



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

# A qualified Yes

Holy Communion on the Fourth Sunday before Lent  
Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2022

## 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 a candle to mark the beginning of worship.*

*Music as we gather:*

1. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,  
holy is the Lord God almighty.  
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord,  
holy is the Lord God almighty:  
who was, and is, and is to come;  
holy, holy, holy is the Lord.

2. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is the Lord...

3. Worthy, worthy, worthy is the  
Lord...

4. Glory, glory, glory to the Lord...

(words & music: Unknown, arr Colin Hand)

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 [And can it be](#)

1. And can it be that I should gain  
an int'rest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died he for me, who caused his pain?  
For me, who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

*Amazing love! How can it be  
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

2. He left his Father's throne above  
so free, so infinite his grace;  
emptied himself of all but love,  
and bled for Adam's helpless race;  
'tis mercy all, immense and free;  
for, O my God, it found out me.

3. Long my imprisoned spirit lay  
fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
thine eye diffused a quick'ning ray,  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
my chains fell off, my heart was free;  
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

4. No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in him, is mine!  
Alive in him, my living Head,  
and clothed in righteousness divine,  
bold I approach the eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

*(words: Charles Wesley; music: Thomas Campbell)*

*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.**

## We seek forgiveness

### CONFESSION

Deacon: Remembering the flawed servants God has inspired in the past, like Isaiah, Peter and Paul, we confess to God the insecurity that hinders our discipleship.

*Silence*

God, we are people of unclean lips.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

We are tempted to say "go away from us, Lord, for we are sinful people."  
**Christ, have mercy.**

We are the least of your people, feeling unfit to be your witnesses.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

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

*May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit, and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. Amen.*

*We celebrate God's forgiveness singing 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 the Fourth Sunday before Lent*

O God, you know us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright; grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers and carry us through all temptations; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING [Isaiah 6](#)

NEW TESTAMENT READING [1 Corinthians 15.1-11](#)

HYMN [Dear Lord and Father of mankind](#)

1. Dear Lord and Father of mankind,  
forgive our foolish ways!  
Reclothe us in our rightful mind,  
in purer lives thy service find,  
in deeper rev'ence praise,  
in deeper rev'ence praise.

2. In simple trust like theirs who heard,  
beside the Syrian sea,  
the gracious calling of the Lord,  
let us, like them, without a word,  
rise up and follow thee,  
rise up and follow thee.

3. O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
where Jesus knelt to share with thee  
the silence of eternity,  
interpreted by love!  
Interpreted by love!

4. Drop thy still dews of quietness,  
till all our strivings cease;  
take from our souls the strain and stress  
and let our ordered lives confess  
the beauty of thy peace,  
the beauty of thy peace.

5. Breathe through the heats of our desire  
thy coolness and thy balm;  
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;  
speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,  
O still small voice of calm!  
O still small voice of calm!

(words: John Greenleaf Whittier; music: Charles Hubert Hastings Parry)

GOSPEL READING [Luke 5.1-11](#)

*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 David*

Seventy years ago, people stood crying, removing their hats and bowing their heads on railway station platforms as a train very slowly bore the body of King George VI from Sandringham to London. Whether or not you think there should be a hereditary royal family, it is unsettling when a monarch dies. Some of you remember what that feels like. Many of us don't yet know. Something shifts inside us. Some core identity is questioned. Where the king or queen has real clout, a vacuum of power can be dangerous, people clamouring for influence, sucked into the space occupied by the monarch, the first casualty in the crush being wisdom.

Knowing any change of regime is difficult - a new bishop, a new boss, a new monarch - it is hard to underestimate the dismay for Israel when its King died. The

vacuum might not be filled by family but by neighbouring powers who might take the opportunity to invade. Isaiah's vision in this context reveals a deeply devout and impressive person of faith. For he sees no power vacuum. Just when the earthly throne is empty, he is given a vision of heaven, where rippling folds of the sumptuous cloth of God's robes seem to fill the temple, and smoke evokes immeasurable holiness. Isaiah's identity is securely in God, not in the earthly regime. There is no power vacuum in his own life.

While the rest of the country is dismayed without the security of a king, worried about who will take the throne and what they'll be like, Isaiah is dismayed about his relationship with YHWH. How can he possibly stand in God's presence? He didn't ask for the vision, but its sheer raw holiness is too much to bear. He feels the awe every human should feel before the Lord of all creation. The un-graspable glory overwhelms him. He feels too small to count, too filthy to be present in the great chamber, too hot under the gaze of heaven's judgement of his scruffy little life. It is logical to feel so. We all do to a lesser degree. It's like when we feel flustered and clumsy in the presence of someone calm and authoritative. Or it's like when we feel unkempt in the company of someone who seems really good, even holy.

But movingly, in heaven Isaiah is not left to squirm. Again, unasked for, a seraph enacts a cleansing of his speech, which makes us shudder, but the hot coal seems not to hurt him. While the judgment is not asked for, nor is the mercy. They are two realities Isaiah is learning to hold together.

"Behold the gates of mercy in arbitrary space, none of us deserving the cruelty or the grace," as Leonard Cohen put it when in one of his later songs he laid the human condition starkly before God offering, a prayer for healing as broken human hearts meet 'the broken heart above.'<sup>1</sup>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MUB1O2cT2gM>

Having been open to the awesome presence of God which he experiences as judgement, Isaiah is also open to feel the enlivening effect of mercy. He is immediately free from the inertia of shame and stands offering his voice in God's service, ready to be sent wherever God will send him.

So, prayerful Isaiah presents a "No" to God. "I am unclean." But his cry wants to be a "yes."

The moment he accepts God's grace for him, his "Yes" is set free. Importantly, Isaiah's heaven-rooted identity does not mean he uncaring about the world. The next 60 Chapters will reveal Isaiah and his successors' passion for the nation's health and insight into her politics in good times and in bad. It seems his prayerful awe humbles him, then puts him in a position to receive grace, then stands him on

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<sup>1</sup> Come Healing, on [Old Ideas](#) 2012

his feet and sends him into the world with dazzling realism. Indeed, those fixated on power, and clinging to it, are the ones who can't see the wood for the trees. In the harshly ironic opening speech God gives him, (v9ff) the supposedly intelligent, talkative leaders are exposed as wilfully deaf to wisdom and blind to reality.

In Peter we find another no that wants to be a yes. In fact there are three yeses in this intense scene. His first yes is very practical. He lends Jesus his boat. As Peter pushes the boat out so Jesus can preach, I give thanks for countless people who have generously offered their practical skills and time to a church they may have had good reason to be suspicious of.

Then Jesus preaches from the boat, while Peter and his colleagues continue cleaning and sorting the nets. Glad of something to do with his hands, relieved not to have to make any embarrassing sign of religious commitment, Peter can overhear the preaching. Here, too, I pause to give thanks for the people who quietly, after a carol service, express wistful gratitude for something they don't feel entirely able to sign up for but recognise truth in it and say they're glad we believe for them.

This Rabbi has already been to Simon Peter's home and healed his mother in law of a fever (Ch4). It would have been churlish not to lend the boat. But after he had finished speaking to the crowd, Jesus suggested another fishing expedition. Now we hear the second more qualified yes from Peter: "we've been at it all night and caught nothing...but if you say so...". In it I hear so many gracious, patient Christian people who have said to the new vicar "we've tried it before," presenting a no, but then have summoned up the grace to support and had another go. In Peter I hear the qualified yes of all who have worked all hours for the church and don't feel as though we've achieved much. Tired, nearly disillusioned, still they step up and have another go.

When the miraculous catch is hauled in, there the slippery flapping fish at his feet are incontrovertibly real. Peter cannot hold in his admiration which is felt, paradoxically, as shame. "Go away from me," he says, "for I am a sinful man." Healing, teaching, feeding have overwhelmed Simon Peter. His "Go away" is in fact a statement of faith. He absolutely trusts Jesus to be of God. That is why like Isaiah, he can't imagine occupying the same space. He feels too shabby; too full of regret. Equivalent to the angel's coal, Jesus says do not be afraid and suggests that his fishing skills are exactly what God calls for his purposes. In other words, "It is you I want, not some sanitised version of you." It's lovely how Luke melds the boat as pulpit with the boat hauling in fish: Jesus will share the ministry of preaching with Peter, all his skill and experience brought with him, not left behind.

A third man in our readings, Paul, gives another qualified Yes to God. By the time he wrote this letter he was further on the journey to godly confidence than Isaiah

and Peter when we met them. But Paul, too, feels unworthy, because past mistakes, for which he takes full responsibility, mean he is the least worthy person in the world to be an apostle. His agony over this transition from persecutor to preacher is described in Acts as a time of bewildered blindness. In Acts (Chapter 9) Luke tells us Paul, then called Saul, was felled by the glory of Jesus, surrounding him and asking gently "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" Having been dismayed and humbled in awe, Paul was in a position to receive the grace he would need in order to stand again. A terrified church member agreed to pray for the man who'd come to have them all beaten. That grace opened Paul's eyes to a new vision of the world where he could look the poor and the powerful in the eye and defiantly tell them the good news. In this letter to Corinth, he shows what his *Yes* to God is like. "I worked harder than any of them...*yet not I*, but the grace of God in me..." He manages to admit what he's good at, but in a way that points back to God. All his story telling is about building up the Corinthians: "*you* received... *you* stand... *you* believe...you are being saved."

I said three men. We might be wishing that some men learn to lower their sense of their own status and abilities. Equally, in fact probably more common, men with a deep sense of inadequacy over assert themselves in a futile attempt to compensate. We might pray for people of power to re-learn what awe feels like: the first step to humility, which is paradoxically the next step to real confidence. In Isaiah and Peter, God invites us, women and men, to express our qualified Yes. In Paul, God invites us all to find our "Yet not I" in prayer. In God's regime, awe, gives way to grace and leads to energising, generous confidence.

Our cautious yes is, perhaps, qualified by questions about the church or about the reliability of God.

Our reluctant yes may be qualified by insecurity, shame or in my case probably laziness.

Our paradoxical yes is qualified by shame which is often a misshapen expression of awe towards God.

Our vulnerable yes is qualified by past sorrows which make us cautious about hoping too much.

Our fearful yes worries how much will be asked of us.

Our humble yes brings all sorts of doubts about our gifts.

I wonder what your 'yes' is qualified by. We only need to articulate it to God and s/he will give us all the grace we need to move forward, freeing the embattled yes into ministry in your workplace, your school, your home, your neighbourhood, your church. For God does not need to wait for a full-throated, unqualified, uncomplicated yes. Our cautious, self-deprecating, suspicious, nervous, over-awed 'no' that conceals a 'yes' is enough. God wants to work with us and lead us from prayer to thoroughgoing engagement with the hurly burly of the world. S/He goes

with us to meet the world's inadequacies with compassion, to call out the bullies, but then wait for their healing, as the Church did with Paul.

For most of us, most of the time. our hum drum daily prayer will not involve staggering visions of heaven, but still it is our hidden personal habits of prayer that will anchor our identity in God and clear our vision for the world. I bet most of us say Lord's Prayer most days. It begins and ends asserting the awesome authority of heaven, so we humble ourselves. Unworthy in that realm, we name our hunger and name our sin, asking for forgiveness, and so we put ourselves in a position to receive the grace that stands us on our feet again and sends us out with fresh realism into the world of hunger, trial and conflict about which we have prayed.

Whether you are moved or frustrated by a monarch's seventieth anniversary, whether you think our elected powers need humbling, or replacing, or encouraging, we are called to emerge both humbled and emboldened by our prayer, confident that there is no power vacuum in the universe. We are to engage thoroughly with the world as it is, its powers and institutions with all their flaws. There can be little doubt that prayers, attentive compassion, scrutiny and sense of awe are needed very much. However you pray, God is not waiting for your goodness. He just needs your qualified yes.

## We affirm our faith

*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 in God the Father,  
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,  
who lives in our hearts through faith,  
and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit,  
who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

(cf Ephesians 3, from Common Worship)

## INTERCESSIONS

God our heavenly parent, cosmic authority and fierce judge, we nervously bring you the places and institutions where power is wielded badly, or power vacuum risks terrible destruction. We pray for those addressing hunger in Afghanistan; those bristling with weapons around Ukraine; those deciding when a leader has gone too far; those wondering whether to blow the whistle on normalised prejudice in police or government department.

Lord of heaven and earth,

**hear our prayer.**

God, in Christ you insisted you are also our friend, our companion, our sibling. You invited us to eat with you. You are with us. We pray for every kind of family in every kind of need, especially those bitten by price rises, hurt by redundancy or rejection and those exhausted by family strife.

You came to be with us all, of every culture and calling. Today we ask you to be with Elizabeth, the daughter remembering the death of her father seventy years ago. Be with Her Majesty Elizabeth II as she reflects on seven decades as your servant with a most unusual vocation. Be with her as she feels the prayers of countless people buoying her up, wondering what blessing should look like for each of her offspring, for Charles, for Ann, for Edward, for Andrew.

Lord of heaven and earth,

**hear our prayer.**

God who calls us each with our own vocation, be with us as we explore what it means to follow you, to speak of you, to share our hope in you. We pray for the life and witness of your church. When we mistake anxiety for faithfulness, or tiredness dampens our sense of awe, restore our confidence in the wonder of heaven, refresh our purpose and clear our vision.

Lord of heaven and earth,

**hear our prayer.**

God who heals us, draw near to all who need you now, confined by illness, hurt by disappointment, worried by diagnosis. We pray for Bill Gardner, Iain Galloway and Ruth Tetlow. Be with them, if you will, in us.

Lord of heaven and earth,  
**hear our prayer.**

God who is with us in life and death, be with all who grieve, especially the family of Margaret Gorodema whose funeral is in Zimbabwe today. Assure her family near and far of her place in heaven.

Lord of heaven and earth,  
**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:*

Deacon: Acknowledging the different gifts God has given to each of us to bring to his fellowship, we say to one another:

**The Peace of the Lord be always with you.**

#### HYMN [Lord, the light of your love](#)

1. Lord, the light of your love is shining,  
in the midst of the darkness, shining;  
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,  
set us free by the truth you now bring us.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus, shine, fill this land with the Father's glory;  
blaze, Spirit, blaze, set our hearts on fire.  
Flow, river, flow, flood the nations with grace and mercy;  
send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light.*

2. Lord, I come to your awesome presence,  
from the shadows into your radiance;  
by the blood I may enter your brightness,  
search me, try me, consume all my darkness.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

3. As we gaze on your kingly brightness,  
so our faces display your likeness,  
ever changing from glory to glory;  
mirrored here may our lives tell your story.  
Shine on me, shine on me.

*(words & music: Graham Kendrick)*

*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)*

## 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.**

Holy, holy, holy are you, Lord God of hosts, for all the earth is full of your glory. From your heavenly throne you touched the lips of your prophet Isaiah to remove his guilt, and you sent him to awaken your people. In the fullness of time you sent your Son, proclaiming through his lips your promise of life and through his death and resurrection your forgiveness of sins. At his ascension he sent forth his disciples in your name, trusting your good news to the lips of the redeemed. And so we give our thanks and praise in the great company of sinners become saints, joining together in their unending hymn.

**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.**

Plenteous God, as you transformed fishermen into followers and filled empty nets with more than their boat could hold, show us your abundance in the joy of this feast. Sanctify us by your Holy Spirit that we might be faithful followers, sent into the world in strength. By your

same Spirit, make this bread and cup be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

*A bell is rung*

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples saying: 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*

Deacon: Great is the mystery of faith:

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

God of holy presence, in your temple what is ordinary is made holy. Before your throne of grace, make your children into prophets of peace and heralds of mercy. Bless every man and woman and every boy and girl with courage to follow where you call, trusting the depth of your purpose. Meet with your grace every soul rendered an outcast by the judgements of others, and restore the fallen as your faithful followers. Renew your church to seek you in your dwelling places, among the poor and the forgotten, the sick and the imprisoned, the hungry and the homeless. Gather all your children into your holy presence as you draw angels around your throne; until we enter your eternal temple in fullness of joy and dwell with you for ever, one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.  
**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.

*We sing:* **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.*

SONG during Communion [Be still, my soul](#)

1. Be still, my soul: the Lord is at your side;  
bear patiently the cross of grief and pain;  
leave to your God to order and provide;  
in ev'ry change he faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul: your best, your heav'nly friend,  
through thorny ways, leads to a joyful end.

2. Be still, my soul: your God will undertake  
to guide the future as he has the past.  
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake,  
all now mysterious shall be clear at last.  
Be still, my soul: the tempests still obey  
his voice, who ruled them once on Galilee.

3. Be still, my soul: the hour is hastening on  
when we shall be for ever with the Lord,  
when disappointment, grief and fear are gone,  
sorrow forgotten, love's pure joy restored.  
Be still, my soul: when change and tears are past,  
all safe and blessed we shall meet at last.

*(words: Katherina von Schlegel, trans Jane L Borthwick alt; music: Jean Sibelius)*

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 peace of God which passes all understanding keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us now and always.

**Amen.**

## HYMN

1. Forth in the peace of Christ we go;  
Christ to the world with joy we bring;  
Christ in our minds, Christ on our lips,  
Christ in our hearts, the world's true king.

2. King of our hearts, Christ makes us kings;  
kingship with him his servants gain:  
with Christ, the Servant-Lord of all,  
Christ's world we serve to share Christ's reign.

3. Priests of the world, Christ sends us forth  
this world of thine to consecrate,  
our world of sin by grace to heal,  
Christ's world in Christ to re-create.

4. Prophets of Christ, we hear his Word:  
he claims our minds to search his ways;  
he claims our lips to speak his truth;  
he claims our hearts to sing his praise.

5. We are his Church, he makes us one;  
here is one hearth for all to find;  
here is one flock, one Shepherd-King;  
here is one faith, one heart, one mind.

*(words: James Quinn; music: Melody attributed to John Hatton)*

Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All: In the name of Christ, Amen.**



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