

Welcome to
your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Holy Communion

on the Third Sunday of Lent
20th 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: [Faithful One](#)

Faithful One, so unchanging,
Ageless One, you're my rock of peace.
Lord of all I depend on you,
I call out to you again and again.
I call out to you again and again.

You are my rock in times of trouble.
You lift me up when I fall down.
All through the storm your love is the
anchor,
my hope is in you alone.

(words & music: Brian Doerksen)

When invited to stand, we keep silence and then sing:

1. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds
in a believer's ear!
It soothes our sorrows, heals our wounds,
and drives away our fear.

2. It makes the wounded spirit whole,
and calms the troubled breast;
'tis manna to the hungry soul,
and to the weary, rest.

3. Dear name! the rock on which I build,
my shield and hiding-place,
my never-failing treasury filled
with boundless stores of grace.

4. Jesus! my shepherd, brother, friend,
my prophet, priest, and king,
my Lord, my life, my way, my end,
accept the praise I bring.

We sing:

Kyrie eleison.
Christe eleison.
Kyrie eleison.

(Lord, have mercy)

We pray THE COLLECT for the Third Sunday in Lent

Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of his cross may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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 55:1-9](#)

PSALM 63

O God eternal, You are my God!

From Psalm 63

words: Christopher Idle; music: traditional, arr Norman Warren



1 O God eternal, You are my God!
For You I long in body and soul;
As in a dry and waterless land
I search, I thirst, I faint for You.

2 On holy ground Your glory I saw;
Your steadfast love is better than life;
I'll bless Your Name as long as I live
And lift my hands to You in prayer.

3 You feed my soul as if with a feast –
I sing Your praise with jubilant lips;
Upon my bed I call You to mind
And meditate on You at night.

4 For You have been the help of my life;
You take and keep me under Your wing;
I cling to You, and find Your support;
O God my joy, You are my God!

NEW TESTAMENT READING [1 Corinthians 10:1-13](#)

HYMN

1. Faithful Shepherd, feed me in the pastures green;
faithful Shepherd, lead me where thy steps are seen.
2. Hold me fast, and guide me in the narrow way;
so, with thee beside me, I shall never stray.
3. Daily bring me nearer to the heav'nly shore;
may my faith grow clearer, may I love thee more.
4. Hallow ev'ry pleasure, ev'ry gift and pain;
be thyself my treasure, though none else I gain.
5. Day by day prepare me as thou seest best,
then let angels bear me to thy promised rest.

(words: Thomas Benson Pollock; music: Friedrich Silcher)

GOSPEL READING [Luke 13:1-9](#)

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 John Parkin*

Well, here we are in Lent again, hoping that the world might someday be a better place. Given that last year we were locked down we are hoping that this year we might avoid another lockdown, or becoming part of Putin's Empire! I have to confess that I find it hard to understand Putin, is he sane and rational or not? He seems to want to turn the clock back several decades at least, and may be dreaming of a time when the USSR appeared to be a real force in the world. In these strange circumstances I find myself asking a question, do we really have a mandate to claim that western liberal democracy is the 'best system' thus justifying our imposing it on others? That leaves unanswered the question of how you understand the idea of 'best'? Churchill once said in a speech "No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed, it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time"¹ If you happen to know from where he got that quote, please tell me as I haven't been able to locate its source.

What of our readings today? We begin with the one from Isaiah, with its first two verses, which tell us:

Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you that have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price

¹ ["Parliament Bill"](#). *api.parliament.uk*. November 11, 1947.

Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

For me the real impact of the reading from Isaiah goes beyond it's positive tone and it's invitation to a 'free' meal.

I find myself asking could we, should we offer a meal to refugees? The idea of a meal has echoes in the psalm (at the start of verse 3 as we sing it ,and in verse 5 of the psalm itself) . As a believing Physicist the real message comes in the last couple of verses from Isaiah, where we are told that there are things of God which are outside of human comprehension. It says: For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

It so happened that this week I was listening to an 'In our Time' podcast ² about Moses Maimonides, probably one of the greatest medieval Jewish thinkers, who seems to have made much the same point in his writings, that there is that of God which is not comprehensible by mortals. This is a situation not unknown in Physics, for there is much of the subject where we simply have to admit ignorance, say that we don't know, and try to move forward, towards hopefully increased understanding though we may not arrive ever at any sense of finality.

And the Psalm? On the face of it it is, as its title says, a Psalm of Comfort and Assurance in God's Presence, possibly related to David's time in the desert when he was at odds with Saul. But I find myself asking is it so comforting and assuring? We get to sing 4 verses of the Hymn version of the Psalm, but there are more verses in the Psalm itself, so why the apparent shortness of what we sing?

The answers are that each verse of the hymn version is in actuality usually a couple of verses of the Psalm itself and we also lose some of the last verses of the Psalm. Why lose them? Well, some of the final verses are Not Nice. There is a strange echo of David Warbrick's sermon last week, as a possible literal translation of one of the omitted verses is "may they be the foxes portion"³ .One of those omitted verses involves leaving corpses out for the scavenging animals to eat which is almost the ultimate insult. One wonders what they would make of such an action in Ukraine these days. In the last verse a King suddenly appears when the rest of the Psalm has been written as if spoken by a single person, so why another person, a King even, should suddenly appear at the end is not really clear, something that the commentators and translators remark on. Perhaps it is not so comforting and assuring as we might have thought.

The reading from 1 Corinthians seems to consist of a series of warnings by Paul to the effect that the Corinthians are, as professed believers, subject to judgement just as we are. And we should not forget that Putin, as one who claims to believe, is subject to the same judgement as us . Paul takes it for granted that his audience is familiar with the Exodus story, though, perhaps inevitably given his context, he gives it a Christian twist, in for example his reference to Baptism. In the Gospel, we are reminded that death comes to all of us, whether or not we are righteous. The event mentioned in Verse 1 doesn't appear anywhere else , so it's a bit of a mystery to know what happened to those Galileans or even whose sacrifices are meant .

It also isn't really very clear what the parable of the Fig Tree in the Gospel is about, in contrast to it you may perhaps recall the withered Fig Tree of **Matthew 21.19**:

² About 31 minutes in to iotr20110215-1233b

³ Robert Alter *The Book of Psalms* W A Norton New York and London 2007 p 217

And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he (Jesus) went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, 'May no fruit ever come from you again!' And the fig tree withered at once.

It seems that a fig tree may grow for several years before it bears fruit, and we are not told how long the tree has been there. There is no way of knowing if the expectation is reasonable, perhaps we should not expect reasonableness in the kingdom! .One could argue that it reminds us to be merciful and patient, though possibly not too merciful and not too patient, for the gardener in the reading puts limits on how long a wait is required and implies that something has to be done before drastic, irreversible, action is taken, so just doing nothing, and expecting results is not an option.

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 Chris Pearce*

God the Shepherd, we give thanks for all who teach, lead and nurture us. Here at All Saints we pray for your continued guidance to David, Tariro, John, Margaret, Nigel and the whole ministry and pastoral team as they seek to serve us in Your name. We pray for the leaders of our Church, that they will speak Your truth fearlessly to the powerful in the interests of the powerless. We pray for leaders of our nations, that at this time of war and in the face of a climate emergency, they find the wisdom we desperately need them to display.

God, in Your mercy hear our prayer

God the Creator, there are times when we are tempted to despair at the horrors of the world. When we see the pitiless cruelty of war displayed minute by minute on our phones, when each hour brings another horror visited upon sheltering civilians, when refugee families battered and broken by their ordeal meet bureaucratic indifference and political hostility. Even as we bemoan the human action that creates such misery, we ask ourselves 'how can you let such things happen?' While heaven will always be higher than the earth, we pray with an urgency borne of near-despair that our ways may be ever closer to your ways, and that our thoughts may be every closer to your thoughts. May this be true no matter who we are – the President of Russia, a soldier on the battlefield, a Home Office civil servant or one of us gathered together here.

God, in Your mercy hear our prayer

God the Gardener, as we look around us and see too many fig trees bearing no fruit, may we also find inspiration from the abundance of fruit that others bear. May the fruit of courage we see in the resistance of a lone journalist making her dangerous protest on Russian television, inspire courage in us. May the fruit of selflessness displayed by Doctors Without Borders who remain in Mariupol throughout the seemingly endless siege, inspire selflessness in us. May the hospitality offered by our brothers and sisters here in the UK to those seeking refuge, inspire us to offer hospitality to all who need it no matter the colour of their eyes, or hair, or skin.

God, in Your mercy hear our prayer

God the Provider Of All Things, we think of those for whom a 'dry and weary land' is no simile but a daily reality. We pray simply and clearly that water, food, shelter, warmth and all the other essentials of life are available for those who need them. We think of those sheltering underground in Ukraine, those huddling in doorways in Birmingham, and those in so many other places near and far who lack what they need for life. Here in the UK, we pray for families already choosing between eating and heating and fearful for what the future holds. We pray that in this country of abundance, where poverty is unnecessary, we find the will to end it.

God, in Your mercy hear our prayer

God the Comforter, we pray that in the darkest of places and the most appalling of circumstances your love and your peace is felt. As so many are tested physically,

emotionally and spiritually we pray for Your faithfulness. At the times of greatest trial, we pray that what Paul said to the Corinthians will be true in our own time – that You will not test us and our brothers and sisters beyond our strength. That You will provide what we need to endure what we must.

God, in Your mercy hear our prayer

God the Consoler, we remember those who have recently died, secure in the knowledge that they have been taken into your eternal peace. We pray for those who mourn and grieve close to home and in all parts of the world. May those who console them know the words to say and the silence to hold, the presence to offer and the space to provide. In a moment of silence we pray for those in need known to us.

God, in Your mercy hear our prayer.

THE PEACE

We pause to remember each other: those worshipping at home, and those worshipping in Church:

Deacon: Jesus said, "My peace I give to you. My peace I leave with you. Do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." So we say to one another: (John 14:27)

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

HYMN

1. Let us, with a gladsome mind,
praise the Lord, for he is kind;

*for his mercies aye endure,
ever faithful, ever sure.*

2. Let us blaze his name abroad,
for of gods he is the God;

3. He, with all-commanding might,
filled the new-made world with light;

4. He the golden-tressèd sun
caused all day his course to run;

5. And the moon to shine at night,
'mid her starry sisters bright;

6. All things living he doth feed,
his full hand supplies their need;

7. Let us, with a gladsome mind,
praise the Lord, for he is kind;

*(words: John Milton, based on Psalm 136;
music: from 'Hymn Tunes of the United Brethren', adapt John Bernard Wilkes)*

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, translated from a prayer by St Basil the Great, patron saint of Russia. We wonder what he would pray today.

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.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise,
Lord God of truth,
for by the breath of your mouth
you have spoken your word,
and all things have come into being.

You fashioned us in your image
and placed us in the garden of your delight.
Though we chose the path of rebellion
you would not abandon your own.

Again and again you drew us into the covenant of grace.
You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets
to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace.
As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth,
we echo the song of the angels in heaven,
evermore praising you and saying:

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.

Lord God, you are the most holy one,
enthroned in splendour and light,
yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ
you reveal the power of your love
made perfect in our human weakness.

All: Amen, Lord, we believe.

Embracing our humanity,
Jesus showed us the way of salvation;
loving us to the end,
he gave himself for us;
dying for his own,
he set us free from the bonds of sin
that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

All: Amen, Lord, we believe.

On the night he gave himself up for us all
he took bread and gave you thanks;
he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

All: Amen, Lord, we believe.

In the same way, after supper
he took the cup and gave you thanks;
he gave it to them, 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.

All: Amen, Lord, we believe.

Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross,
we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb,
we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high
and we long for his coming in glory.

All: Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption,
Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation
be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ;
form us into the likeness of Christ
and make us a perfect offering in your sight.

All: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Look with favour on your people
and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts.
Bless the earth, heal the sick,
let the oppressed go free
and fill your Church with power from on high.

All: Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.

Gather your people from the ends of the earth
to feast with all your saints
at the table in your kingdom,
where the new creation is brought to perfection
in Jesus Christ our Lord;
by whom, and with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
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.

All: Oh God, you are my God. My soul thirst for you.

(Psalm 63:1)

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* [O God, you search me and you know me](#)

1. O God, you search me and you know me.
All my thoughts lie open to your gaze.
When I walk or lie down you are before me:
ever the maker and keeper of my days.

2. You know my resting and my rising.
You discern my purpose from afar,
and with love everlasting you besiege me:
in every moment of life and death, you are.

3. Before a word is on my tongue, Lord,
you have known its meaning through and through.
You are with me beyond my understanding:
God of my present, my past and future, too.

4. Although your Spirit is upon me,
still I search for shelter from your light.
There is nowhere on earth I can escape you:
even the darkness is radiant in your sight.

5. For you created me and shaped me,
gave me life within my mother's womb.
For the wonder of who I am, I praise you:
safe in your hands, all creation is made new.

(words & music: Bernadette Farrell, based on Psalm 139)

We are sent out

Priest: We give thanks saying:

**All: My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast, and my mouth praises
you with joyful lips.**

(Psalm 63:5)

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

*May the peace of God which surpasses understanding keep our hearts
and minds in the knowledge of love of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord,
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always. Amen.*

HYMN [God's Spirit is in my heart](#)

1. God's Spirit is in my heart. He has called me and set me apart.
This is what I have to do, what I have to do.

*He sent me to give the Good News to the poor,
tell pris'ners that they are pris'ners no more,
tell blind people that they can see, and set the downtrodden free,
and go tell ev'ryone the news that the kingdom of God has come,
and go tell ev'ryone the news that God's kingdom has come.*

2. Just as the Father sent me, so I'm sending you out to be
my witnesses throughout the world, the whole of the world.

3. Don't carry a load in your pack,
you don't need two shirts on your back.
A workman can earn his own keep, can earn his own keep.

4. Don't worry what you have to say, don't worry because on that day
God's Spirit will speak in your heart, will speak in your heart.

(words: Alan Dale & Hubert J Richards; music: Hubert J Richards, arr Keith Stent)

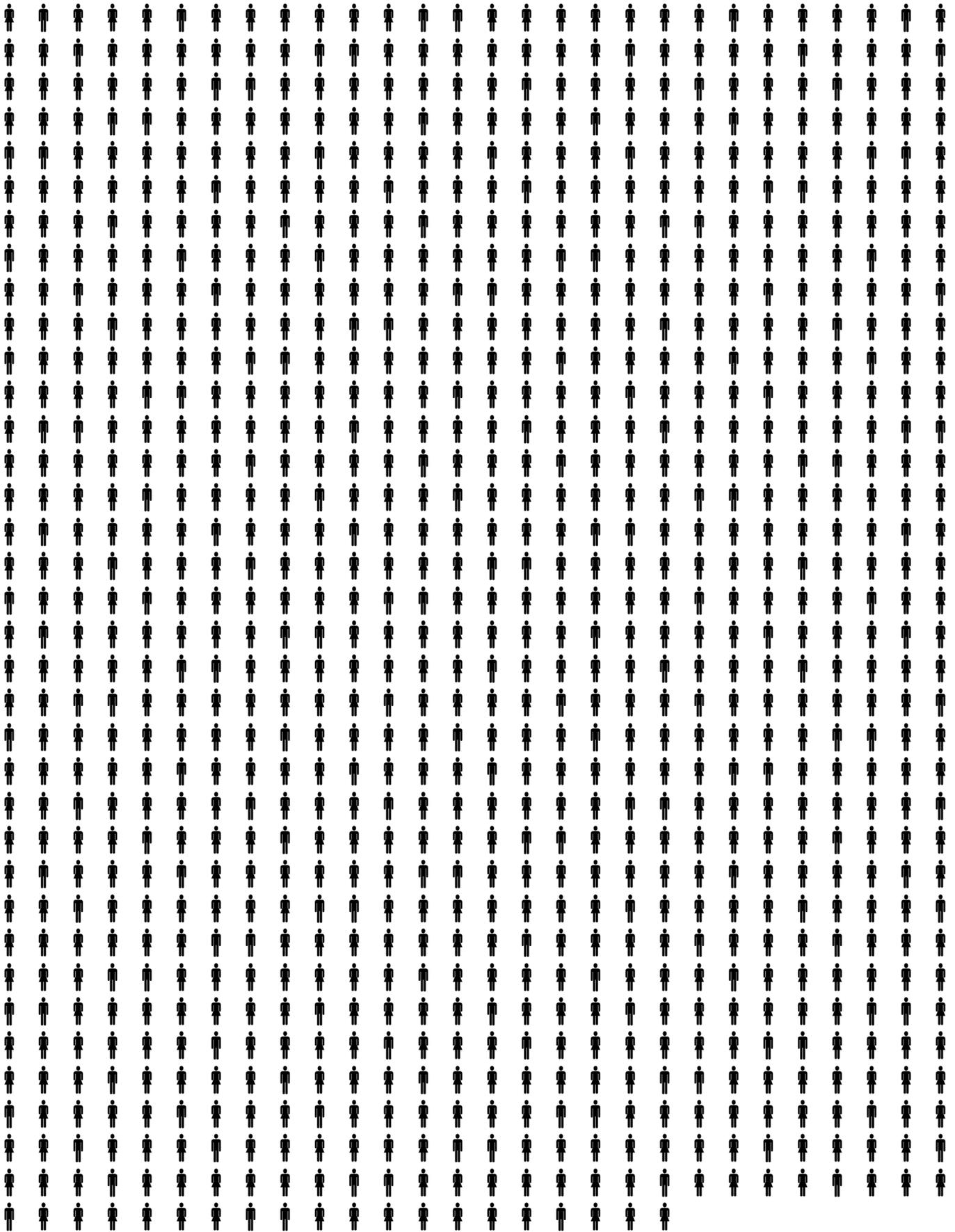
Deacon: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All: In the name of Christ, Amen.

*Do stay for birthday cake to celebrate Churchwarden Chris' 50th
Birthday (and an extra year for lockdown). If you don't feel
comfortable mingling, feel free to take some home with you.*

Each of the figures ♀ following represents 3000 people.

*They are a focus for prayer this week as together they picture
the 3 million refugees who have had to leave Ukraine.
The anonymity of the stylised human symbols is to prompt us to
deepen our prayers, upholding their individuality and their unique
story which God knows intimately.*





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printed on sustainably sourced paper.



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