



Welcome to
All Saints
Kings Heath

Your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham

Hammering Home the Blessing

Holy Communion on the Third Sunday before Lent

Sunday 13th February 2022

We gather

*As we gather in Church, **we invite you to wear masks when entering and moving around Church.** Feel free to remove them when in your place, rather as we do when going for a different kind of feast in a café or restaurant. 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, (as David is doing today having tested positive) 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. Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
you are one with us, Mary's Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin,
pouring your love and goodness in,
Jesus, our love for you we sing, living Lord.
2. Lord Jesus Christ, now and ev'ry day
teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
this in remembrance, Lord, of you.
Into our lives your pow'r breaks through, living Lord.

3. Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us,
born as one of us, Mary's Son.
Led out to die on Calvary,
rising from death to set us free,
living Lord Jesus, help us see you are Lord.

4. Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to you,
live my life for you, Son of God.
All your commands I know are true,
your many gifts will make me new,
into my life your pow'r breaks through, living Lord.

(words & music: Patrick Appleford)

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 [Through all the changing scenes of life](#)

1. Through all the changing scenes of
life,
in trouble and in joy,
the praises of my God shall still
my heart and tongue employ.

2. O magnify the Lord with me,
with me exalt his name;
when in distress to him I called,
he to my rescue came.

3. The hosts of God encamp around
the dwellings of the just;
deliv'rance he affords to all
who on his succour trust.

4. O make but trial of his love:
experience will decide
how blest are they, and only they,
who in his truth confide.

5. Fear him, ye saints, and you will
then
have nothing else to fear;
make you his service your delight,
your wants shall be his care.

6. To Father, Son and Holy Ghost,
the God whom we adore,
be glory as it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

(Psalm 34 in 'New Version' [Tate and Brady, 1696]; music: George Thomas Smart)

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: "I the Lord test the mind and search the heart," said the prophet Jeremiah. Let us then confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God's commandment and to live in love and peace with all.

Silence

**Lord God, we have sinned against you;
we have done evil in your sight.
We are sorry and repent.
Have mercy on us according to your love.
Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.
Renew a right spirit within us
and restore us to the joy of your salvation,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

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 Third Sunday before Lent

Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity; give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found, 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 [Jeremiah 17:5-10](#)

NEW TESTAMENT READING [1 Corinthians 15:12-20](#)

HYMN

1. Blest are the pure in heart,
for they shall see our God;
the secret of the Lord is theirs,
their soul is Christ's abode.

2. The Lord who left the heav'ns
our life and peace to bring,
to dwell in lowliness with us,
our pattern and our King.

3. Still to the lowly soul
he doth himself impart,
and for his dwelling and his throne
chooseth the pure in heart.

4. Lord, we thy presence seek;
may ours this blessing be:
give us a pure and lowly heart,
a temple meet for thee.

*(words: vv1 & 3 John Keble, vv2 & 4 William John Hall's 'Psalms and Hymns' [1836] alt;
music: 'Harmonischer Liederschatz' [1738], adapt William Henry Havergal)*

GOSPEL READING [Luke 6:17-26](#)

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 Nigel Pietroni*

I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend
He referred to the dates on the tombstone
From the beginning...to the end

He noted that first came the date of birth
And spoke the following date with tears,
But he said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years

For that dash represents all the time
That they spent alive on earth.
And now only those who loved them
Know what that little line is worth

For it matters not, how much we own,
The cars...the house...the cash.
What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.

So, think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?
For you never know how much time is left
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real
And always try to understand
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger
And show appreciation more
And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect
And more often wear a smile,
Remembering this special dash
Might only last a little while

So, when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash...
Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent YOUR dash? (The Dash by Linda Ellis)

The dash by Linda Ellis is a poem I am often asked for in my work as a funeral celebrant. It is an encouragement to navigate life with a different set of values to those which are held by so many throughout the world, and indeed are so dreadfully held by the leaders of our nation. I might perhaps consider sending a copy to the current inhabitant of a certain address in the capital.

Throughout the journey of life we face many challenges, personal struggles, difficult family matters, grief and loss, Each of us could tell stories about the questions we face, the challenges we confront, and the difficulties we must overcome. Sometimes we seem to succeed and other times we don't.

Most of us have been taught to navigate the journey of life through power, strength, accomplishment, and the accumulation of things - money and material goods. Those of us privileged to work can fall into the trap of doing so to be rich so we can have what we want. We seek power so we can take what we want. We argue to be right so we can have our way. We compete to win so we'll be respected and admired. We want to be beautiful so we'll be liked and desired.

Those attitudes fill headline news sadly all too often, magazine articles, tabloid pictures, television, and our own lives. They find their origin in the idea that we are to be self-made men and women, that we are to build up ourselves and make a life. After all we must look out for number one because if we don't no one will. At least that's what many of us have

been told. For too long that has been the myth with which we have lived. Jesus' life and teaching fly in the face of that myth. Jesus offers a different way of navigating life.

We can successfully navigate our way along life's journey. But it's not through power, strength, accomplishment, or acquisition. The way forward is not the way we've always done it. It is not enough for us, as believers and followers of Jesus, to simply make over a little piece of our world or life. It is not enough to just reform a political or economic system. Navigating life is not about overcoming circumstances or other people. It is about overcoming ourselves.

- Blessed are you who are poor but woe to you who are rich for you have already received your comfort.
- Blessed are you who weep now for you will laugh, but woe to you who laugh now for you will mourn and weep.
- Blessed are those who hunger for you will be satisfied; woe to you who are well fed now for you will go hungry

The beatitudes we have in Luke appear to be even more challenging than those we hear in Matthew's Gospel, and hammer home the point. They come from Jesus teaching from the Sermon on the plain, where he amplifies the teaching already given on the sermon on the mount and taught in Matthew's Gospel - blessed are the poor in spirit, blessed are the meek, blessed are the humble. He is hammering home the message that Not just blessed are the poor in spirit, but blessed are those who in their life are willing to strive with every sinew of their being to follow God.

His followers must learn what it means to take up the cross and follow Jesus. They must delay instant gratification for the long term kingdom benefit. One theologian says of the teaching in Luke: If you set your heart and bend your whole energies to obtain the things which the world values, you will get them--but that is all you will ever get. In other words, you have had it! But if on the other hand you set your heart and bend all your energies to be utterly loyal to God and true to Christ, you will run into all kinds of trouble, you may by the world's standards look unhappy, but much of your payment is still to come; and it will be joy eternal.

As we hear Jesus' words and consider his teaching it's easy to look at ourselves and say, "That is not me, that is not the world, that is not even the church." You are right, it's not. We tend to look at what we are not. God, however, focuses on what we can become, who we are called to be.

The temptation is to think that this teaching from Jesus both in Matthew and in Luke are rules or conditions for being blessed or receiving our heavenly reward. They are not that at all. They are not about building up, accomplishing, or acquiring. They are about letting go, surrendering, living with a vulnerable and open heart. That does not mean we run away, back down, or isolate ourselves from the realities of our life and world. It means we engage them in a different way, Jesus' way. Jesus is teaching us to trust God more than the external circumstances of our lives. They invite dependence on God rather than self-reliance.

In today's world that sounds a lot like weakness and foolishness. That's what it sounds like in every age. But to those who are being saved it is the [power of God](#). God chose what is foolish to shame the wise and what is weak to shame the strong. These teachings of Jesus are nothing less than the way of the cross. The fullest expression of a "beatitudinal life" is seen in Jesus' crucifixion, and as Paul in our reading from Corinthians testifies, he has been raised from the dead.

If we live the beatitudes they will take us to the cross but also into the reality of the resurrection of Christ.

In the trauma and setbacks of life we discover that we cannot do life by ourselves. As we admit our need of God we find riches of his blessings. Our own misfortunes awaken and connect us to the pain of the world for which we cannot help but mourn. We think less about ourselves and become merciful to others. We have no where else to go and so we turn our gaze back to God. The longer we gaze at God the more we hunger and thirst for righteousness.

This July marks 21 years since I was ordained deacon and 20 years since I was ordained a priest! I'm not sure where the time has gone! I remember well my first Sunday in the Parish of Gawthorpe and Chickenley where I served in my first post.

Nervously waiting at the door and greeting people as they arrived, my gaze fell upon a little old lady on the arms of her husband. Thin, bent over and with deep wrinkles on her face she didn't look at me as her husband introduced her to me.

Margaret he told me had suffered with Alzheimers for 10 years and he had devoted himself to her care. Always a vibrant and faithful woman full of life, the cruel disease had taken everything from her. She now rarely spoke, and appeared to be lost in her own world.

Thinking nothing more about her the service began, hymns were sung and the sermon preached. As we approached the eucharist and the congregation joined in with the words of the Lords Prayer a shrill and very loud voice rose above everybody else. It was Margaret praying the Lords Prayer. It turned out that this happened every week and in those moments, in the midst of her illness that had stripped everything away, she was clearly blessed, and she was a blessing to us all. I have to confess I have long forgotten her husband's name, but hers will live long in the memory. She had taken up the cross and walked with her Lord.

I know that like us she was far from perfect. Life has many challenges and we so often fail to keep our eyes on God and to put all our faith in her, but if we set our hearts and bend all our energies to be utterly loyal to God we will run into all kinds of trouble, but we will have the comfort of knowing we are never by ourselves and we will be blessed. And so I end as I began and ask you the question: how will you live YOUR Dash?

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: I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried; he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

INTERCESSIONS *from Nicola Slee*

O God our God, to whom every life is infinitely precious,
no matter how long or short the dash:

We pray for your world in every land and nation: for places where life seems cheap and easily snuffed out; for places where war rages or is imminent; places where life is lived on the edge of poverty and people must choose between heat or food for themselves and their children; for our own city and neighbourhood and nation:

Give to us all the hunger and will to create the conditions where life can flourish in all its fullness; where basic human needs are met while caring for all creaturekind, and where the potential of each life is released so that we may see your glory in all its fullness. Restrain the hands of those who pursue violence and do not care who they trample on in their greed to amass more; help them to recognise how they damage their own humanity as well as that of others. Strengthen the hearts of all who seek to protect the weak, nurture the young and care for the elderly, that each may live life to its fullest, most vibrant extent. Teach our leaders to care less for their own status and reputation and more for the well-being of those whose lives they govern.

God the God of all life,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for your church and all faith communities, for spiritual leaders whose teaching inspires, for pastors and counsellors who care for others, for theologians and wise ones who study the mysteries of faith, and for the ones who work to keep buildings clean and open, answer emails, work out rotas and keep the accounts afloat. May we welcome all who work with us rather than against us, and teach us to co-operate gladly with allies wherever they manifest and however unlikely they may appear. Gladden our hearts in the service of others and give us rest and encouragement when we feel pushed to the limits. Encourage all people of good will as we seek to live in a post-pandemic world and find new patterns of communal as well as personal relating.

God the God of all life,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for all in pain or need, whether their distress is physical, mental, emotional or spiritual that, even in their suffering, they may give expression to the fullness of their being which you have created. Help us to hear the cries of those whose humanity is in crisis, whether in our homes, streets, workplaces or on our TV screens; not to shut our ears to the pain that can overwhelm us but to do what we can, where we can, to reach out to the one person who seeks for our love and attention now.

God the God of all life,
Hear our prayer.

We pray for those who have recently died, amongst them priest and poet David Hart, who lived in Kings Heath for many years and whose words captured the fragility and the beauty as well as the comedy of life. I would like to end these prayers with a short poem of David's which was read at his funeral yesterday; perhaps we can hear these words as the plea of one in need and distress, perhaps close to the end of their life, begging some small act of kindness from one who will visit them - in hospital, prison or care home:

Please bring some socks

Please bring some socks
and if they can be smuggled in
as well the pens

and the Hebrew Bible and the dictionary
and paper. If God in his wisdom takes me
for honour's sake
that is his will but to die here

of cold in my very bones
fills me with dread. I am
like piss in a gutter¹
draining away
unless your graciousness
and courage save me. Smuggle in

for me the socks, my friend, Sir,
and if you have a thicker shirt
than I have here and a blanket.

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: Christ is our peace. In the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body. Let us then pursue all that makes for peace and builds up our common life. We say to one another:

All: The Peace of the Lord be always with you.

HYMN

1. Beauty for brokenness, hope for despair,
Lord, in the suffering this is our prayer.
Bread for the children, justice, joy, peace,
sunrise to sunset your kingdom increase.

2. Shelter for fragile lives, cures for their ills,
work for the craftsmen, trade for their skills.
Land for the dispossessed, rights for the weak,
voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak.

*God of the poor, friend of the weak,
give us compassion, we pray,
melt our cold hearts, let tears fall like rain.
Come, change our love from a spark to a flame.*

¹ To reassure any unsettled by such a word as "piss" in our prayers, the word appears in the King James Bible, 2 Kings 18:27 and Isaiah 36:12.

3. Refuge from cruel wars, havens from fear,
cities for sanctu'ry, freedoms to share.
Peace to the killing fields, scorched earth to green,
Christ for the bitterness, his cross for the pain.

4. Rest for the ravaged earth, oceans and streams,
plundered and poisoned, our future, our dreams.
Lord, end our madness, carelessness, greed;
make us content with the things that we need.
God of the poor...

5. Lighten our darkness, breathe on this flame,
until your justice burns brightly again;
until the nations learn of your ways,
seek your salvation and bring you their praise.
God of the poor...

(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

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: 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 thanks and praise.

Blessed are you, Lord God, our light and our salvation;
to you be glory and praise for ever.

From the beginning you have created all things
and all your works echo the silent music of your praise.

In the fullness of time you made us in your image,
the crown of all creation.

You give us breath and speech that with angels and archangels
and all the powers of heaven

we may find a voice to sing your praise:

**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.**

How wonderful the works of your hands, O Lord.
As a mother tenderly gathers her children,
you embraced a people as your own.
When they turned away and rebelled
your love remained steadfast.
From them you raised up Jesus, our Saviour, born of Mary,
to be the living bread,
in whom all our hungers are satisfied.
He offered his life for sinners,
and with a love stronger than death
he opened wide his arms on the cross.

On the night before he died,
he came to supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he 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.

A bell is rung

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 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.**

Mother, we plead with confidence
his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross;
we remember his dying and rising in glory,
and we rejoice that he intercedes for us at your right hand.
Pour out your Spirit as we bring before you
these gifts of your creation;
may they be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

As we eat and drink these holy things in your presence
form us in the likeness of Christ,
and build us into a living temple to your glory.
Remember, Lord, your church in every land.
Reveal her unity, guard her faith and preserve her in peace. Bring us at
last with all the saints to the vision of that eternal splendour
for which you have created us; through Jesus Christ our Lord,
by whom and with whom and in whom, with all who stand before you in
earth and heaven, we worship you, God almighty, in songs of
everlasting praise.

**All: Blessing and honour and glory and power
be yours for ever and ever. 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.*

SONGS *during Communion* [Bread of the world in mercy broken](#)

1. Bread of the world in mercy broken,
wine of the soul in mercy shed,
by whom the words of life were spoken,
and in whose death our sins are dead.

2. Look on the heart by sorrows broken,
look on the tears by sinners shed;
and be thy feast to us the token
that by thy grace our souls are fed.

(words: Reginald Heber; music: Louis Bourgeois, from the 'Genevan Psalter' [1551])

And

1. Father, I place into your hands the things I cannot do.
Father, I place into your hands the things that I've been through.
Father, I place into your hands the way that I should go,
for I know I always can trust you.

2. Father, I place into your hands my friends and family.
Father, I place into your hands the things that trouble me.
Father, I place into your hands the person I would be,
for I know I always can trust you.

3. Father, we love to see your face, we love to hear your voice.
Father, we love to sing your praise and in your name rejoice.
Father, we love to walk with you and in your presence rest
for we know we always can trust you.

4. Father, I want to be with you and do the things you do.
Father, I want to speak the words that you are speaking too.
Father, I want to love the ones that you will draw to you,
for I know that I am one with you.

(words & music: Jenny Hewer)

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 [All my hope on God is founded](#)

1. All my hope on God is founded;
he doth still my trust renew.
Me through change and chance he guideth,
only good and only true.
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

2. Human pride and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
what with care and toil he buildeth,
tow'r and temple, fall to dust.
But God's pow'r, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tow'r.

3. God's great goodness aye endureth,
deep his wisdom, passing thought:
splendour, light and life attend him,
beauty springeth out of naught.
Evermore, from his store,
new-born worlds rise and adore.

4. Still from earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done,
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son.
Christ doth call one and all:
ye who follow shall not fall.

*(words: paraphrased by Robert Bridges alt,
based on 'Meine Hoffnung stehet feste' by Joachim Neander; music: Herbert Howells)*

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

All: In the name of Christ, Amen.



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