



Heacham Parish Church



5th Sunday of Lent – 3rd April 2022

This is Heacham Parish Church on-line. You join us for our Service of Worship for the 5th Sunday of Lent. Although we join this at various times, from various places and in various ways we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

We meet in the presence of God
**who knows our needs, hears our cries,
feels our pain, and heals our wounds.**

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus,

giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.

Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:

let us sing to God with thankful hearts.

Open our lips, Lord:

and we shall praise your name.

God is spirit.

Let us worship him in spirit and truth.

The Lord is with us.

Let us praise his name together.

Hymn: Praise Him, praise Him (MP 559)

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!

Sing, O Earth, His wonderful love proclaim!

Hail Him! hail Him! Highest archangels in glory;

Strength and honour give to his holy name!

Like a shepherd, Jesus will guard His children,

in His arms He carries them all day long.

*Praise Him! praise Him! tell of His excellent greatness;
Praise Him! praise Him! ever in joyful song!*

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
for our sins He suffered, and bled, and died.
He - our Rock, our hope of eternal salvation,
hail Him! hail Him! Jesus the Crucified.
Sound His praises! Jesus who bore our sorrows,
love unbounded, wonderful, deep and strong.

Praise Him....

Praise Him! praise Him! Jesus, our blessed Redeemer!
heavenly portals loud with hosannas ring!
Jesus, Saviour, reigneth for ever and ever:
crown Him! crown Him! Prophet, and Priest, and King!
Christ is coming, over the world victorious,
power and glory unto the Lord belong.

Praise Him....

God of our days and years,
we set this time apart for you.
Form us in the likeness of Christ
so that our lives may glorify you.

Amen.

Prayers of penitence

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God,
though we have rebelled against him. Let us then renounce our
wilfulness and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in
penitence and faith.

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins.
For turning away from you,
and ignoring your will for our lives;
Father, forgive us: save us and help us.

For behaving just as we wish, without thinking of you;
Father, forgive us: save us and help us.

For failing you by what we do, and think and say;
Father, forgive us: save us and help us.

For letting ourselves be drawn away from you
by temptations in the world about us;
Father, forgive us: save us and help us.

For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son;
Father, forgive us: save us and help us.

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

Hymn: **Lead, kindly light (MP 399)**

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
lead Thou me on;
the night is dark, and I am far from home;
lead Thou me on
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
the distant scene; one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose, and see my path; but now
lead Thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
pride ruled my will: remember not past years.

So long Thy power has blest me, sure it still
will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
the night is gone;
and with the morn those angel faces smile
which I have loved long since, and lost a while

Bible reading – John 12: 1-8 read by Liz

A reflection – by Pip

Let's pray,
Father God thank you for your word. Thank you that it has
been recorded and preserved. Help us now to see a little more
of you as we look at these verses now. We ask in the precious
name of Jesus. Amen.

Have you ever been at an event, or occasion, or meeting, or
party and not realised at the time how significant it was in the
story of both your life and the life of others? Only with
hindsight did you look back and realise that the occasion,
event, meeting or whatever, marked a turning point. It
becomes the place, the moment, you go back to, that
epitomises the end of all that went before. Or it may not be an
event, it might be a moment of revelation that is the place you
visit to mark an end. These turning points enter all of our lives.
If I was to ask everyone at the end of the service I am
reasonably certain that every one of us, with a little reflection,
could recall such a time. Reflection may bring to mind how we

or someone had acted a little out of character. Maybe something was said that we thought was odd at the time, and later it made a lot of sense of what happened after. We may think to ourselves if only I had paid attention, if only I had looked a little closer, if only I had known what I know now.

For me, the reading from John, speaks of one of those times. As the event took place and unfolded the disciples had no idea what was waiting on the horizon. Possibly they were living in the moment, expecting things to carry on as they had been doing. Okay, it was an unprecedented time. Their lives were unrecognisable to the one they led before they met Jesus. It had its difficult moments, it had been challenging, it had been exciting, it had been the best of times, why would it not continue? Why not have a party to honour Jesus? Martha and Mary were, I am sure, supremely grateful for the return of their brother Lazarus. Jesus was in Bethany, let's get the party started. Martha served, no complaints this time. Lazarus reclined at the table with Jesus. There was joy and togetherness. Then, what? Wait a minute, what on earth is Mary up to? She is carrying an expensive perfume, a pint of nard, she is headed to the men folk. She must have got on her knees, how else could she have poured the perfume on to his feet. Then she wiped his feet with her hair, "And the house was filled with the fragrance of perfume".

Maybe the people gathered were a little taken a back. We have all been in social situations and have been taken off guard by the unexpected. You know the type of moment, where there is a collective intake of breath. The moment where no one is quite sure what to say or do. Inevitably someone says or does something and the tension fades. Except in this case the tension rises as Judas points out that the perfume was jolly expensive, what a complete waste, it could have been sold. It was worth a small fortune, now it was ruined. John the gospel writer adds his thoughts. He suspects that Judas's motives are

not totally pure, Judas had sticky fingers when it came to the money bag for the poor.

Jesus cuts through the tension, coming to Mary's defence saying the very prophetic words, " you will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me". John does not include the lines that Matthew and Mark do. "What she has done will also be told in memory of her".

Lots to think about in these eight verses. I did take a while before I settled on and formulated some coherent thoughts. I decided to go with the usual three themes, they are extraordinary places, extravagant people, and finally exit time.

The events took place in an ordinary home, but it became an extraordinary place. Can you recall the words from a Beatles song My life? It starts, "There are places I'll remember" and the second verse says "All these places have their moments with lovers and friends I can still recall. Some are dead and some are living, in my life I've loved them all". Martha's home became a place to pinpoint a turning point for all those gathered there that day. It is recorded, and we can share the moment. It also acts as an example for us. How do we feel about our own homes? Are they places that will be remembered as a place where there is always a welcome in the name of the Lord? Have we made space in our place to allow the extraordinary to happen? Or do we go home, batten down the hatches and no one gets passed the doors without an invitation? Will people remember our homes for the Christ like love offered? Will people miss them when they are gone because they provided a special shelter in a time of crisis? We can all offer our ordinary homes and places to the Lord because he can make them extraordinary. If we have never tried it then we are missing blessings.

Let's move to extravagant people. Mary was extravagant with what she had. She didn't cling on to the precious perfume, hiding it away. When the prompting moment came, she delivered a gift in the most tender and loving way. We are not told what prompted Mary, we are only told of the action. Did she know the whole episode of Jesus's earthly ministry was drawing to a close? Did she have a sort of knowing that it was now or not at all that she could display her love? We will never know, but we have the privilege of knowing about that special act. We have the advantage of knowing that following Jesus means we too are prompted to acts of extravagance. We are not able to do what Mary did, but we can replicate it in a way. Matthew 25:40 "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me". By being extravagant to others in his name we are serving the Lord. When was the last time we were extravagant to others? Extravagant with our time, our talents, our homes, our invites, our efforts? If we have to think too hard about it, then it's way too long ago. As followers of Jesus, we are called to, as Paul says, "spread everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him". So as this year unfolds we remind ourselves to be extravagant in acts of love to others. Also, to be extravagant in love, praise and worship to our saviour Jesus who called us from darkness into his glorious light.

This call was and is only possible because Jesus did not shrink back from the exit time. At the party given in his honour he knew the cross lay ahead. He alone carried that terrible knowledge, yet he partied with those he had called to share his earthly ministry with. No one wants to leave when the party is just getting started. Jesus did, from the start he knew that he would. At the beginning of this gospel it says, "For God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him."

That saving meant the cross, it meant an excruciating exit, followed by the glorious resurrection. At that party which marked the turning point. That dinner that heralded the end of all that was before helps us now as we are moving towards Good Friday. It can help us to focus on what Jesus did for you and for me and for the world. Let's close by reminding ourselves of the enormity of it all by listening to words from Isaiah.

"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed."

Let's pray,

Thank you Lord Jesus for all you have done for us, for all you continue to do for us, and for all that you will do for us. Amen.

Hymn: Here is love vast as the ocean (MP 987)

Here is love vast as the ocean,
loving kindness as the flood,
when the Prince of life, our ransom,
shed for us His precious blood.
Who His love will not remember;
who can cease to sing His praise?
He can never be forgotten
throughout heaven's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion
fountains opened deep and wide;
through the floodgates of God's mercy
flowed a vast and gracious tide.
Grace and love, like mighty rivers
poured incessant from above;
and heaven's peace and perfect justice
kissed a guilt world in love.

Affirmation of faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of Intercession - Led by Kika

Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the
midst of them.

We thank you, heavenly Father, for your presence with us.

We pray Your blessing on our Queen and that the preparations
for the Royal Platinum Jubilee Celebrations, signifying 70 years
of the Queen's faithful rule, will go ahead as planned and that
the events will bring great joy to her Majesty and to the people
of the United Kingdom and Commonwealth. Amen

We pray for our Church Leaders that they may be guided by Your Spirit and not by tradition or by worldly trends. Amen

Heavenly Father we pray for all members of the House of Commons and the House of Lords that they may remember that all of us will have to face the Heavenly Judge, some with and some without the only available Advocate, Jesus Christ, who does not want anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. Amen

We commit to you. Heavenly Father our World, created and sustained by your Word of power, it is hurting and becoming increasingly secular and lawless, war torn, and assailed by earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, pandemics, just as You prophesied through your prophets. We eagerly look forward to the time when the Lord Jesus will come and take His Bride, the Church, out of this world to be with Him forever. Until then, please bless the healing work of Your people all over the world engaged in spreading the Lord Jesus' Good News of repentance, forgiveness, and everlasting life, available for everyone who believes. Amen

We pray for safety, energy, and wisdom for all who are engaged in bible translation, literacy work, and distributions of Christian books and publications and those who are able to send and receive Christian literature over the internet. We also pray Your blessings on all Christian Organisations who use radio waves to broadcast the Good News to places which are difficult to reach in any other way. Amen

Heavenly Father, we pray for all in our Parish who have been bereaved and others who are unwell or are in great distress, that You will provide all they need and give them healing and the peace which passes all understanding. Amen

And with all who have faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord we pray the ancient invitation,

“If my people called by my name hear my voice, humble themselves and pray and seek my face and cease from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and forgive their sin and heal the land.” 2Chronicles 7:14

Gathering our prayers and praises into one, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen**

The Collect

Gracious Father,
you gave up your Son
out of love for the world:
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,
that we may know eternal peace
through the shedding of our Saviour's blood,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

Hymn: Saviour, again to Thy dear name (MP 584)

Saviour, again to Thy dear name we raise
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;
we stand to bless Thee ere our worship cease,
then, lowly kneeling, wait Thy word of peace.

Grant us Thy peace upon our homeward way;
with Thee began, with Thee shall end the day;
guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
that in this house have called upon Thy name.

Grant us Thy peace, Lord, through the coming night;
turn Thou for us its darkness into light;
from harm and danger keep Thy children free,
for dark and light are both alike to Thee.

Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,
our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,
call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

Christ has brought us out of darkness
to dwell in his marvellous light.

See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called the children of God.

You are my sons and daughters, this day I have begotten you.
See what love the Father has given us.

As many as received him,
to them he gave power to become the children of God.

See what love the Father has given us.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

**See what love the Father has given us,
that we should be called the children of God.**

Closing Prayers

Jesus, lord of time,
hold us in your eternity.

Jesus, image of God,
travel with us the life of faith.
Jesus, friend of sinners,
heal the brokenness of our world.
Jesus, lord of tomorrow,
draw us into your future. Amen.

Go forth into the world in peace; be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good; render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
be among us and remain with us always.
Amen.

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