



Welcome to
All Saints
Kings Heath
Your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham

Holy Communion

Third Sunday of Epiphany
Sunday 23rd January 2022

Our Preacher is Margaret Healey Pollett, licensed as Reader yesterday

We gather

*As we gather in Church, **we are required to wear masks when entering and moving around Church.** While we are allowed to remove them when in our place, rather as we do when going for a different kind of feast in a café or restaurant, wearing them is still advised. We continue to respect each other's physical distance and encourage conversation outside Church rather than mingling inside.*

We do not, at present, pass the collection plate around to receive offerings for the work of All Saints. If you wish to contribute a gift, please put it in the plate at the back of Church when you leave.

If you are worshipping at home, have ready in an honoured place a portion of food and something to drink. It may be bread and wine or something else. Set your Bible alongside. You might light three candles, and have another ready to light shortly.

Music as we gather:

1. All heav'n declares the glory of the risen Lord.
Who can compare with the beauty of the Lord?
For ever he will be the Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee and worship him alone.

2. I will proclaim the glory of the risen Lord.
Who once was slain to reconcile us all to God.
For ever you will be the Lamb upon the throne.
I gladly bow the knee and worship you alone.

(words: Tricia Richards; music: Noel Richards)

Priest: In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ
be with *us* all. **Amen.**

WELCOME and NOTICES

HYMN 1. Hark, the glad sound! the Saviour comes,
the Saviour promised long:
let ev'ry heart prepare a throne,
and ev'ry voice a song.

2. He comes, the pris'ners to release
in Satan's bondage held;
the gates of brass before him burst,
the iron fetters yield.

3. He comes, the broken heart to bind,
the bleeding soul to cure,
and with the treasures of his grace
to bless the humble poor.

4. Our glad hosannas, Prince of Peace,
thy welcome shall proclaim;
and heav'n's eternal arches ring
with thy belovèd name.

(words Philip Doddridge, based on Luke 4:18-19; music: Thomas Ravenscroft, 'Psalms' [1621])

We pray:

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known
and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of
our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may
perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

A PROMISE *Margaret is welcomed as a new Reader.*

We seek forgiveness

CONFESSION

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

Silence

When the bickering of the powerful drowns out good news for the poor, Lord, have mercy.

Kyrie eleison. *(The tune we sing is from Ukraine)*

When we are held captive by cynicism, greed or resentment, Christ, have mercy.

Christe eleison.

When oppressors are blind to the needs of the oppressed, Lord, have mercy.

Kyrie eleison. (Cf Luke 4:18-19)

ABSOLUTION At home we pray for forgiveness. In church, the priest declares forgiveness for all, wherever we worship:

May almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon *us*, pardon and deliver *us* from all our sins, confirm and strengthen *us* in all goodness and keep *us* in life eternal, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

THE GLORIA

1. Glory be to God in heaven,
peace to those who love him well;
on the earth let all his people
speak his grace, his wonders tell:
Lord, we praise you for your glory,
mighty Father, heavenly King;
hear our joyful adoration
and accept the thanks we bring.

2. Only Son of God the Father,
Lamb who takes our sin away,
now with him in triumph seated,
for your mercy, Lord we pray:
Jesus Christ, most high and holy;
Saviour, you are God alone
in the glory of the Father
with the Spirit: Three in One!

We pray THE COLLECT for Epiphany III

Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence: renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness, sustain us by your mighty power; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

READING [Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10](#)

READING [1 Corinthians 12:12-31a](#)

HYMN [As the deer pants for the water](#)

1. As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you;
you alone are my heart's desire and I long to worship you.

*You alone are my strength, my shield, to you alone may my spirit yield;
you alone are my heart's desire, and I long to worship you.*

2. I want you more than gold or silver, only you can satisfy;
you alone are the real joy-giver and the apple of my eye.

3. You're my friend and you are my brother, even though you are a king;
I love you more than any other, so much more than anything!

(words & music: Martin Nystrom, arr John Barnard)

GOSPEL READING [Luke 4:14-21](#)

In church we stand and, when it is announced, we say:

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON *from Margaret Healey Pollett*

Yesterday, in the Cathedral, I was admitted into the Office of Reader in the Church of England, and then licensed to serve here at All Saints. It involved putting on these robes and being presented with this blue scarf, this Bible, and this licence, as well as promises made and prayers offered. This was all completed with the confirmation of the licence here this morning.

The Robes

Would anyone like to have a closer look? Children?

First, we have the **cassock**. Those of us who did the Youth Project Christmas quiz, have learnt that this comes from an Italian word. It has been worn by the clergy for centuries and dates back to a time when it was common for most people to wear something like it. It's a bit like a coat, and can be worn out and about by anybody, really.

Secondly, we have the **surplice**. This comes from a Latin word, that basically means 'over the coat'. It is worn over the cassock for worship purposes, as a sign of respect for the holiness of the worship

Thirdly, there is the **blue scarf**, which indicates the office of Reader, and distinguishes us from vicars – even though we might look like one with the cassock and surplice! These scarves were adopted as recently as 1969, which is also the year when women were allowed to become Readers.

All these robes are known as choir dress, and we don't normally see them at our Sunday morning Eucharist, where those at the front wear white albs, as you can see, and which usually I will do. These garments also have a long history in the Church, dating back to the time when they were standard dress for the ancient Romans. If you would like to know more about the other items David and Tariro are wearing, please ask them later.

The word 'surplice' might sound the same as 'surplus', but don't be misled as 'surplus' comes from a different root, meaning 'in excess'. There are those who question the robes, thinking them 'surplus to requirements', but there is the view, which I share, that they are equalisers, that reduce the distinctiveness of those at the front, and give continuity down the years. They are about service to the Church.

The Bible

I did have one already! But we have been given this rather fine edition, because at the heart of what readers do is the public ministry of preaching and teaching the faith 'uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures', as well as in reason and tradition.

The Licence

This gives me permission from the Bishop to perform the duties of a Reader at this particular time in this particular place. It also makes me accountable. I have a responsibility to you all to work within the teachings and authority of the Church, and to be answerable to you if I seem to fall short.

The Role of Reader

We are very used to having Readers assisting with public worship here at All Saints, but numbers were dwindling with Mike's illness, Simon's ordination, and Gill's untimely death. Gill knew I was training to be a Reader and passed on some of her books to me, which provide a blessing of continuity, and memory.

John was my sponsor in the cathedral yesterday, and now together, he and I, together with Claire (who has duties round the diocese) make up the active Reader team.

Our three readings today each provide pointers for understanding the role. Our Old Testament reading comes from the Book of Nehemiah, which is the last of a quartet of books, the first three being 1 and 2 Chronicles, and Ezra. The books record the history of Israel and Judah up to the time of the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, and the temple. In our reading we see the people assembled in the Square by the Water Gate. Ezra stood on a wooden platform and, with great ceremony, he read out to them the Book of the Law of Moses. This book might have been the entire Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible; or it might have been just a part of it. Together with some Levitical helpers, Ezra read from the Book, 'making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read' not a bad description of the most visible part of today's Reader role, from about 2,500 years ago! This sacred day for the resettled Israelites, must have been quite a marathon, and afterwards they celebrated with 'choice food and sweet drinks', and they sent out a share to the needy. I hope you will all be able to follow this pattern, and to share in some food on our Square after this service.

In their book '*Reader Ministry Explored*', Cathy Rowling and Paula Gooder¹ discuss the role of 'Readers, or Lectors' in the very early church, making the point that most people were illiterate and so needed to hear the Scriptures read out. This might be seen as the origin of the role, which was learnt from the practice in the synagogues. The skill of reading for oneself is a relatively new one in our history.

Turning to our NT reading, we learn that we are all baptised into one body, which is made up of many parts, which have equal concern for each other, and equal participation in Christ.

There is nothing distinctive about being a Reader. Everything a Reader does can be done by others baptised or ordained into the Church, however, Rowling and Gooder list five characteristics that come together in a Reader who is:

1. Admitted into public ministry by the Church of England.
2. 'Licensed to a local context'
3. A lay minister in the midst of other lay Church members.
4. Trained in Theology
5. Licensed to preach, teach, be involved in pastoral support, to lead some elements of public worship.

These five elements, they say, form the service performed by the Reader. They go on to say that 'Reader Ministry must remain open to God's leading and directing; educated, informed, contextually based, culturally aware and able to respond to contemporary need'.

¹ Rowling and Gooder, *Reader Ministry Explored* SPCK, 2009

By the grace of God, I will do my best in all this.

Returning to Paul's brilliant metaphor, each one of the baptised plays our part in the body of Christ. I wonder what part you feel you play. We all need each other's different gifts. For yesterday's service, I had to produce a short statement about my journey of faith, and I included in this the reflection that

'I feel I am more head than heart in my faith, a balance to redress in prayer. I love the head work, though, it feels like a conversation with the Spirit. This is the way I can serve in the body of Christ while I depend on other members of the Body for their heart wisdom. Together we serve one another.'

By 'heart wisdom' I mean those whose gifts kindle gentle, loving, healing relationship, through, for example, active listening; poetic word-craft; companionable, meditative silence; artistic creativity; musical harmonies; imaginative prayer – habits, and talents that bring us into right relationships with God and each other. These gifts are all wonderfully present at All Saints.

What I call the 'head element' is the analysis of the Biblical and other literature, asking questions about the genre of the writings, how we can understand the history found in them, what we can say about Jesus's self-understanding, and what we can say about the implications for our faith and action. We have been, and still are, wonderfully blessed at All Saints through our connections with great scholars whose contributions have built up the body of the worldwide Church, while they also join in with us here in our little body. It is in engaging with the writings of these and other scholars, where I feel called to be of service to All Saints

If head questions are not really your thing, there is always next week, when different gifts may be brought to the lectern, and we always have each other, as we are all 'a limb or organ of the body of Christ', and all give service to each other in our different ways.

Finally, we turn to our Gospel reading where we see Jesus in his home synagogue. Firstly, we might note the interesting point that Jesus could read, and that there is an expectation that he will read to them and then teach. We see him select a reading from Isaiah 61, and then make the remarkable claim that the reading is fulfilled in the listeners' hearing. Luke portrays Jesus as taking on the mantle of Isaiah of being anointed and sent to turn things round for the disadvantaged of the time: the poor, prisoners, the blind, and the oppressed, and to announce the Year of the Lord's favour.

The idea of 'Year of the Lord's favour' is found in the Pentateuch both as the Sabbatical Year, every seven years, and the Jubilee Year, every 49 or 50 years. It is about giving rest to the land, setting slaves free, remission of debts, and restoring equality between people.

Isaiah's list is about human relationships, and situations where injustice can start to accelerate in the here and now. This Isaiah (there were three), was active around the same time as Nehemiah. He wanted to see the restoration of Judah, and of Jerusalem to its people, and the 'setting free of those who have been crushed'.² This is what the justice, loved of the Lord, would look like to him. It would be like a Jubilee Year.

In the time of Jesus, the issues were different, but there still were those suffering from the poverty, imprisonment, blindness and oppression identified by Isaiah. The oppression was now under the Romans and the Herodian family, but there were still crushed people longing for a year of the Lord's favour, and justice for their times.

In 2014, only about a year before he died, our dear brother, John Hull who was one of the great scholars who was part of this congregation, had a book published called 'Towards the Prophetic Church'.³ In it he talks about faith being both vertical and horizontal. The vertical is our relationship with God, while the horizontal is our relationship with each other, and he argues that 'access to the vertical is impossible unless the horizontal is first recognised'. This was the message of the prophets. So, life in the Kingdom of God begins on Earth, as Jesus announced in the synagogue.

In our own times, the issues are different again, but as Des led us in prayer last week, he named some of them: hypocritical politicians, foodbanks, poverty, starvation in Sudan and Afghanistan, street children in Kenya, vaccine injustice, inequality and racism. We are rightly angry, and seek God's help to be loving and to support the work of Save the Children, Church Action on Poverty, Christian Aid, the B30 Foodbank, and our Youth Project, Lunch Club and Robin Centre.

Des's prayers illustrate All Saints taking our place in the body of Christ, seeking justice in the horizontal on Earth, as well as opening glimpses of the vertical, as it is in heaven. I pray that, as one of your Readers, I will be equal to the task of serving you as you serve others, seeking the Kingdom of God in the horizontal and therefore the vertical.

We affirm our faith

² Isaiah 58:6

³ Hull, John M. *Towards the Prophetic Church*, 2014, SPCK

At home, if able, we stand and turn in the direction of Church, where we also stand to affirm our faith:

Deacon: We stand to affirm our faith in God revealed to us as Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

**All: We believe and trust in God the father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist.**

**We believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again.**

**We believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world.**

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

(adapted from Common Worship)

INTERCESSIONS offered by Chris Pearce

Almighty God, you promised through you Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith. Help us shut out the distractions around us and hear your calling clearly.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all peoples of any faith and none. As in today's readings we hear the metaphor that all parts of the body are important so all people are important. We pray for understanding of different points of view within your church around the world and at home and without your church in other faiths and those who have a different spirituality. We pray for Archbishop Justin, Bishop David, Tariro, David, John, Claire and all those who lead activities at All Saints. We pray for Margaret as she starts her journey as a Reader.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for your guidance to those who are in positions of authority, elected or otherwise. Help them to remember the responsibility to those they govern, which comes with power and help them to act with humility, honesty and selflessness in discharging their duties. As our media focuses on the undignified spectacle of those trusted to lead us covering up their errors of judgement, help us to pray for and remember those who are currently concerned for their life and freedom in Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for your creation and everyone working to create a more equitable and secure future for all living things on earth. Help us to remember our part in caring for your creation in the choices we make in everyday life remembering that every action is important. We pray for farmers and those in food production and for those in Government creating new rules and frameworks for supporting agriculture, that they will place appropriate value on nature and the environment.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all refugees and all those who are on a journey, whether physical or spiritual. Help us all to remember that we can make a difference in the way we treat others and that, as your hands, voice, eyes and ears on earth, we may be that samaritan on the road. We pray for your protection of those who are scared, running away from persecution and those imprisoned. Keep hope alive in their hearts and inspire generosity and compassion in the hearts of those they meet.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all who are ill and for those who care for others, for our doctors, nurses, midwives and carers, whether paid or otherwise. Provide comfort and strength to those who suffer in body, mind or spirit. We pray for everyone working or volunteering to help with the treatment or vaccination programme for COVID and for everyone working hard to try and keep other medical services going during the pandemic. We pray for all those who feel unable to come to church or other activities out of fear for health. Let them know they are in our minds and are loved and missed.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for your love and care for those who have died and for your comfort to their families and friends. Especially this week we pray for Jean Belling whose funeral is tomorrow and for her family. We remember those who died at this time of year and pray you will provide comfort to those who loved and cared for them here on earth as they remember their anniversary.

God of Love,
Hear our prayer.

Merciful God,
**Accept these prayers
for the sake of your son,
our saviour Jesus Christ,
Amen**

THE PEACE

We pause to remember each other: those worshipping at home, and those worshipping in Church, and those we care for whom we cannot visit.

Deacon: Christ is our peace. If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away: behold, everything has become new. We say to one another:

The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

HYMN [God is working his purpose out](#)

1. God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year.
God is working his purpose out, and the day is drawing near.
Nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

2. From the east to the utmost west wherever foot has trod,
through the mouths of his messengers echoes forth the voice of God:
"Listen to me, ye continents, ye islands, give ear to me,
that the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

3. How can we do the work of God, how prosper and increase
harmony in the human race, and the reign of perfect peace?
What can we do to urge the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea?

4. All our efforts are nothing worth unless God bless the deed;
vain our hopes for the harvest tide till he brings to life the seed.
Yet ever nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God as the waters cover the sea.

(words: Arthur Campbell Ainger, adapt Michael Forster; music: Millicent Kingham, in 'Church Hymns' [1903])

The Table is prepared in Church. At home, now is the time to say the Lord's Prayer (below) and consume the food and drink you have prepared, first praying:

God, we long for Communion. With this symbolic meal stir my hope for the fellowship meal we cannot yet see, and help me wait for it with patience. **Amen.**

(cf Romans 8:2)

As the president takes the bread and wine:

As the grain once scattered in the fields and the grapes once dispersed on the hillside are now reunited on this table in bread and wine, so, Lord, may your whole Church soon be gathered together from the corners of the earth into your kingdom. **Amen.**

We celebrate God's faithfulness

In Church we stand, if able, for the Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Father, you made the world and love your creation. You gave your son Jesus Christ to be our saviour. His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death. And so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels praising you and singing:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise you, we bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

A bell is rung

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine. Again he praised you, gave it to them and said: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

A bell is rung

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did. In him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross. Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation, we proclaim his death and resurrection until he comes in glory.

Deacon: Great is the mystery of faith:

**All: Christ has died,
Christ is risen
Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Deacon: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Priest: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All: Though we are many, we are one body.
For we all share in one bread.**

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you. Eat in remembrance that he died for you and feed on him in your hearts with thanksgiving.

**Jesus, Lamb of God, have mercy on us.
Jesus, bearer of our sins, have mercy on us.
Jesus, Redeemer of the world, give us your peace. (x2)**

We pause to remember all who pray at home, then share the bread and wine, now for us the body and blood of Christ.

SONGS *during Communion*

[Like a candle flame](#)

1. Like a candle flame, flick'ring small in our darkness,
uncreated light shines through infant eyes.

*God is with us, alleluia,
come to save us, alleluia!*

2. Stars and angels sing, yet the earth sleeps in shadows;
can this tiny spark set a world on fire?

3. Yet his light shall shine from our lives, spirit blazing,
as we touch the flame of his holy fire.

(words & music: Graham Kendrick)

And

1. Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
such a way as gives us breath;
such a truth as ends all strife;
such a life as killeth death.

2. Come, my Light, my Feast, my
Strength:
such a light as shows a feast;
such a feast as mends in length;
such a strength as makes his guest.

3. Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
such a joy as none can move;
such a love as none can part;
such a heart as joys in love.

(words: George Herbert; music: Ralph Vaughan Williams, adapt E H Green)

A POST COMMUNION PRAYER *may be said.*

We are sent out

Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with your Word *[and with the body of Christ]*. Strengthen us in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.

THE BLESSING

The Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, teach *us* to walk his way trustfully, accept his truth faithfully, and share his life lovingly, that by the power of the Holy Spirit *we* may come as one family to the kingdom of the Father, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among *us* and remain with *us* always.

Amen.

HYMN [Will you come and follow me](#)

1. Will you come and follow me if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know, and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown, will you let my name be known,
will you let my life be grown in you, and you in me?

2. Will you leave yourself behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind, and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare,
will you let me answer prayer in you, and you in me?

3. Will you let the blinded see if I but call your name?
Will you set the pris'ners free, and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean and do such as this unseen,
and admit to what I mean in you, and you in me?

4. Will you love the 'you' you hide if I but call your name?
Will you quell the fear inside, and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found to reshape the world around
through my sight and touch and sound in you, and you in me?

5. Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you, and never be the same.
In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show.
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you, and you in me.

(words: John L Bell & Graham Maule; music: Traditional Scottish melody, arr The Iona Community)

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ, Amen.



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