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## Service for the 24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 (Christ the King)

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

### CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 95)

Come, let us praise the Lord! Let us sing for joy to God, who protects us!  
Let us come before him with thanksgiving and sing joyful songs of praise.  
For the Lord is a mighty God, a mighty king over all the gods.  
He rules over the whole earth, from the deepest caves to the highest hills.  
He rules over the sea, which he made; the land also, which he himself formed.  
Come, let us bow down and worship him; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!  
He is our God; we are the people he cares for, the flock for which he provides.

### HYMN: Praise, my soul, the King of heaven

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

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
to his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
who like me his praise should sing?  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

2 Praise him for his grace and favour  
to his people in distress.  
Praise him, still the same as ever,  
slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise him, praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness!

3 Father-like he tends and spares us;  
well our feeble frame he knows.  
In his hand he gently bears us,  
rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise him, praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows!

4 Frail as summer's flower we flourish,  
blows the wind and it is gone,  
but while mortals rise and perish  
God endures unchanging on.  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise the high eternal One!

5 Angels, help us to adore him;  
ye behold him face to face.  
Sun and moon, bow down before him,  
dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise him, praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

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## PRAYERS

*Let us pray*

We thank and praise you for your goodness to us,  
stronger than any human father,  
gentler than any human mother;  
you hold us in the palm of your hand.

We bring our worship to our Rock, our Creator,  
you who teach us how to be a people of resurrection,  
how to find light from darkness,  
how to find courage and strength in a constantly changing world.  
In all things, we can find new life.

Almighty God, we pray that you will give us new life, where we are worn and tired;  
new love, where we have turned hard-hearted and lack compassion;  
forgiveness, where we have caused pain and hurt  
and the joy and freedom of the Holy Spirit, where we are prisoners of ourselves.

**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: Ephesians 1: 15-23

<sup>15</sup> For this reason, ever since I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all of God's people, <sup>16</sup> I have not stopped giving thanks to God for you. I remember you in my prayers <sup>17</sup> and ask the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, to give you the Spirit, who will make you wise and reveal God to you, so that you will know him. <sup>18</sup> I ask that your minds may be opened to see his light, so that you will know what is the hope to which he has called you, how rich are the wonderful blessings he promises his people, <sup>19</sup> and how very great is his power at work in us who believe. This power working in us is the same as the mighty strength <sup>20</sup> which he used when he raised Christ from death and seated him at his right side in the heavenly world. <sup>21</sup> Christ rules there above all heavenly rulers, authorities, powers, and lords; he has a title superior to all titles of authority in this world and in the next. <sup>22</sup> God put all things under Christ's feet and gave him to the church as supreme Lord over all things. <sup>23</sup> The church is Christ's body, the completion of him who himself completes all things everywhere.

*Thanks be to God.*

ANTHEM: *Rejoice in the Lord alway* – Anon (16<sup>th</sup> cent)  
sung by the church choir, an archive recording from 2002.  
*If you would like to listen to this, click the icon on the webpage.*

Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice!  
Let your moderation be known unto all men: the Lord is near at hand.  
Be careful for nothing, but in all prayer and supplication  
let your petitions be manifest unto God with giving of thanks.  
And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding,  
keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesu.

ADDRESS: *Mr Andy Levesley*

### **Teamwork**

Just before I retired into lockdown, we had started to work from home. Working in IT for the most part, this was fine; but when you require collaboration with other people, it becomes more complicated. You can't turn to your colleague and say "Could you just give me a hand with this?" You need to check if they are available online and then set up a *Zoom* or *Skype* meeting, or something similar. Even just wanting a quick chat, what the Americans call a 'water-cooler moment', has become much more problematic when people are remote from each other.

Although the church has been mainly closed since the first lockdown, only opening briefly during September and October, the eldership of the church has continued to meet regularly online – and this has brought its own challenges. Meeting face-to-face is one thing, but meeting online is a completely different matter. As with many things in life, some people are completely at home with the technology, while others struggle. While we often take communicating for granted when face-to-face, we miss the subtle nuances of body language when meeting online.

But the important thing is that we have met as a team, despite these challenges, so that we can support our fellowship during these difficult times. We continue to provide worship, albeit in a different form, and to maintain the church buildings; so when times get better, we shall be ready to meet again face-to-face.

I started to think about what teamwork means, as a Christian, and how we can apply scripture to help us negotiate these difficult times. I found a number of passages from the Bible that give useful insights into teamwork....

*Above everything, love one another earnestly, because love covers over many sins. Open your homes to each other without complaining. Each one, as a good manager of God's different gifts, must use for the good of others the special gift he has received from God. [1 Peter 4: 8-10]*

This verse focuses on the need for us to use our talents to serve others, and to adapt our skills to fit the gaps that the church needs filled. Being kind and serving gladly, instead of complaining, are tremendously important skills for our fellowship.

*Let us be concerned for one another, to help one another to show love and to do good. Let us not give up the habit of meeting together, as some are doing. Instead, let us encourage one another all the more, since you see that the Day of the Lord is coming nearer. [Hebrews 10: 24-25]*

Everyone in the church needs encouragement and wants to feel a part of something greater than themselves. Meeting together builds the relationships and trust that create a more positive, caring, and cohesive fellowship. Whilst difficult at the moment to meet face to face, we can still pick up the phone and call someone we have been thinking about in our prayers.

*If the whole body were just an eye, how could it hear? And if it were only an ear, how could it smell? As it is, however, God put every different part in the body just as he wanted it to be. There would not be a body if it were all only one part! As it is, there are many parts but one body.*

[1 Corinthians 12: 17-20]

The best teams do not have people with similar skills – they combine the diverse talents and backgrounds from a pool of diverse individuals and appreciate the gifts that each one brings to contribute. Great teams have people that know their role and appreciate others as well.

*People learn from one another, just as iron sharpens iron. [Proverbs 27:17]*

The power of teamwork is best summarized in one word: influence. As team-mates, our expectations and attitudes and behaviours impact those around us on a day-to-day basis. We all are sharpened and improved by the interactions and examples of our peers.

*Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively. If one of them falls down, the other can help him up. But if someone is alone and falls, it's just too bad, because there is no one to help him. [Ecclesiastes 4:9-10]*

Nobody climbs Mount Everest alone. To accomplish great things, we all need team-mates and a supporting cast to pick us up – and we need to look for opportunities to also pick up others when they stumble.

In conclusion, while we are going through difficult times and missing the physical interaction of regular services, Bible study, Pins & Needles, Pop-in, badminton – the list seems endless – there are still many things we can do as a team to support and nurture each other until times get better for us all.

## PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Let us pray*

God, Maker and Lover of all, we know that your way is not always easy; that peace is not given lightly, that sometimes justice comes only through struggle.

We pray for our world family, while we ourselves battle with the Coronavirus pandemic. We pray for the places in the world where Coronavirus is leading to conflict, hunger and poverty.

We pray that the vaccines being developed will be available soon and will be available to all based on need rather than financial consideration.

We look at all the conflicts in the world based on mutual distrust and ask that people see the similarities rather than the differences; that all people can learn to respect other cultures, religions and political persuasions.

We remember especially the peoples of countries beset by civil war, where conflicts seem so long-standing and complex that we cannot imagine resolution.

We pray for wisdom and reconciliation.

We pray for our own local communities, help us to care for each other, to embrace each other's individuality, and help us to avoid taking each other for granted.

We pray for our own church, for all of us going through these difficult times.

We pray that we can sustain ourselves until such time as we shall be able to meet in fellowship again, and also meet in fellowship with the other churches of our pastorate and with St Martin's.

Lord, in your name we pray.

**Amen.**

HYMN: God is love, his the care

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

1 God is love: his the care,  
tending each, ev'rywhere,  
God is love, all is there!  
Jesus came to show him,  
that we all might know him!

*Sing aloud, loud, loud!  
sing aloud, loud, loud!  
God is good! God is truth!  
God is beauty! Praise him!*

2 Jesus came, lived and died,  
for our sake, crucified,  
rose again, glorified:  
he was born to save us  
by the truth he gave us:  
[Refrain]

3 None can see God above;  
Jesus shows how to love;  
thus may we Godward move,  
joined as sisters, brothers,  
finding him in others.

[Refrain]

4 To our Lord praise we sing,  
light and life, friend and King,  
coming down, love to bring,  
pattern for our duty,  
showing God in beauty.

*Sing aloud, loud, loud!  
sing aloud, loud, loud!  
God is good! God is truth!  
God is beauty! Praise him!*

Percy Dearmer (*altd*)

THE GRACE

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore.

**Amen.**