

Welcome to  
your Parish Church  
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS  
KINGS HEATH

# Ferocious Love

Holy Communion on the Second Sunday of Lent  
13<sup>th</sup> March 2022

We gather

***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: [Praise to you, O Christ, our Saviour](#)

*Praise to you, O Christ, our Saviour,  
Word of the Father, calling us to life;  
Son of God who leads us to freedom:  
glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!*

1. You are the Word who calls us out of darkness;  
you are the Word who leads us into light;  
you are the Word who brings us through the desert:  
glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

2. You are the one whom prophets hoped and longed for;  
you are the one who speaks to us today;  
you are the one who leads us to our future:  
glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

3. You are the Word who calls us to be servants;  
you are the Word whose only law is love;  
you are the Word-made-flesh who lives among us:  
glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

4. You are the Word who binds us and unites us;  
you are the Word who calls us to be one;  
you are the Word who teaches us forgiveness:  
glory to you, Lord Jesus Christ!

*(words & music: Bernadette Farrell)*

*When invited to stand, we keep silence and then sing: [Christ, be our light](#)*

1. Longing for light, we wait in darkness.  
Longing for truth, we turn to you.  
Make us your own, your holy people,  
light for the world to see.

*Christ, be our light!  
Shine in our hearts. Shine through the darkness.  
Christ, be our light!  
Shine in your church gathered today.*

2. Longing for peace, our world is troubled.  
Longing for hope, many despair.  
Your world alone has power to save us.  
Make us your living voice.

3. Longing for food, many are hungry.  
Longing for water, many still thirst.  
Make us your bread, broken for others,  
shared until all are fed.

4. Longing for shelter, many are homeless.  
Longing for warmth, many are cold.  
Make us your building, sheltering others,  
walls made of living stone.

5. Many the gifts, many the people,  
many the hearts that yearn to belong.  
Let us be servants to one another,  
making your kingdom come.

*(words & music: Bernadette Farrell)*

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.

*In Church we respond:*        **and also with you.**

## WELCOME, BANNS *and* NOTICES

*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

*Our confession anticipates today's Gospel reading where Jesus compares his protective love to that of a mother hen. Therefore the absolution is in feminine form.*

Deacon: Let us confess our need for God's protection, not least from ourselves.

(cf Luke 13:31ff)

### *Silence*

For resisting your protection and seeking security in unhealthy ways:  
**God, forgive us.**

For provoking needless conflict, and for avoiding the conflicts we should face:  
**God, forgive us.**

For righteous indignation concealing malicious intent; for self-justification eclipsing compassion:  
**God, forgive us.**

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

*May God enrich us with her grace, and nourish us with her blessing; may God defend us in trouble and keep us from all evil; may God accept our prayers and absolve us from our offences, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.*

### *We sing:*

**Kyrie eleison.**  
**Christe eleison.**  
**Kyrie eleison.**

(Lord, have mercy)

*We pray* THE COLLECT for the second Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, by the prayer and discipline of Lent, may we enter in to the mystery of Christ's suffering, and by following in his Way come to share in his glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

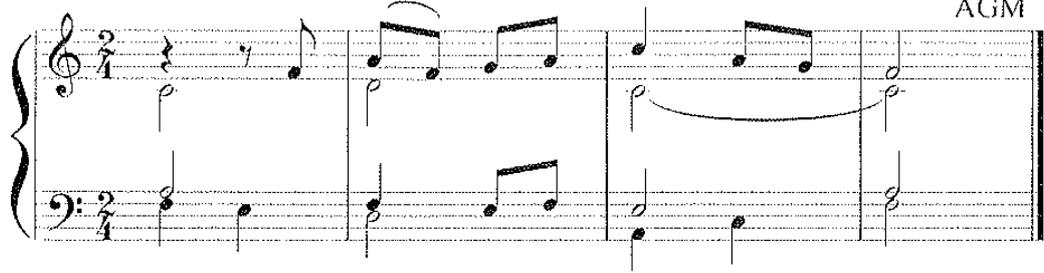
OLD TESTAMENT READING [Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18](#)

## PSALM 27

**Response:**

The Lord... is my light and my help.

AGM



Choir

Response

**Congregation**

**Response: The Lord is my light and my help.**

Choir

The Lord is my light and my help;  
whom shall I fear?  
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
before whom shall I shrink?

**Congregation**

**Response**

Choir

O Lord, hear my voice when I call;  
have mercy and answer.  
Of you my heart has spoken:  
"Seek God's face."

**Congregation**

**Response**

Choir

It is your face, O Lord, that I seek;  
hide not your face.  
Dismiss not your servant in anger;  
you have been my help.

**Congregation**

**Response**

Choir

I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness  
in the land of the living.  
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.  
Hope in the Lord!

**Congregation**

**Response**

NEW TESTAMENT READING [Philippians 3:17-4:1](#)

HYMN [Be still, for the presence of the Lord](#)

1. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.  
Come, bow before him now, with reverence and fear.  
In him no sin is found, we stand on holy ground.  
Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

2. Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;  
He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned.

How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of light!  
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

3. Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;  
he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.  
No work too hard for him, in faith receive from him;  
be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

*(words & music: David J Evans)*

## GOSPEL READING [Luke 13:31-35](#)

*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*

Hand on her swollen belly, a woman picks her way through the debris of the bombed Maternity Hospital in Mariupol. Others are stretched out; some carry their new-born child. Meanwhile, hundreds of miles east the man who ordered the bombing prays. What goes through the priest's mind as he puts the host on the President's tongue?

Paranoid about legacy, curious about religion but using it as a cover for his own grasping purposes, trying to keep a grip on power with the constant threat and regular use of violence like his father before him, Herod is cast as a fox by Jesus. It's an image that does acknowledge his dangerous ways. In Greek literature the fox was considered clever. In Jewish literature, its destructiveness was evoked. Herod was both. Yet it also belittles him. It exposes him as furtive, lonely, opportunistic, skilled but cowardly. Having acknowledged the danger, Jesus insists he will not be diverted from his calling. He has healing to do, and he is making his own way towards Jerusalem. Ironically, he is heading towards danger, but not according to Herod's agenda. It is Jesus' own will and purpose, refracting the will of his Heavenly Father that leads him steadily in that direction. So now we see Herod as reactive, not proactive; as a little figure in a much bigger scene than he knows how to manage.

In this extraordinary encounter, Jesus reacts sharply and knowingly to the political reality. He is witty, calling out Herod's duplicity, setting out his agenda and sarcastically showing how Jerusalem with all its religious glamour is the place where God is rejected, and his messengers abused. But it does not stop there, with some acid last word. The moment he has said "Jerusalem" sarcastically, he says it again twice, with growing tenderness. He declares his longing for the people who will reject him to accept his protection. The irony is intensifying. Pharisees think Jesus needs protection from Herod. Jesus says Jerusalem need protection from Herod and all the world's powers. More seriously, Jerusalem needs protection from herself. It is striking how in the face of all the Herodian male aggression, Jesus chooses to feminise the discourse, comparing himself to a mother hen. It's a

deliberate and startling change of tone. The protection he offers, while defiant, seems pathetic. Hens get eaten by foxes. On the other hand, there are few forces in evolution more ferocious than motherly protection.

Jesus' feminine voice rises as he allows us to imagine his being devoured by the powers that be. Still he prays with ferocious love for their well being; he longs for them to be healed of their self-delusion. "You will not see me until you say "blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord."

He points ahead to his entry into the city when the crowd will shout that well known phrase to welcome him. (Luke 19:38) It's the liturgical response the people would shout when the priest emerged from the Holy of Holies to pronounce forgiveness, so they do have some idea that Jesus may be the solution to all their dissonance and disappointment. But they will only trust that for a few days, then they will turn on him. But that will not be all. Jesus points further still to his resurrection, when he will emerge from the tomb, the curtain temple torn in two and no longer needed, his very body, risen, glorified, the essence of forgiveness and absolution, his risen presence embodying the reconciliation between God and all humanity. The intensity of Jesus' lament is heightened by the fact that those who reject him are the very ones claiming loyalty to God. Likewise, Paul cries tears of frustration over those who claim to be devoted to Christ but whose lives tell another story. That betrayal by the supposedly faithful is far worse than outright rejection.

Paul might be looking at Putin at prayer, boasting his loyalty to the Orthodox Church. "enemies of the cross of Christ...their end [ their purpose] is destruction, their god is the belly and their glory is in their shame; their minds are set on earthly things," he weeps. (Phil 3:19)

Claiming some kind of mystical spirituality, no doubt like Herod curious about religion, Putin's deeds show that he does not trust the crucified Christ, but puts his trust in what he counts as the glory of legacy, the glory of the world's largest army, the glory of association with the Orthodox Church that can help him keep a grip on the imagination of millions of Russians who kept praying through the Stalin years; the glory of chemical weaponry and pounding artillery; the glory of endless processions of phallic missiles through Red Square. Putin's "glory" is his very shame. Jesus might well be calling him a fox. We would be unwise to underestimate Putin's cleverness and clearly he leaves destruction in his wake. Like Herod and Pilate getting together, Putin is now calling on other bullies he knows from Syria to come and join his gang. And yet he is creating the conditions in which his own destruction becomes inevitable. He is a small player in a much bigger game. He is deadly, lonely and pathetic, not in control as much as he thinks.

Just as Jesus moved from anger to compassion, Paul does not stay with the bitterness. He moves on to assert the positive fact that our citizenship, or commonwealth, is in heaven. *Politeuma* (Gk) includes the ruling class and religious elite, the structures of an ordered society; it includes the scattered people far from home; it includes the sense of rights and duties of all citizens. It is a strong word to use to describe Christian identity because it takes energy from the political realm and gives it to the spiritual. Paul himself

has at least three layers of identity. He is a Jewish scholar; legally he is a Roman citizen; now he is a Christian. While the last does not exclude the others, it does overwhelm and absorb them. This last is, for him, the true anchor for his life. Writing from prison, kept under guard by the Roman empire that claims to be his primary identity, he knows his identity is in the character of Christ whom he imitates. The one who emptied himself was born human, died, then rose again to be exalted high above all empires, is visible in Paul's life who chooses an independent joy in Christ, which will be expressed magnificently in the defiantly thankful Chapter 4 where he proves Rome has no grip on his imagination.

Even for us at a distance, it's hard living with such frustration in this unholy war. Each contradictory announcement and each duplicitous proclamation of innocence, the fake righteousness and claims of moral superiority truly twist the gut and make hope seem naive. Way back, Abram's patience was eye watering. It took decades for God to fulfil his personal promise. It would take four hundred years after Abraham to fulfil the promise to his descendants (see vv13-16). It was not logical to believe God would give him an heir but, gazing at the uncountable stars, God encouraged Abram towards trust that the logical world is not all there is to creation. If God can create the universe from nothing, Abram can trust that God can fulfil a promise that seems beyond the bounds of the ingenious human mind. It should be noted, Abram does politics and war very ably. He has just beaten and alliance of six kings but then he sought prayer from a priest, knowing there is something bigger at play, giving thanks for victory by giving riches away. He had refused to plunder his enemies, even though entitled to. It is striking that his impressive worldly skills are not the be all and end all for him. Still he looks upward, outward, forward. He has an eagerness about him which is the essence of hope. It is, at this stage, shapeless, but it seems never to leave him. He identifies it as being something in the realm of legacy, and the lack of heir is hurtful to him because it seems to contradict the hope that wells up in him. Putin's not wrong to care about Russia's future, but he attempts to control and over define legacy, thinking it's all about him. Abram by contrast, with the smallest but most effective army in the world, has a humble longing and gives God space to define the legacy. God vindicates this feeling, and counts it as righteousness. It is the heart of what God loves about humanity. Stirred by God, Abram forms a ceremony involving animal sacrifice: something visceral and vivid is needed to dramatise and express the feeling of promise and hope. Cutting the animals in two perhaps he shows himself a picture of that feeling that we are of God, yet irreconcilably separated from God. The detail of his waving his arms around to shoo the birds of prey away is a touching cameo of his almost naive eagerness that things be right with God. In his sweaty feverish dream a great incense burner swings down from heaven between the un-joinable pieces, as if to say "I, the Lord who made the heavens and the earth, and made humankind in my image can re-join what has been catastrophically divided." The patience of Abram represents all our frustrated faith in every age. When the patience of God meets human patience, redemption can begin. It is a very long game, but it is possible.

We behold the chaos of battle, we loathe the confected hate, we hardly dare imagine Ukraine can be rebuilt or Putin's soul healed. Logic tells us it's all over. Brutality wins. The most violent male will conquer. We cannot imagine the humiliated body of Ukraine will be transformed into anything glorious again. We are tempted to despair. But Abram calls us to hope, even when we can't see the shape of what we hope for. Paul calls us to stand

firm under the influence of heaven even as the sounds of empire crash around us. Jesus call us to trust he is the kind of protection we need. Cracking the tear jerking hen-fox joke, Jesus insists we hold on to the fierce love that resists two-dimensional male aggression. Look, he says, the protective mother emerging from the rubble is stronger than frightened Putin will ever be. Name the evil, he says, expose the political reality, critique the behaviour of the powerful with acerbic wit, then press on to pray with compassion for the deluded and lost.

Living as we all do with layered identities we humbly, tearfully, ferociously pray that a terrified Ukrainian mother and a bewildered Russian conscript may discover that only Christ protects the soul from enmity, and we will know peace only when we accept our unifying citizenship and true commonwealth lies in heaven.

## 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 the one whose peaceable humility outshines angry human pride:

**Though he was divine,  
he did not cling to equality with God,  
but made himself nothing.  
Taking the form of a slave,  
he was born in human likeness.  
He humbled himself  
and was obedient to death,  
even the death of the cross.  
Therefore God has raised him on high,  
and given him the name above every other name:  
that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bow,  
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

(From Philippians chapter 2)

INTERCESSIONS *from Magdalen Gorringe*

Eternal God,  
there are times when, as Paul wrote to the Romans and David reminded us recently, the most eloquent prayers take the form of an inarticulate groan, too deep for words. Faced with wanton murder, with power set on destruction, with the callous indifference to the sanctity and uniqueness of each human life, no words are adequate. Where we do not know how to pray as we ought, may your Spirit guide us.

God in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Suffering God,

we pray for all those injured, terrorised, devastated by war and violence. We call to mind just a few of these too many places - Gaza, Yemen, Syria and now Ukraine. We pray for those tormented by pain and bewildered by loss, whose suffering we can scarcely bear to witness. We pray especially for those who even in the midst of crisis still face the added cruelty of racism. Through Jesus, You know the suffering of torture and of death. You point us to faith in the limits of such claims to power. We pray that those who need it most know You are with them, even when it seems they are most abandoned.

God in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

Loving God,

we bring before you all those responding to savagery and threat with courage, compassion and generosity. In the midst of barbarism that threatens to hide You from our sight, we thank you for those whose courage stirs our courage; whose generosity stirs our generosity; whose compassion restores our humanity. We pray for all those in Russia protesting this war, despite the real danger to themselves. We pray for those welcoming refugees. We pray for those gathering and delivering emergency support. May their strength prompt our strength so that we can work to show your Spirit in the world where it is most needed.

God in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

All powerful God who chooses to inhabit the most vulnerable – the baby and the tortured,

we pray for politicians and those in authority as they struggle to find the right way to respond to war, as well as to the climate emergency.

May they be led by courage, not fear; by generosity, not greed; by compassion, not calculation. Break through the fog where self-interest, deep seated insecurities or anxiety cloud their hearts. May they understand both their limits and their responsibilities. Crack open their hearts to your life affirming wisdom that they may work towards your ends and not be trapped in the pettiness of small-term gain. We pray also for church leaders across the world. Where the church makes an idol of itself, overturn the tables with their fripperies of self-righteousness. Let church leaders glimpse and be humbled by your radical welcoming of all that says 'yes' to life.

God in your mercy

**Hear our prayer.**

We thank you especially at this time for our community at All Saint's. May we grow in depth of care and recognition of each other, with compassion for our frailties, delight in our talents and understanding for our disagreements. God of the Trinity, Relationships - with their treasures and their tensions - are at your core. In nurturing our relationships with each other, we nurture a part of You. We pray especially for those who are unwell, including Ralph, Ruth, Brian, Iain and Bill.

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: Jesus said

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

#### HYMN

1. Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart,  
naught be all else to me save that thou art;  
thou my best thought in the day and the night,  
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.
2. Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word,  
I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord;  
thou my great Father, and I thy true heir;  
thou in me dwelling, and I in thy care.
3. Be thou my breastplate, my sword for the fight,  
be thou my armour, and be thou my might,  
thou my soul's shelter, and thou my high tow'r,  
raise thou me heav'nward, O Pow'r of my pow'r.
4. Riches I need not, nor all the world's praise,  
thou mine inheritance through all my days;  
thou, and thou only, the first in my heart,  
high King of heaven, my treasure thou art!
5. High King of heaven, when battle is done,  
grant heaven's joy to me, O bright heav'n's sun;  
Christ of my own heart, whatever befall,  
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

*(words: Irish [c8th century], trans Mary Byrne & Eleanor Hull;*

*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. (Again, we continue to dwell on Jesus' mothering metaphor)*

Priest: The Lord is here.

**All: God's Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to our Mothering God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

Blessed are you, O 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, God, 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: grant us peace.**

(Shephard)

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

SONG *during Communion*

1. What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!  
What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss  
to lay aside his crown for my soul, for my soul,  
to lay aside his crown for my soul.

2. To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing;  
to God and to the Lamb I will sing.  
To God and to the Lamb who is the great I AM,  
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing;  
while millions join the theme, I will sing.

3. And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on;  
and when from death I'm free, I'll sing on.  
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,  
and through eternity I'll sing on, I'll sing on;  
and through eternity I'll sing on.

*(words: Traditional American; music: American folk hymn)*

## 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 *In Church the priest declares God's blessing. At home we pray:*

*May Christ give us grace to grow in holiness, to deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow him: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among us and remain with us always.*  
**Amen.**

HYMN [The God of Abraham praise](#)

1. The God of Abraham praise, who reigns enthroned above,  
Ancient of everlasting Days, and God of love:  
Jehovah, great I AM, by earth and heav'n confessed;  
we bow and bless the sacred name, for ever blessed.

2. The God of Abraham praise, at whose supreme command  
from earth we rise, and seek the joys at his right hand:  
we all on earth forsake, its wisdom, fame and pow'r;  
and him our only portion make, our shield and tow'r.

3. The God of Abraham praise, whose all-sufficient grace  
shall guide us all our happy days, in all our ways:  
he is our faithful friend; he is our gracious God;  
and he will save us to the end, through Jesus' blood.

4. The whole triumphant host give thanks to God on high:  
"Hail, Father, Son and Holy Ghost!" they ever cry:  
Hail, Abraham's God and ours! We join the heav'nly throng,  
and celebrate with all our pow'rs in endless song.

*(words: Thomas Olivers, based on the Hebrew 'Yigdal' alt; music: Traditional Hebrew melody)*

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

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





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