

Welcome to
your Parish Church
in the Diocese of Birmingham



ALL SAINTS
KINGS HEATH

Curious Faith



An Ethiopian painting of the Crucifixion, mid Nineteenth Century (British Museum)

Holy Communion
Easter V, Sunday 28th April 2024

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.

Music as we gather: [Earth, earth, awake](#)

Earth, earth, awake; your praises sing: *Alleluia!*
Greet with the dawn your risen King: *Alleluia!*
Bright suns and stars, your homage pay: *Alleluia!*
Life reigns again this Easter Day: *Alleluia!*

All nature sings of hope reborn: *Alleluia!*
Christ lives to comfort those who mourn: *Alleluia!*
First fruit of all the dead who sleep: *Alleluia!*
Promise of joy for all who weep: *Alleluia!*

Winter is past, the night is gone: *Alleluia!*
Christ's light, triumphant, pales the dawn: *Alleluia!*
Creation spreads its springtime bloom: *Alleluia!*
Life bursts like flame from death's cold tomb: *Alleluia!*

Praise we the Father, Spirit, Son: *Alleluia!*
Praise we the victory God has won: *Alleluia!*
Praise we the Lamb who reigns above: *Alleluia!*
Praise we the King whose rule is love: *Alleluia!*

(words: Herman G Stuempfle, Jr; music: Sally Ann Morris)

When the song finishes we stand in silence. We sing:

HYMN [Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour](#)

1. Lord, enthroned in heav'nly splendour, first begotten from the dead, thou alone, our strong defender, liftest up thy people's head.
Alleluia, alleluia, Jesu, true and living bread.
2. Here our humblest homage pay we, here in loving rev'ence bow;
here for faith's discernment pray we, lest we fail to know thee now.
Alleluia, alleluia, thou art here, we ask not how.

3. Paschal Lamb, thine off'ring, finished once for all when thou wast slain,
in its fullness undiminished shall for evermore remain.
Alleluia, alleluia, cleansing souls from ev'ry stain.

4. Life-imparting heav'nly manna, stricken rock with streaming side,
heav'n and earth with loud hosanna worship thee, the Lamb who died.
Alleluia, alleluia, ris'n, ascended, glorified!

(words: George Hugh Bourne; music: George Clement Martin)

We acclaim:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. **Amen.**

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: Beloved, since God loves us, we also ought to love one another.
Let us confess the ways we hinder love.

Silence

God, you come to abide in us but we choose to dwell on our fears.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

God, you come to abide in our neighbour, but we refuse to recognise you, nursing enmity and superiority.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

God, you come to abide in your Church, but we hinder our witness to your love by our division.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

(cf 1 John 4:7ff)

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

*May the God of Love, bring us back to himself, forgive us our sins and assure us of his eternal love in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.***

We stand to give thanks for forgiveness, singing THE GLORIA

1. Glory be to God in heaven,
songs of praise and joy we bring;
thankful hearts and voices raising,
to creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you:
Lord we bless you:
glory be to God our King;
glory be to God our King.

2. Lamb of God who on your
shoulders
bore the load of this world's sin:
only Son of God the Father
you have brought us peace within.
Lord have mercy,
Christ have mercy,
now your glorious reign begin;
now your glorious reign begin.

3. You O Son of God are holy,
you we praise with one accord:
none in heaven or earth is like you,
only you are Christ the Lord:
with the Father
and the Spirit
ever worshipped and adored;
ever worshipped and adored.

THE COLLECT for the Fifth Sunday of Easter

Risen Christ, by your wounds declare your love for the world and the wonder of your risen life: give us compassion and courage to risk ourselves for those we serve, to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

BIBLE READINGS [Acts 8:26-end](#)

and

[1 John 4:7-end](#)

HYMN [I will enter his gates](#) (*sing twice*)

I will enter his gates with thanksgiving in my heart,
I will enter his courts with praise,
I will say this is the day that the Lord has made,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.

He has made me glad, he has made me glad,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.
He has made me glad, he has made me glad,
I will rejoice for he has made me glad.

(words & music: Leona von Brethorst)

We remain standing for the GOSPEL READING [John 15:1-8](#)

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

All: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end This is the Gospel of the Lord
All: Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON in Church is from David

For those at home:

Dr Harvey Kwiyani Chief Executive Officer, Global Connections, describes how Christianity has been an inter-cultural faith from the outset. Migration has always been a part of its character. Jesus was from “Galilee of the Gentiles”. He says the Term Christian was coined in the time of acts to pick out an emerging faith community that was fundamentally multi cultural and multi ethnic in character. We may note today’s key figure Philip follows the way of Jesus, has a Greek name and yet is steeped in the Hebrew scriptures. He speaks to an Ethiopian. How rich and exciting is this?

But the diversity does not end there. Surely one of the most fascinating characters we tantalisingly meet in the New Testament, the man is a top civil servant in an East African culture, Ethiopia. We glimpse his character: someone so powerful has travelled to Jerusalem out of Spiritual curiosity. So curious is he that he has purchased an astonishingly expensive copy of Isaiah, something very rarely in private ownership. He is a eunuch, so has been mutilated for the safety and reputation of a Queen. That made him disabled in such a way as to forbid him entry to the Jerusalem Temple. Such rejection has not dampened his curiosity. He is a man of influence and impotence; power and need. He is eager for help interpreting these scriptures where he is mesmerised by talk of humiliation and sacrifice somehow pointing to something good to come. He shows no sign of security concerns inviting the man walking alongside up into his carriage. For all his horribly grown up job – sort of chancellor of the exchequer – he is impulsive, eager, and prone to gratitude. After baptism, even when his spiritual guide is suddenly gone, with the same eagerness as the shepherds in Luke, he goes on his way “rejoicing.” Like those shepherds, he returns to his old life with new vigour and perspective. The Christian Church in Ethiopia lives today. Who knows what part he played in making that a reality?

The text firmly faces us with the Ethiopian’s exotic quality: the Gaza area then was a desert – a culturally disorientating place - bordering Egypt, a culture characterised by mysterious ancient gods, wealth, power, dictatorship, past myths of both hospitality and slavery. But the Ethiopian will pass through that unsettling land on to his own: his exquisite dark skin and elegant facial bone structure adding layer upon layer of otherness, mystery, and either richness or threat depending on the demeanour of Luke’s first readers.

So he is a gift. A gift to Ethiopia. A gift to Philip and the church of the time. A gift to us, inspiring prayer for all in leadership, especially those who make huge sacrifices in order to take responsibility, who sacrifice family life for some bigger purpose; all who turn what others see as disability into a gift that makes new things possible; all who, despite rejection and prejudice, stay eager, curious and prone to gratitude.

It's worth noting how eunuch's appear in the book of Isaiah, which he read in his carriage. The eunuch is a subject for lament in Isaiah 39:7 when, being led into exile he warns Israel their sons will be made eunuchs in Babylon. Apart from losing freedom, they will lose sexual potency, Later, Isaiah 56:4 talks of the restoration of Israel and that eunuchs who have kept the faith should not hold themselves in contempt. They will be given an honoured place in God's house and given an "everlasting name" – in other words, even their lack of offspring will be compensated for in God's memory. That Isaiah uses Eunuchs of all people to illustrate Israel's restoration is rhetorically a sign that they were the least expected beneficiaries of God's affection.

When we read Acts today, with all the church's dysfunction and angst around gender and sex, it is a wonder that we think this a modern preoccupation. Luke may not have used strings of initials like LGBTQ+, but this amazing gifted figure in Acts is such a rich and category-shattering example of a human being that he opens up all such possible spectrums of gender, culture, status, and breaks down boundaries between categories. We meet him in chapter 8, before we even have the row about whether a straight Roman Centurion presumably with balls in tact, can be accepted in the fellowship. The layers of foreignness about this Ethiopian are deliberately shown and enjoyed and worked by Luke the craftsman-writer.

So who might we pray for today having met him, and watched Philip's interaction so early in the formation of the multi-ethnic, sexually diverse, multi cultural Christian Way?

We affirm our faith

THE APOSTLES' CREED

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

Deacon: Friends, I invite you 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

As cultural and religious identities are fraught with misunderstanding, projection, confusion and dangerous clumsiness at the moment, conflicts sparking rows far away from their epicentre, we might pray for inter-cultural and interfaith relationships in our own city; for the policing of demonstrations; for a healing of political rhetoric in this regard as elections approach.

Pray for any experiencing prejudice as a minority of any kind; living with what others perceive as disability. Perhaps bring to mind anyone you admire for rising above others' assumptions and retaining their own interest, excitement and gratitude against the odds. Give thanks for them and pray for their flourishing.

We might pray too for the hearts of any who find difference a source of fear.

Please remember those who are unwell including:

Shelagh Prain and Carol Fallon, Jean Caswell, Kathy Farbrother, Richard Sharif, Wendy Turner, Howard Drury, Roger Tyrrell and Helen Fenton.

THE PEACE

Deacon: God is love and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All: And also with you.

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

HYMN [Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heaven and voices raise](#)

1. Alleluia, alleluia, hearts to heav'n and voices raise;
sing to God a hymn of gladness, sing to God a hymn of praise:
he who on the cross a victim for the world's salvation bled,
Jesus Christ, the King of Glory, now is risen from the dead.

2. Christ is risen, Christ the first-fruits of the holy harvest field,
which will all its full abundance at his second coming yield;
then the golden ears of harvest will their heads before him wave,
ripened by his glorious sunshine, from the furrows of the grave.

3. Christ is risen, we are risen; shed upon us heav'nly grace,
rain, and dew, and gleams of glory from the brightness of thy
face;

that we, with our hearts in heaven, here on earth may fruitful be,
and by angel-hands be gathered, and be ever, Lord, with thee.

4. Alleluia, alleluia, glory be to God on high;
alleluia to the Saviour, who has gained the victory;
alleluia to the Spirit, fount of love and sanctity;
alleluia, alleluia, to the Triune Majesty.

(words: Christopher Wordsworth; music: Arthur Seymour Sullivan)

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, feeling yourself to be part of the wider church family.

We tell the story of salvation

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 the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

Abiding God, you planted the vineyard of creation and called your chosen people to be your vine, rooted and grounded in you. In Jesus you gave us the true vine, turning earth into grapes and the water of life into the wine of eternal life. Through your Son you abide in us, and in the power of your Holy Spirit you shape the branches of the vine to make fruit that will last. Your Son was crucified on the vine of our sin, that the blood of his sacrifice might be the wine through which we may never be thirsty again. In this meal of creation, of resurrection and of everlasting life, you pour out the cup of your abundance to give us eternal joy in you. And so we gladly thank you, with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, singing the hymn of your unending praise.

We repeat after the cantor:

All: Holy, holy, holy Lord!

God of power and God of might.

**Heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest!
Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord most high.
Hosanna.
Hosanna.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Transforming God, your Son took the ordinary substance of human flesh and bone; and on his last night with his friends he took the ordinary materials of bread and wine. Come among us now and make the ordinariness of our lives glow with the wonder of your eternal life. Take these gifts of bread and wine and make them be for us the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Who, at supper with his disciples, took bread, gave you thanks, broke the bread, and gave it to them, saying, "Take, eat: this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me."

A bell is rung

After supper he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks, and gave it to his disciples saying, "Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

A bell is rung

Deacon: Great is the mystery of faith:

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Companionable God, you turn Word into flesh and your perfect love casts out our fear. You show us a way to love you by giving us brothers and sisters to love as we love you. Abide with all those whose lives are far from fruitful; remain with those who have experienced pruning; dwell with any who feel like branches that have been discarded. Unite your whole church, living and departed, as branches of your one vine, and through being rooted and grounded in you, make us fruitful in body, mind and spirit, until we stand before you, with your whole creation, and you are all in all, one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Deacon: As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,**

**your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

Priest: We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All: Though we are many, we are one body.
For we all share in one bread.**

Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you 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: **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, now for us the body of Christ.

SONGS during Communion [You are the Vine](#)

You are the Vine, we are the branches, keep us abiding in you.
You are the Vine, we are the branches, keep us abiding in you.

Then we'll grow in your love, then we'll go in your name,
that the world will surely know that you have power to heal and to save.

(words & music: Danny Daniels & Randy Rigby)

and

1. We sing the praise of him who died,
of him who died upon the cross;
the sinner's hope, though all deride,
will turn to gain this bitter loss.

2. Inscribed upon the cross we see
in shining letters, "God is love";
he bears our sins upon the tree;

he brings us mercy from above.

3. The cross! It takes our guilt away:
it holds the fainting spirit up;
it cheers with hope the gloomy day,
and sweetens ev'ry bitter cup.

4. It makes the coward spirit brave
to face the darkness of the night;

it takes the terror from the grave, and gilds the bed of death with light.

5. The balm of life, the cure of woe,
the measure and the pledge of love,
the sinner's refuge here below,
the angels' theme in heav'n above.

(words: Thomas Kelly alt; music: 'As Hymnodus Sacer' [1625], arr Felix Mendelssohn)

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 peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, make *us* perfect in every good work to do his will, 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 strife is o'er, the battle done](#)

1. The strife is o'er, the battle done;
now is the Victor's triumph won;
O let the song of praise be sung: Alleluia.

2. Death's mightiest pow'rs have done their worst,
and Jesus hath his foes dispersed;
let shouts of praise and joy outburst: Alleluia.

3. On the third morn he rose again
glorious in majesty to reign;
O let us swell the joyful strain: Alleluia.

4. Lord, by the stripes which wounded thee
from death's dread sting thy servants free,
that we may live, and sing to thee: Alleluia.

(words: Latin hymn [17th century], trans Francis Pott;
music: Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, adapt William Henry Monk)

We acclaim:

Alleluia! Christ is risen.
He is risen indeed. Alleluia!

Go on your way rejoicing.
In the name of Christ, Amen.

This evening, 6.30 Service: Making Room for God



This order of service is
printed on sustainably sourced paper.
Hymns and Songs printed under CCL Licence No. 116429



Common Worship: Services and Prayers for the Church of England

is copyright © the Archbishop's Council (2000)

Eucharistic Prayer from *Joining the Angels' Song*, Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher, Canterbury Press 2016

Eucharistic Prayer from *Joining the Angels' Song*, Samuel Wells and Abigail Kocher, Canterbury Press 2016

PHOTOGRAPHY

We respectfully ask that others do not take photographs at Church without permission.

All Saints Safeguarding and Child Protection Coordinator is Eira Jones. If you have any concerns or worries about children, young people or vulnerable adults and don't know what to do, don't hesitate to contact her on 07497 781681.

Giving to All Saints

If you wish to contribute financially to sustain All Saints Church and our ministry to Kings Heath you can:

- leave a gift of cash on the collection plate on your way out of church;
- use the card reader near the Church door;
- make a transfer to

HSBC - Sort Code 40-11-15

All Saints Kings Heath PCC - A/C No. 71801163.

If you would like to find out about arrangements for regular giving to All Saints, please speak to Steve Brittle about the Parish Giving Scheme.