

Sunday 25 October 2020

- All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.
- The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration have been included at the end rather than in situ because many following the service will be in isolation and unable to celebrate the sacrament.
- The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

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 Bible readings © The publishers of the NRSV translation.
 Sermon © Revd Dr Paul Monk.
 Prayers of intercession © Jen Ryder.

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 One Church, one faith, one Lord (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All 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.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

God so loved the world that he gave his only Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins, to be our advocate in heaven, and to bring us to eternal life. Therefore, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This version of the Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our 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.**

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n 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 Bible Sunday

Blessed Lord,
who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:
help us so to hear them,
to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them
that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,
we may embrace and for ever hold fast
the hope of everlasting life,
which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Book of Nehemiah

All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. The scribe Ezra stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the

purpose. And they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people, all said to all the people, 'This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep.' For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Then he said to them, 'Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.' So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, 'Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved.' And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them. *Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 8-12*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Colossians

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. *Colossians 3:12-17*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Your word is a lamp unto my feet ([click on this link to hear the hymn](#))

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, '[At the end of the world] the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see "the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven" with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.'

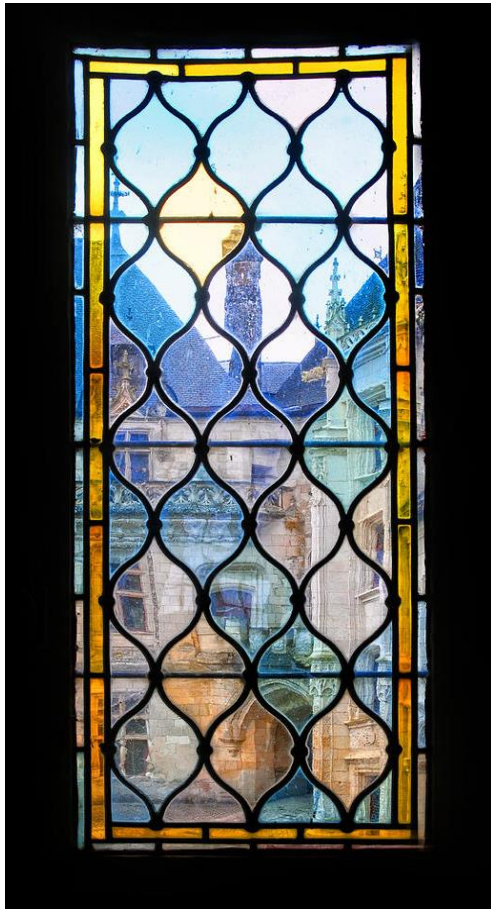
Matthew 24:30-35

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

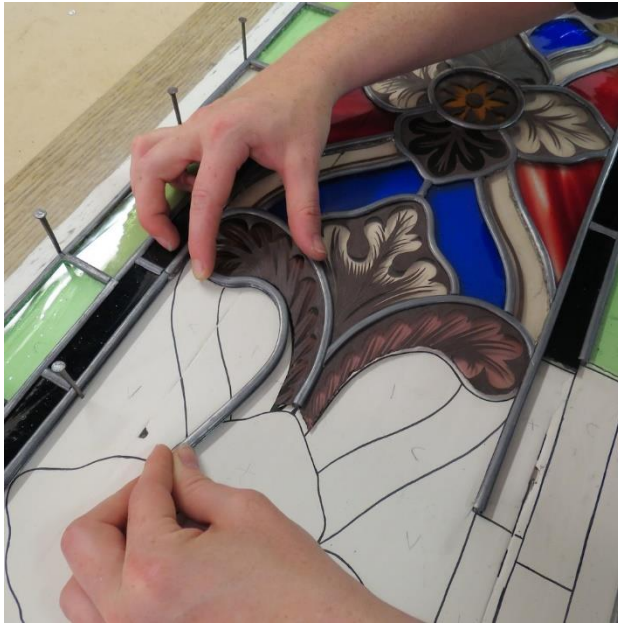
Sermon

Think of a stained-glass window that you know well. It could be a favourite from the Church or maybe something better known from a great cathedral. In past centuries, such windows were often called 'The poor person's Bible' because they portrayed stories from the Bible ... and the poor were often likely to be illiterate.



Stained-glass windows generally show pictures of simple narratives taken from the New Testament, so we'll not see Noah's Ark or David and Goliath. But they do permit simple metaphors that helping us understand the Bible.

When examining a stained-glass, we can look through the glass and see outside. It will of course look different owing to the colours in the glass and (especially with old glass) because of imperfections in the glass pieces themselves. In the same way, we can look at Scripture and see the past. It's an imperfect vision. Like looking through dirty glass, we will need to read many passages to gain multiple perspectives before we dare to pronounce, 'In the past, ...' But our passages today permit us to say that people at the time of Jesus were expecting the world to end soon; we learn the names of both leaders and priests in Israel's long-ago past, and so on.



Second we can look at a stained-glass window and learn how the image was created. We look at the pigments, the way the pieces interlock and make a pattern, how the artist used the inherent limitations of the materials. Did he or she use them to advantage, or did it limit the scope for what they wanted to portray? In the same way, the Scriptures are made of prose and poetry, history and law, narrative, or prophecy. We look silly if we create an image with a blue face or a green sky; and we

look equally silly if we treat a poem like the story of creation in Genesis 1 as history. And then look at the way the pieces are juxtaposed with one story straight after another. For example, what are the leaders of the Church telling us when they invite us to read today's three passages from the Bible one by one, one after another?

And we can look at a window and realise that the image we see most clearly is our own reflection. The pieces of glass that comprise the window may distort that reflection but, if anything, such an alteration helps us see ourselves more truthfully. They cut through our fantasies because we saw it when caught unawares.



Reading Scripture can also do that. Today's readings, for example, could be asking us to reflect (pun intended) on how we look at Scripture. If read properly, the Bible will *always* ask questions of us. For example, Jesus in the Gospel passage is asking if we live in the shadow of judgement. Today's Old Testament passage is asking us to decide if we look at Scripture as the 'word of God' or as man-made. We're being asked how we listen to it.

In all these ways, the theme of Bible Sunday is therefore not so much looking at Scripture but learning how to let Scripture look at us.

The Creed

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

All 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?

All 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?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

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

Prayers of intercession

God of the silence, God in the stillness and the calm,
who met Elijah not in the rushing wind but in quietness,
who brought peace to a group of fishermen in a raging storm:
be with us, here, and now.

Help us to leave behind the busyness of our lives, and listen for your word.

God of relationships, God of compassion and love,
who gave Ruth to Naomi when she had no family,
who gave Abraham and Sarah a baby when they had given up hope,
who brought together the disciples and other followers of Jesus:
we think of our relationships,
our families, our friends and colleagues and our Church family,
we lift them to you now,
we bring our thanks, our concerns, our need for forgiveness.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

God of wisdom, God of the proverbs and the 10 commandments,
who inspired your prophets like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, to speak your words:
we bring before you our country and its political leaders, we pray for wisdom
and justice.

and we think of situations, people, places around the world that need change.
Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

God of creativity, God of beauty and delight,
who gave David the gift of song-writing, who spoke to Joseph in vivid dreams,
who inspired the Songs of Solomon:

open our eyes to see you all around us.

help us to find you in nature, in poetry, in song, in conversation, in touch.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

God of surprises, God of hopes and plans,

who called Samuel in the night,

who met Paul in blinding light,

Help us to hear your call for our lives, however big or small,

open our eyes to your promptings and guidance, so that we can see the people,
places, opportunities that you want us to.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

God of revelation, who came to us as one of us.

You call us to be the light of the world,

to love our enemies, and treat our neighbours as we would be treated,

who urges us not to worry, who encouraged us to seek and we will find,

who told us that we are so loved that if we were one of hundred sheep he would
leave the other ninety-nine to look for us if we were lost:

help us to take your Gospel words seriously,

let them shape our lives and give us courage to take new paths and explore new
patterns. Help us to hear their call afresh and let them release us from old

routines to try new steps and dance with you in abandoned joy through all our days.

Lord in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

The peace

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy and peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you. Alleluia!

HYMN 3 [Jesus loves me, this I know](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)
or [Veni Creator Spiritus](#) (Gregorian chant)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and
be gracious to you.

The Lord lift up the light of his countenance upon you
and give you his peace;

and the blessing of God the Almighty:

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you now and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

HYMN 4 [We have a Gospel to proclaim](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

Father, 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 and bless you, loving Father,
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
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.

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.

So, Father, 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.

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.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All 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.**

Breaking of the Bread

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

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

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

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 for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us. Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God of all grace,
your Son Jesus Christ fed the hungry
with the bread of his life
and the word of his kingdom:
renew your people with your heavenly grace,
and in all our weakness
sustain us by your true and living bread;
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.