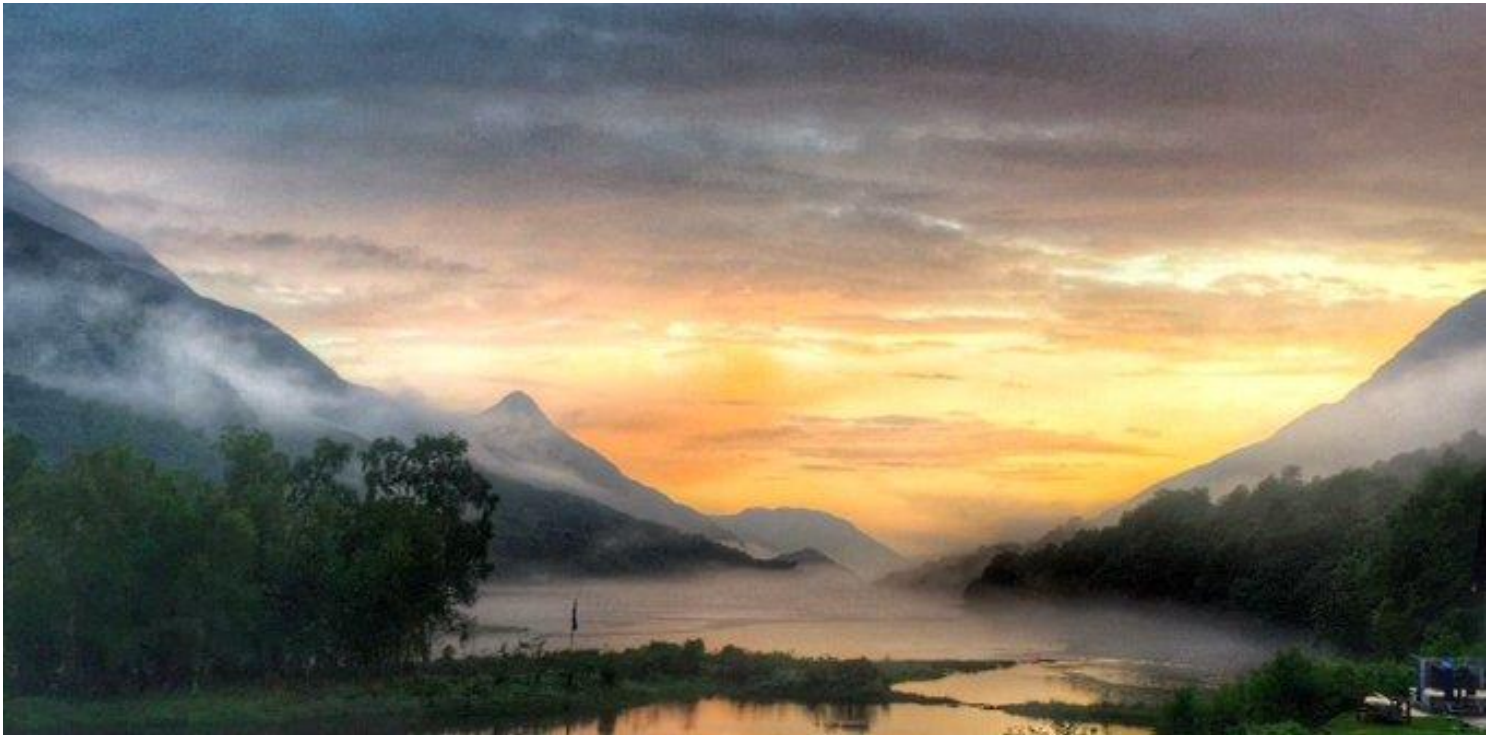


Sunday 27 October 2024

Revd Paul Monk's leaving service



Sermon and prayers of intercession © the Revd Dr Paul Monk.

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The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic.

The hymns can be accessed via YouTube links. Please click on the links.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Be thou my vision

[\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)

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.

Christ the Lord is the Alpha and Omega,

the First and the Last, the beginning and the end.

We seek forgiveness for all that we have committed

and that works against his claims of overwhelming love:

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

All Holy, holy, holy is the Lord;
Holy is the Lord God Almighty.
Holy, holy, holy to the Lord;
Holy is the Lord God Almighty.
Who was, and is, and is to come.
Holy is the Lord!

Jesus, Jesus, Jesus is the Lord ...

Glory, glory, glory to the Lord ...

Worthy, worthy, worthy is the Lord ...

The Collect for changes in job, role, or vocation

Loving Lord,
you give all your servants a vocation of love
and every work we undertake is to be done for love of you:
grant that we may so occupy our vocation in your work of saving grace
that all who see us will discern you as our Lord, inspiration, and our joy;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
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 the Prophet Isaiah

‘As for me, this is my covenant with them,’ says the Lord. ‘My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever,’ says the Lord.

‘Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.

See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.

Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

‘Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the hip.

Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy.’ *Isaiah 59:21—60:5a*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Second Letter to Timothy

You then, my child, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus; and what you have heard from me through many witnesses entrust to faithful people who will be able to teach others as well. Share in suffering like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving in the army gets entangled in everyday affairs; the soldier's aim is to please the enlisting officer. And in the case of an athlete, no one is crowned without competing according to the rules. It is the farmer who does the work who ought to have the first share of the crops. Think over what I say, for the Lord will give you understanding in all things.

2 Timothy 2:1-7

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 [Seek ye first](#)

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day.'

John 6:35-40

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

We are what we eat. Talking of eating, a cannibal went away on holiday and, a week later, came back limping horribly. He had gone 'self-catering'.

We are what we eat. That truth is obvious in a physical way because the correlation between diet and health has been proven beyond reasonable doubt—the very first medical textbook from the time of the Ancient Romans, Galen, starts by saying improving our diet will improve our health. It's also been proven in the areas of mental and psychological health: show a person scenes of gentle tranquillity and the peace rubs off; show a child scenes of violence and they mimic. And it is also proven beyond reasonable doubt concerning our spiritual health.

So, what is the diet I have been feeding the Churches since I joined you here in east Oldham, all those years ago in October 2009? Perhaps, as a priest, I should rephrase that as, 'What is the diet God has been feeding me that I've been sharing?' By the way, talking of food, How fast is milk? It's pasteurised before you know it.

There are many definitions of a priest. My favourite comes from the mighty William Temple: a priest places God before the people and the people before God. I have therefore prayed and prayed and prayed until my spiritual voice is a husky whisper. I have prayed for all of you; and I have spent my voice placing God before you—all of you, repeatedly. Since I arrived, I have preached many thousands of times; I've e-mailed many of those sermons as transcripts. The core message is that you are what you eat.

And you *are* what you eat. By the way, did you hear about the man who drank a large bottle of food colouring and, every time he ate anything, dyed a little inside.

You are what you eat. By the way, much of our fast food today comes from Macdonald's: did you know the chief executive of Macdonald's farm is its C E C E O. The correct spiritual diet of a Christian involves God. As Jesus said in today's Gospel passage, 'Whoever comes to me will never be hungry'. Scripture says repeatedly that God is love so a diet of God is a diet that always involves love. That's why the core message I've been given for us to consume is that God is love, and that He expresses his love and has shared His love. He loves you and me, and He will never ever give up on us, because love is like that and God is like that. Our task is to respond to that love and submit to his loving, just, and gentle rule.

This love comes from God and this love *is* God, but what does it look like? By the way, as a vegan cook, I wonder if I've just made a big, missed, steak. We must love God. Since October 2009, in addition to preaching, I have conducted baptisms—hundreds of them. A baptism is the ceremony or service, a holy rite by which a person starts their journey of faith. It's a kickstart, a formal asking of God the Holy Spirit into the soul of a much-loved child of God. It's also a sign of commitment and

family. All genuine Christian ministry seeks to bring people to faith: it's the gentle desire to bring souls into relationship with God. It's therefore a response of love to love, love reciprocating love. Baptism is therefore asking divine love into a soul. The love of God does that.

You are what you eat. By the way, I once tried to shallow fry a tree branch but it kept slipping out—the pan was non-stick. Since joining you, I have also conducted many weddings. At heart, a wedding is both a symbol of love but also a commitment to join two different houses. It's therefore entirely appropriate for me to talk about weddings, for everything I've tried to do here feeds into the idea of God *being* love and I've spoken repeatedly about joining earth with Heaven. All Christian ministry should propel earth toward Heaven through prayer and sacrament. To that end, it involves the deliberate transformation into Christlikeness, which means living the lives of holiness that God desires. The love of God requires nothing less. So we become like that which we eat.

You are what you eat. By the way, I've been messing with my wife's collection of herbs and spices: she hasn't noticed yet but her thyme is cumin. Since I joined you, I have conducted many hundred funerals. Every funeral should be a service of comfort and is intended to bring hope and consolation. Indeed, all Christian ministry should bring comfort because God does that. That's why ministry involves preparing for Heaven, coaching human souls for eternity spent with God who loves us beyond words. You are what you eat and that eating takes eternity into ourselves.

You are what you eat. By the way, I had a meal made from a cow with two legs—it was lean beef; and the last time I had a meal made from a cow with no legs resulted in ground beef. I've said a lot but it all comes down to the same thing. We are here for God. We must ask God into lives, invite the overlap of earth and Heaven, and in that way prepare our souls to live with God forever. To that explicit end we consuming spiritual love as the nourishment that every Christian soul needs.

You are what you eat. By the way, I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes: it's all about raisin awareness. The God of love has so arranged the world that Christian growth requires growth in love, hence the commandment with which we started this service, to love God and neighbour. Think of Jesus' 'New Commandment' to love as he loves us. Remember that Jesus said you can identify Christians by the way they love each other. You are what you eat: that's why cannibals don't eat clowns—they taste funny. We are what we eat, so listen to Jesus: 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.' And if we do, 'This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life'.

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

We come before the God with our prayers.

Loving Lord, we thank you for your love. Help us to love you. We repent of the times we ignored your claims of overwhelming love in our lives, the times we ignored the New Commandment to love one another as Jesus loves us, and for refusing to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind, and all our strength.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord, hone our faith and thereby help us live lives of holiness and radical commitment to the Gospel.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

Loving Lord, we thank you that you forgive our sins and, through Jesus, we can live in eternity with you. We thank you for your infinite love which sustains us and teaches us about you. We thank you for the birth-right of all the redeemed, that we may be called your children.

Lord, in your mercy:

All hear our prayer.

Lord of love, we bring before you the life of our Churches: we thank you for those former disciples who fed on you and built these places of worship; we thank you for our own growth into faith; and we ask you to continue feeding and sustaining our churches, to your praise and glory.

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 Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and for evermore. *Psalm 121:7-8*

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

All And also with you

HYMN 3 [The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want](#)

[\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)

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.

The collect for Bible Sunday

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.

The Dismissal

The Lord Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

May our service of love and worship remain unchanged

from everlasting to everlasting;

and the blessing of God the Almighty,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

be with you now

and remain with you for ever.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Holy, holy, holy

[\(click to hear the hymn\)](#)

This worship service is ended. The service of love now begins.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ.

Amen.