creature unique in the song that it sings
All exclaiming

*Indescribable uncontainable
You placed the stars in the sky
And You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful untameable
Awestruck we fall to our knees
As we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God*

Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go
Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow
Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light
Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night
None can fathom

*Indescribable uncontainable
You placed the stars in the sky
And You know them by name
You are amazing God
All powerful untameable
Awestruck we fall to our knees
As we humbly proclaim
You are amazing God*

*Indescribable uncontainable
You placed the stars in the sky
And You know them by name
You are amazing God
Incomparable unchangeable*

***You see the depths of my heart
And You love me the same
You are amazing God
You are amazing God***

*Jesse Reeves | Laura Story
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Notices:

**150 Club draw this weekend – winners will be informed
VE Day Commemoration next weekend – please email me any of your memories**

Blessing:

May the God of peace,
who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus,
that great shepherd of the sheep,
through the blood of the eternal covenant,
make you perfect in every good work to do his will,
working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight;
and the blessing of the God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be with you and all those you love, now and for ever.

Amen.

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