

Welcome to  
your Parish Church  
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS  
KINGS HEATH

# Safe Spaces? Holy Communion

Trinity 3, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2022

We gather

*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.*

*We imagine everyone in their homes around the parish, united in preparing for prayer.*

*Music as we gather: [Like a mighty river flowing](#)*

1. Like a mighty river flowing,  
like a flow'r in beauty growing,  
far beyond all human knowing  
is the perfect peace of God.

2. Like the hills serene and even,  
like the coursing clouds of heaven,  
like the heart that's been forgiven  
is the perfect peace of God.

3. Like the summer breezes playing,  
like the tall trees softly swaying,  
like the lips of silent praying  
is the perfect peace of God.

4. Like the morning sun ascended,  
like the scents of evening blended,  
like a friendship never ended  
is the perfect peace of God.

5. Like the azure ocean swelling,  
like the jewel all-excelling,  
far beyond our human telling  
is the perfect peace of God.

*(words: Michael Perry; music: Noël Harwood Tredinnick)*

*When the song finishes we stand in silence. We sing: [Come on and celebrate](#)*

*(We sing twice)*

Come on and celebrate his gift of love,  
we will celebrate the Son of God  
who loved us and gave us life.

We'll shout your praise, O King,  
you give us joy nothing else can bring;  
we'll give to you our offering in celebration praise.

Come on and celebrate, celebrate, celebrate and sing,  
celebrate and sing to the King!  
Come on and celebrate, celebrate, celebrate and sing,  
celebrate and sing to the King!

*(words & music: Patricia Morgan & Dave Bankhead)*

Priest: Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ  
be with you all.

**All: 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

Deacon: Jesus said, "the kingdom of Heaven has come near." We confess the  
ways we have obscured heaven's beauty and made it seem a distant  
dream.

*Silence*

When we have been unwelcoming, ungracious, or judgemental,  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

When we have been arrogant, superior or dismissive,  
Christ, have mercy.  
**Christ, have mercy.**

When we have gloated, or taken pleasure in others' mistakes,  
Lord, have mercy.  
**Lord, have mercy.**

ABSOLUTION *In church forgiveness is declared for all while at home we pray:*

*May* the almighty and merciful Lord grant *us* pardon and forgiveness of all *our* sins, time for amendment of life and the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

*We stand to give thanks for forgiveness, singing* THE GLORIA

[Glory to God in the highest,](#)  
and peace to his people on earth,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father,  
we worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, Lamb of God,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

THE COLLECT for the Third Sunday after Trinity

Almighty God, you have broken the tyranny of sin and have sent the Spirit of your Son into our hearts whereby we call you Father: give us grace to dedicate our freedom to your service, that we and all creation may be brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God; 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.**

READINGS [Isaiah 66:10-14](#)

and [Galatians 6:7-16](#)

SONG [Faithful One](#) (*We sing twice*)

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)*

*We remain standing for the* GOSPEL READING [Luke 10:1-11, 16-20](#)

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Luke

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

*At the end* This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON from David

Alma Mater is the term sometimes used with varying degrees of pretentiousness, for our place of education and formation, of character. "Nourishing mother", it means. Profoundly, Alma became the word for soul in Spanish. Nourishing mother, or mother of your soul. At the climax of the fraught and often angry collection of prophetic poems which is Isaiah, we are given a magnificent image of Jerusalem, once sacked and deserted, raped by invaders, once again nursing her child and letting it play on her knees. In turn, God comforts Jerusalem as a mother her child. A safe, nurturing, nourishing household will allow a child's character to form and virtues to be established. Jerusalem is the alma mater of the people of Israel.

In class ridden England, Alma Mater might be most likely heard used of a university or a posh school, although they are no more or less formative than primary schools, nurseries and comprehensive schools in every neighbourhood. There has, though, been a terribly depressing investigation for Radio 4 of sexual abuse in some of the poshest schools in the land. What impact the culture of authoritarian entitlement, of known, un-challenged abuse, of sexualised discipline has on shaping the character and soul and virtues of their pupils is hard to measure. The name "Pincher," and the words "private members club" and "whip" are a bleakly comic combination in headlines this week as the wider cultural consequences of such public school culture are projected onto the big national screen by the Conservative cabinet. (Mr Pincher's Alma Mater us London School of Economics, is not one of their educational set, and has some political decisions to his credit, but his character which we will each appraise in our own way, has thrived in the culture they underwrite.)

A household where an authoritative woman ensures flourishing, wholesomeness, relational play, is a beautiful founding image for what Jesus calls the Kingdom of Heaven. At Tariro's ordination, the preacher pointed out that Jesus' nickname for Simon was Petra, rock, a feminine Greek word. The word for church, he reminded us, ecclesia, is also feminine. Without over emphasising the impact of this, it is resonant with the mothering image of Isaiah. Peter will give from his feminine side a strength and security to the household of faith. The church, in turn, will nurture her children, shaping their virtue and playfulness. Paul, too, takes the household image: v 10,

showing Christians who are starting to generate an exclusive class system, that we are all siblings equal siblings among the "Israel of God" that is, all who wrestle with God and whom God counts as his children. The wrestling is genuine struggle, but also related to the play fighting and tickling that children may safely indulge in on the knee of their mother or father.

In a startling turn of events in Luke's Gospel, Jesus prepares for his own visits to many ordinary communities by sending out disciples two by two to publicise his mission. They are enjoined to entrust themselves to the hospitality of strangers' households. The urgency and focus of their mission is emphasised by instructions not to take things we would regard as essential for any journey, and yet the message of their urgent mission is rather elusive. "The kingdom of Heaven has come near...it is at hand...." The kingdom is not defined and it is not grasped. It's just out of view, out of reach, yet very close.

What we are given is some qualities of the kingdom where God the nourishing mother reigns and God the Son makes her known: it is a place where peace is always offered; where on the one hand labour is dignified by proper reward, but where, on the other, food is a gift to be received with grace, not an entitlement. It's a place where the mutual vulnerabilities of host and guest allow peace to flourish. It's a place where deceit falls, like a flash of lightning. It is a realm of invitation, not coercion. The expectation of rejection is dramatically shown in Jesus' instructions about feet and dust, but the desire, the first impulse of a heart attuned to the Kingdom of Heaven is to say "Peace be upon this house." On their return we receive other clues about the kingdom. It seems to be a place of healing. It is also somewhere where there is joy, uncluttered by competition. Jesus says, "don't celebrate that you've won any arguments. Simply give thanks that your name is written in heaven." In other words, the kingdom is a place of non-anxious self-acceptance; a place of being fully known and honoured for who you are. It's a place where God's opinion of us is more reliable and important than our opinion of each other, or even ourselves.

Until we all dwell eternally in the Kingdom of Heaven, making safe places in this world for the vulnerability of play, the vulnerability of worship, the vulnerability of wrestling with God is the call of the church,. Meanwhile it is the call of some who belong to the church to go out and enter others' space with boldness, yet vulnerability, to proclaim that such a kingdom is possible, just within reach, in this world.

I fear America is a less safe place for women as the Supreme Court shows its reactionary character. Some may assert that it is a safe place for unborn children, but we know they have not banned abortion. They have banned safe abortion. We know that the assertion of sanctity of life has not led to any healthcare, childcare or contraceptive provision. We know there could never be such a law governing decisions over the bodies of men. Terrifyingly proud words about what else the reactionary old man announcing this decision wants to prohibit must fill every gay person's heart with foreboding. What virtues are nurtured, what character is formed under such a political regime? Time will tell.

As we ponder this and watch the disciples sent, not as hosts, but as guests of strangers, prompting discourse about what kind of reality we live in, the Imperial Roman reality or the greater, deeper, more enduring reality of the Kingdom of Heaven, we might wonder how we, as part of the established church, behave as guest or host. We have all this historical kit, and the obligations to every citizen in each parish, and so might look like we expect to be hosts. And yet, every time we host a wedding or funeral or baptism here for strangers, I feel profoundly that we are guests in their family; we are not there by right, but by invitation; we should speak truthfully, but carefully and respectfully as we stand on the sacred ground of their grief or their love.

Here is a very acute and fraught example of how proprietorial assumptions of the church have been radically challenged. When the right to choose abortion was recently granted in Ireland, there were shrieks outside the parliament building. I felt hugely conflicted hearing the shouts about something that cannot simply be celebrated, even if you believe it should be granted. That women ever face such a massive decision. But I stayed with those shrieks. I made myself listen to them and feel them until I could begin to understand from where they sprang. Unusually, in the public debate leading up to that historic vote, the Catholic church had been virtually silent. They were right to be so. For in the previous few years, story after story emerged about the humiliation and shaming of pregnant women, who were pregnant because of the anti-contraception teaching, supposedly arising from a doctrine about the sanctity of life. An abortion was forbidden on the grounds of sanctity of life. Where children had been born, many were taken into "care" homes where the infants died in their hundreds and their bodies discarded in most disgraceful ways. The shaming of those that did survive into childhood continued. This was not only a sin of the Catholic Church. The shame culture crossed Catholic/Protestant divides. But the proof that the teaching had absolutely nothing to do with the sanctity of life, but everything about control through shame, was in the treatment of those infants. The shaming that carried on in the Laundries long after the babies had been taken away proved that the need to shame was soon nothing to do with a woman's sin but to do with lurid pleasure in humiliating people, especially women. The complete absence from the shaming and the teaching of the men involved in the pregnancy shows the shaming of women was a particular and specific desire. Yes, the church had learned it had lost any right to host a discussion on the sanctity of life. Hence it's silence in the public discourse. Those shrieks were relief more than celebration. They had a primeval quality, to me, coming from a place held in tension for too long; the place that has absorbed the aggression and passive aggression of men and male dominated institutions for decades and more. I remember a long deep wail throughout the entire funeral of a brutally oppressive man. The wail was from his wife who had stayed the course, done her duty as she saw it, held on in faith, endured, served, kept her head up and shoulders back whatever he had demanded of her. The sounds outside the parliament, to me, had that sense of release.

I do not decry the distress anyone feels about the possibility of abortion. I share it. I don't think David Steel and any who guided the act through the British parliament expected there would have been seven million abortions in Britain by now. We need to think long and hard about that, and about the failures of community around women that that number represents. But I believe the Act was designed to create a safe enough space in which women could make the hardest decision of their lives. In half of the United States, that safe space has gone, and some states are threatening to chase women legally if they cross state borders having made the hardest decision of their lives.

Earlier in Isaiah 66 God the prophet has imagined God reassuring Israel he would not close up the womb. There will be a new birth. God as midwife says there will be a new beginning. In the passage we heard, there is the infant, playing on the mother's knee. I believe we should let that image work in our hearts as we ponder the Roe vs Wade decision. Yet we must also let the glorious imagery of God as midwife, then as mother to Jerusalem, the of Jerusalem mothering her people to work on our hearts as we wonder who gets to say how women should govern their bodies and make the hardest decisions that shape their lives.

There will be times when we are called to be hosts, vulnerably welcoming others into our space, hosting conversation, setting food generously before people, literally or metaphorically. We are to be gracious as we host people who may speak unsettling truth. There will be more and more times as Christians when we are guests, or feel more like guests, and have to work out what talk

of the Kingdom will reveal those elusive characteristics of safe, flourishing, gracious space for nurture.

The church's part in incubating and perpetuating shame has lost us the right to host any conversation about sexual politics including abortion. It doesn't mean we don't have anything to say or contribute. We should, though, leave behind the purse full of power and the glamorous clothes of superiority and travel lightly into the conversation. We should hear Jesus' command that the first words to any stranger should be words of peace, not judgement; blessing, not criticism. We should hear the number seventy and remember Luke saw the church rippling out across the known world. He experienced Acts before he wrote the Gospel. So there is a cross cultural journey happening in this early mission. Seventy (or Seventy two) is a literary device pointing outwards to the nations (seventy of which are named in Genesis 10). Eat whatever is set before you is preparing the reader for the startling events in Acts 10, which we read as a sequel to the Gospel, but the ground for which the gospel prepares. The provocative guest also has grace to receive and grow and be changed by the hospitality they receive.

This is to be our demeanour. Whether you find yourself as guest or host in conversation this coming week, the Key to being good guest or good host is grace. May the Spirit free us from the need to compete and excited us with the tantalising closeness of the Kingdom, and embolden us to speak of its nearness, and humble us to accept that God is already busy in the lives and hearts of those who host us; and may the Spirit enlighten us to accept where we have to travel light and cede authority in order to take part in the conversation at all. May God give us each safe enough space to struggle with Her till Kingdom come.

## We affirm our faith

*We stand and at home, if able, we turn to look in the direction of Church*

Deacon: We stand to affirm our faith:

**All: We believe in God the Mother,  
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, Mother, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

(adapted from Common Worship)

INTERCESSIONS from Liz Haskins

In company with all Christians world-wide, let us pray to the Father.

We rejoice that we are in company with fellow Christians across the world, with different ways and customs, and that we can use this diversity to add to our own traditions. We regularly use words and tunes from across Europe and across the Atlantic – and now we have learned to sing in Shona! Dear Lord, it was such fun and so exciting. And so we pray that the church may always be open to try out and adopt new ideas, so that worship is enriched. God of all, **hear our prayer.**

As the holiday season begins, we pray for those who will venture into foreign places, praying that they will find the experience interesting and instructive. We pray that more and more knowledge of the lives and customs of others may be gained, and lead to that greater understanding that drives out the ignorance which in turn leads to suspicion and fear and then to hostility. God of all, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who stay in Britain for their holidays. We pray that they will find in our country of lovely scenery and interesting sites, the rest and refreshment that they seek, be it in the comfort of the familiar, or the adventure of new places and people. And we pray for those we hope they will not meet, all the emergency services, but especially for those who volunteer to put themselves in danger to save others as members of the crews of lifeboats, or in mountain rescue teams. We pray that they may be kept safe, and for the welfare of those they rescue. God of all, **hear our prayer.**

As we pray for those known to us who are sick, we remember those who are unable to get around through age or infirmity, including Mary Cole in hospital this weekend, Tim Alcock and all awaiting surgery. We pray that there will be those who will be inspired to send a postcard, and to give the time to visit them with their photographs and souvenirs, so that for a short while they may have a virtual holiday. God of all, **hear our prayer.**

We remember those who have died, and gained their eternal rest, including Claude's sister Charlotte, who died suddenly of Pneumonia, and Andy Turrell, a neighbour often to be met sitting outside Asda. And we pray for those who mourn them, that as the initial pain begins to fade, they will have happy memories of times spent on ventures together. God of all, **hear our prayer.**

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

THE PEACE *We pause to remember each other: those worshipping at home, and those worshipping in Church and those we care for who are far away.*

Deacon: The apostles say: Peace be to this house.  
So, with joy we say to one each other:  
**The Peace of the Lord be always with you.**

HYMN

1. [O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;](#)  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;  
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,  
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.
2. Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness:  
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,  
comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,  
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

3. Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine: truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness, these are the off'rings to lay on his shrine.

4. These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness, he will accept for the name that is dear; mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness, trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

*(words: John Samuel Bewley Monsell; music: Melody from the 'Rheinhardt MS', Üttingen [1754])*

*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 tell the story of salvation

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.**

Mother<sup>1</sup>, you made the world and love your creation. You gave your Son Jesus Christ to be our Saviour. His dying and rising have set us free from sin and death, and so we gladly thank you, with saints and angels praising you and 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.**

We praise you, we bless you, loving Mother, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son. On the night before he died he had supper with his friends

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<sup>1</sup> Our Isaiah reading shows God as mother to Jerusalem and Jerusalem as mother to her people. We enjoy the image further by addressing God as mother in the Eucharistic Prayer

and, taking bread, he praised you. He broke the bread, gave it to them and said: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you.  
do this in remembrance of me.

*A bell is rung*

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

*A bell is rung*

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

Deacon: Great is the mystery of faith:

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

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth. Look with favour on your people, gather us in your loving arms and bring us with all the saints to feast at your table in heaven. Through Christ and with Christ and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, for ever and ever. **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 and his blood which he shed for you. Eat and drink in remembrance that he died and now lives for you, and feed on him in your heart by faith with thanksgiving.

*We sing:* **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.**  
**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.**  
**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

*We pause to remember all who pray at home, then share the bread and wine, now for us the body and blood of Christ. We form two lines to receive bread, then wine if you wish. No one should feel obliged if you do not feel ready to share the common cup. Receiving only bread you still make your Communion fully and deeply. Do what feels most comfortable to you. If anyone prefers not to receive either, you are welcome still to come forward for a prayer of blessing. Just keep your hands by your sides and we will pray for you.*

SONG *during Communion* **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, arr Richard Shephard)*

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

## THE BLESSING

*May* the God of hope fill *us* with all joy and peace in believing, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be among *us* and remain with *us* always. **Amen.**

## HYMN

### [Lord, for the years](#)

1. Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided,  
urged and inspired us, cheered us on our way,  
sought us and saved us, pardoned and provided,  
Lord of the years, we bring our thanks today.

2. Lord, for that word, the word of life which fires us,  
speaks to our hearts and sets our souls ablaze,  
teaches and trains, rebukes us and inspires us,  
Lord of the word, receive your people's praise.

3. Lord, for our land, in this our generation,  
spirits oppressed by pleasure, wealth and care;  
for young and old, for commonwealth and nation,  
Lord of our land, be pleased to hear our prayer.

4. Lord, for our world; when we disown and doubt you,  
loveless in strength, and comfortless in pain;  
hungry and helpless, lost indeed without you,  
Lord of the world, we pray that Christ may reign.

5. Lord, for ourselves; in living power remake us –  
self on the cross and Christ upon the throne,  
past put behind us, for the future take us:  
Lord of our lives, to live for Christ alone.

*(words: Timothy Dudley-Smith; music: Michael Baughen, arr David Iliff)*

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

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



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