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## Service for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Trinity, 8<sup>th</sup> November 2020 (Remembrance Sunday)

*A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 90)

Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations; before the mountains were brought forth or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, you are God.

A thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past. Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.

HYMN: Our God, our help

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Our God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come,  
our shelter from the stormy blast,  
and our eternal home:

4 A thousand ages in your sight  
are like an evening gone;  
short as the watch that ends the night  
before the rising sun.

2 Under the shadow of your throne  
your saints have dwelt secure;  
sufficient is your arm alone,  
and our defence is sure.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
bears all our years away;  
they fly forgotten, as a dream  
dies at the op'ning day.

3 Before the hills in order stood,  
or earth received her frame,  
from everlasting you are God,  
to endless years the same.

6 Our God, our help in ages past,  
our hope for years to come:  
O be our guard while troubles last,  
and our eternal home.

*Isaac Watts*

### PRAYERS of Thanksgiving & Confession

*Let us pray.*

Lord, awaken us to your glory.

Open our eyes to your presence; open our ears to your call; open our hearts to your love, that we may give ourselves to you and work to your praise and glory.

We thank you for all that you are and for all that you have done for us.

Lord God, you are from everlasting to everlasting; to you we bring the wants that none but you can satisfy, and the unquiet hearts that you alone can still.

We dwell in the changing light and darkness of this world, but you dwell ever in the light.

Have mercy upon us when we are blind to your glory and forgetful of your truth, when we refuse to be guided by your spirit and trust in ourselves alone.

From the darkness of our ways, lead us to your light. Grant us the knowledge of your forgiveness, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

#### THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

SCRIPTURE READING: Revelation 21: 1-5<sup>a</sup> & 22: 1-5

**21** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth disappeared, and the sea vanished. <sup>2</sup> And I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared and ready, like a bride dressed to meet her husband. <sup>3</sup> I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: "Now God's home is with people! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. The old things have disappeared."

<sup>5</sup> Then the one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!"

**22** The angel also showed me the river of the water of life, sparkling like crystal, and coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb <sup>2</sup> and flowing down the middle of the city's street. On each side of the river was the tree of life, which bears fruit twelve times a year, once each month; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations. <sup>3</sup> Nothing that is under God's curse will be found in the city. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will worship him. <sup>4</sup> They will see his face, and his name will be written on their foreheads.

<sup>5</sup> There shall be no more night, and they will not need lamps or sunlight, because the Lord God will be their light, and they will rule as kings forever and ever.

*Thanks be to God.*

VOCAL SOLO: *Pie Jesu* from Requiem by Gabriel Fauré,  
sung by Victoria Hardy, a recording of a performance given at this church in April 1998.

**If you would like to listen to this, click the icon on the webpage.**

*Pie Jesu Domine, dona eis requiem.*

*Pie Jesu, Domine, dona eis sempiternam*

*requiem.*

Blessed Jesu, Lord, grant them rest.

Blessed Jesu, Lord, grant them everlasting rest.

ADDRESS: *Mrs Nancy McOnie*

Some words that have been in my mind quite often over the past months come from a play by T S Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*. The phrase I remember is “living and partly living”, words often spoken by the women in the play. The women of Canterbury are rather apathetic: they do not want anything to happen to upset their way of life. For years, they have succeeded in avoiding notice, not being involved with the tragedies going on around them. They have been “living and partly living”. The cruel death of their archbishop, Thomas à Becket, forces them to face reality.

That phrase, “living and partly living”, could well describe the situation we face today as we cope with these months of pandemic. Life is certainly not normal, with so many changes to family meetings and coming together for worship. So it is reassuring that today’s reading from the Revelation of John brings us a word of hope and encouragement. This book was written at a time when Christians were suffering persecution. John himself was in exile on the island of Patmos. His vision is of the New Jerusalem, the city in which God and the Lamb have their rightful place on the throne. It speaks of life-giving water, healing leaves and everlasting light. So I have been thinking of three ways in which this vision can strengthen us on our Christian journey.

- Purpose and Life

Firstly, it describes the life and purpose that flows from the throne – the river of the Water of Life. We all know we cannot live without water: it is essential for our daily life. The river in the New Jerusalem came from the throne of God and flowed down the city’s street. It is a picture of the life-giving Spirit of God, which is needed in our world today.

You will remember Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well. He offered her the Water of Life so that her life would have new meaning and purpose. Within days, she was sharing her faith with all her friends. We are reminded that the Water of Life is still available to us today to refresh us on the journey. Although it may seem that we are only “partly living” under present restrictions, we can still find our purpose in caring for one another and working with God to build up His kingdom.

Even though they were suffering persecution, the early Christians were still truly alive in their faith, because they knew that God was with them. We have this assurance now, in the next part of John’s book...

- “God Himself will be with them and He will be their God”

We are promised that God is with us now. The dwelling place of God is within human beings. He is not remote and far off, unaware of the needs of His children. God came to live amongst us in Jesus and shares our lives now through the power of His Holy Spirit. He promises to make all things new in our lives and our world.

It is not that perfect relationship, which we shall one day share with Him, but it is an assurance of a presence and power greater than our human ability. I am reminded of some words from one of Robert Browning’s poems:

“On the earth the broken arcs,  
In the heaven the perfect round.”

He was referring to the aim of the artist to be able to draw a perfect circle without taking the pen off the paper. We cannot achieve perfection in this world, but we do believe that God is with us and that He can use us to fulfil His purpose here and now.

This brings us to the final idea expressed in John's vision...

- Healing and Peace

"On each side of the river was the tree of life, which bears fruit twelve times a year, once each month; and its leaves are for the healing of the nations."

The healing of the nations and the peace of the world may seem a distant dream at present. What would the healing of the nations bring? Reconciliation, forgiveness, peace and joy – and that perfect life which casts out fear.

It seems a long way off and many people are still only "partly living" in a world that is so fragmented. Yet we are called to work together to bring God's healing and peace to the world. We remember that peace was Christ's parting gift to His disciples – and to all who would become His followers. It is not peace the world knows at present, but it is the peace that God wants for His children. It is His gift to use today, as we remember those who have suffered – and who still suffer – through war and its effects on their lives.

God's gift of peace to us today does not single us out as special people. We are not protected from the suffering or struggles of this world. We are not loved more than any of God's children. But we know this peace to be ours because we know Him and love and trust Him.

As J Neville Ward wrote in one of his books, "the peace that passes understanding is the deep undertone of meaning and trust by which we know everything happens within the love of God". The world is in His hands and God is always with us. Perhaps this describes the difference between living and "partly living"? We have discovered the abundant life that Jesus promised us. The God who has been our help in ages past will still be our hope in years to come, and for this we say "thanks be to God".

Amen.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Let us pray*

We turn to you, Loving God, with those concerns which are especially on our hearts today. We pray for our world, still torn apart by war and violence. We pray for all whose lives are broken and damaged through the effects of war. We pray for all who remember and mourn the loss of a loved one.

We pray for the many refugees, the hungry and the homeless; for grieving and lonely people. Gracious God, guide all who deal with world crises, including the present pandemic; protect the peace-makers and those who maintain the law. May all who work for justice and freedom know your care. Give wisdom to those who work for the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, and the many aid agencies. Lead all your people in the ways of peace.

Gracious God, we pray for your church in all parts of the world, that through its work and witness many be brought to know and love you. We think especially of all Christians who no longer have the freedom to worship, those who suffer persecution and all who are discouraged.

We pray for our own church here at Broadway and for the other churches in our pastorate at Blakenall and Hatherton during this time of interregnum. We remember all who have the responsibility of leadership and we continue to pray for God's guidance and care in the coming days.

Loving God, we bring to you now all who are in special need of our prayers at this time. For all who suffer through illness or injury and for those in hospital, or awaiting appointments for treatment.

We pray for our own families and for all whom we love. We pray for members and friends of this congregation and commend one another to God's love and care through the coming days.

Finally, we pray for the coming of your kingdom, and for all whom we have loved who have now entered into the fullness of your glory. May we be found worthy to share with them the joys of your eternal kingdom. We offer these prayers, together with the unspoken prayers of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**Amen.**

HYMN: God is love

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 God is Love: let heav'n adore him;  
God is Love: let earth rejoice;  
let creation sing before him,  
and exalt him with one voice.  
He who laid the earth's foundation,  
he who spread the heav'ns above,  
he who breathes through all creation,  
he is Love, eternal Love.

2 God is Love, and is enfolding  
all the world in one embrace;  
his unfailing grasp is holding  
every child of every race.  
And when human hearts are breaking  
under sorrow's iron rod,  
that same sorrow, that same aching  
wrings with pain the heart of God.

3 God is Love: and though with blindness  
sin afflicts and clouds the will,  
God's eternal loving-kindness  
holds us fast and guides us still.  
Sin and death and hell shall never  
o'er us final triumph gain;  
God is Love, so Love for ever  
o'er the universe must reign.

*Timothy Rees*

## ACT OF REMEMBRANCE

Let us remember before God, and commend to His sure keeping, those who have given their lives in the two World Wars and all the conflicts since those times.

We remember all those who have died for their country in times of war: some we may have known and whose memory we treasure, and all who lived and died in the service of others.

“At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them.”

*Let us keep silence .....*



*Let us pray*

Almighty God, before whom stand the spirits of the living and the dead, we pray for all who have laboured and suffered for freedom, just laws and the sanctity of the home; for all who have given their lives for their country; for all who have sought to bless people by their service and their life, and to lighten the dark places of the earth.

For all these we praise you, O God, and bless your holy name.

As we remember, so may we also follow your ways and strive for peace and justice in our world through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

## BLESSING

Now, 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 faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honour all people. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest upon us and on all whom we love, this day and always.

**Amen.**

## ORGAN VOLUNTARY

‘Nimrod’ from *Enigma Variations* by Edward Elgar,

played by Alan Taylor, a recording of the church organ made in September 2014.

*If you would like to **listen** to this, click the icon on the webpage.*