

ORDER OF SERVICE. CIRCUIT SERVICE. OCTOBER 31st

CALL TO WORSHIP.

This is All Souls Day and tomorrow is All Saints Day

St Paul wrote No eye has seen, no ear has heard and the heart of man not begun to comprehend what God has in store for those who love Him.

The writer of Revelation wrote: God says, I set before you an open door which no one can shut

Jesus said: I go to prepare a place for you, so that where I am, you may be also.

The writer of Revelation when speaking of the Heavenly Jerusalem says: There will be no more sorrow, no more pain, no more tears

We listen to the short **video** When we all get to heaven <https://youtu.be/ITVIUjdGdwI>

Hymn StheF 345 And can it be <https://youtu.be/dC8HSEKtuio>

1. And can it be that I should gain
an interest in the Saviour's blood!
Died he for me? who caused his pain!
For me? who him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! How can it be
that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?

2. 'Tis mystery all: th' Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
to sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;
let angel minds inquire no more.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;
let angel minds inquire no more.

3. He left his Father's throne above
(so free, so infinite his grace!),
emptied himself of all but love,
and bled for Adam's helpless race.
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,

for O my God, it found out me!
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
for O my God, it found out me!

4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
fast bound in sin and nature's night;
thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
my chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed thee.

5. No condemnation now I dread;
Jesus, and all in him, is mine;
alive in him, my living Head,
and clothed in righteousness divine,
bold I approach th' eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Bold I approach th' eternal throne,
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.
Charles Wesley

Prayer

Lord God, by your coming amongst us you gather us to yourself. Through your goodness despair turns to hope, through your gentleness we find comfort in time of trouble. In your mercy you heal our wounds and in your love and tenderness you remake us.

Although you often must weep over our sins and our pride you offer us your outstretched arms on the cross. In your compassion you bring us grace and forgiveness and you prepare us for the beauty of heaven where there is no more sorrow, no more tears and no more pain. We thank you that we have the promise of an inheritance that no one can spoil, for we have a sure and certain hope in victory over death and the resurrection to life with you in the heavenly Jerusalem. Bless us this morning with a fresh

anointing of your Holy Spirit the we may honour you with our whole lives until there comes that day in heaven when we see you face to face and share fully in the life of your kingdom. Amen

Children's Talk. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/18b68M-BKBfeHlaL5QXuJKgTE9zKbEGax/view?usp=sharing>

Followed by **children's song** This little light https://youtu.be/RGWC6_SJHKQ

Hymn StheF 746 For all the saints who showed your love <https://youtu.be/kbSo1amJDUs>

1. For all the saints who showed your love
In how they lived and where they moved
For mindful women, caring men,
Accept our gratitude again.

2. For all the saints who loved your name,
Whose faith increased the Saviour's fame
Who sang your songs and shared your Word,
Accept our gratitude, good Lord.

3. For all the saints who named your will,
And saw your kingdom coming still
Through selfless protest, prayer and praise,
Accept our gratitude we raise.

4. Bless all whose will or name or love
Reflects the grace of heaven above.
Though unacclaimed by earthly powers,
Your life through theirs has hallowed ours.
John Bell and Graham Maule

Bible Readings Matthew 25 verses 1-13; Revelation 19 verses 5-9

Sermon https://drive.google.com/file/d/16QkzciDDrlii6P8nj8zU_mqC8dyLev6t/view?usp=sharing

Today is All Souls Day and tomorrow is All Saints Day. Let's start with weddings – we are going to end there too! Nigel and I have three daughters. Our eldest Rebecca married Daniel at the Community Church in Wrexham where they were, and are, strong members. The church worship band led the singing of the contemporary worship songs, there was testimony, prophesy, speaking in tongues and laying on of hands as part of the marriage service. Our middle daughter, Deborah married Philip in a traditional Church of England service which was conducted by Nigel. We had well known hymns and the choir sang Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring and Panes Angelicus. Our youngest daughter, Elizabeth married Phil in an informal hotel ceremony performed by the registrar and we had taped songs by Eretha Franklin. What was in common -lots of prep beforehand with people gathered on one day, at a set time and the bride the star of the occasion.

In the Revelation reading we heard how in heaven we, the church, the followers of Jesus, are likened to a Bride and Jesus invites us to his wedding supper. He is likened to the Bridegroom.

However, when Jesus told the wedding story we heard in the gospel passage, things were very different to weddings today. The Bridegroom was the star of the show. No one knew when he would arrive – no wonder that some of the bridesmaids, the virgins, ran out of oil. They were on parade, on lookout for the groom who would at some point arrive accompanied by his male friends. When he was arriving then a messenger would go ahead saying

THE BRIDEGROOM COMETH..... and when he did get there then the doors shut, no one else could go in.....everything began.

Jesus told this story to get people thinking about end times – we don't like to think about the time when our earthly life will be over but here we are at All Souls Day today and All Saints tomorrow: the liturgical time of year when the lectionary commands our attention to our mortality, to final things and what lies beyond.

And I am asking this question: how are we ordering our lives, sorting ourselves out, so that we are ready for that day when we see Him in the Heavenly Jerusalem?

There is the story of the very morose king. He was always 'down in the dumps'. His courtiers urged him to get a court jester. Someone who would 'play the fool' and keep him entertained and always cheery. So, a messenger went out throughout the kingdom, alerting jesters everywhere that interviews were to be held at the palace. On the appointed day many jesters came. In turn they 'played the fool' with jokes and magic tricks. One stood out as being a greater fool than the others. The king called him forth and said "This is now your work. Every day you must play the fool and you must always always wear this jester hat until I find a fool greater than yourself."

Well, the days and the weeks and the months and years went by. The jester wore the hat and played the fool. Suddenly, the king's health failed and despite the best doctors in the land, life was ending swiftly. He king called the jester to his bedside to tell him the news. The King said "Soon I will be making a journey to the world beyond this one."

The jester said to him "Sir, what preparations have you made for that journey to the world beyond this one?"

The king looked at him in astonishment and said "Preparations? I have made no preparation."

The jester took off his hat and placed on the head of the king and said

"Now I have found a greater fool than myself."

So I ask that question again: how are we ordering our lives, sorting ourselves out, so that we are ready for that day when we see Him in the Heavenly Jerusalem?

For those of us who stand on the promise of Jesus, that He has gone to prepare a place for us, so that where He is we may be also, there is no fear of that meeting. For those of us who stand on the words of Scripture that God sets before us an open door that no one can shut, there is no fear of that meeting. For those of us who stand on the words of Scripture that in that place there is no more sorrow, no more pain, no more tears, there is no fear of that meeting.

But just a bride is adorned on her wedding day in the finest garment she can provide, so we would want to be at the marriage feast of the Lamb -The Bridegroom Jesus - dressed in the garments of holiness and of righteousness. Those garments are woven from praise and from prayer and from servanthood and from the constant holding out of ourselves to receive fresh anointings of the Holy Spirit.

We have no fear but live our lives in *that* preparation for *that* meeting in the Heavenly Jerusalem where no eye has seen, nor ear heard, not the heart of man begun to comprehend what God has prepared for those who love Him.

We listen to the **song** I can only Imagine. <https://youtu.be/0xwzItqYmII>

Prayers

Lord God, we are thankful that you are full of compassion and mercy, slow to anger and of great kindness.

You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your mercy upon those who turn to you.

Holy God,

holy and strong,

holy and immortal,

have mercy upon us as we confess before you and before one another in a time of quiet that we have sinned in thought, word and deed and in what we have left undone.

TIME OF QUIET

As we turn to you in penitence, we are assured that as far as the east is from the west,
so far have you set our sins from us.

We thank you that you are preparing us for the beauty and the joy of heaven, where death is swallowed up in victory, where every tear is wiped dry and where Jesus will gather us up as a bridegroom gathers his bride in his arms and we shall see you, face to face and worship with the angels and your people of every age. Amen.

Hymn StheF 395 Spirit of the Living God <https://youtu.be/p5JYgmsy7X4>

Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Break me, melt me, mould me, fill me. Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.

Intercessions

Let us pray for the Church and for the world

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

Lord, we ask you to give strength to all your Church in the service of Christ, enabling us to live lives of holiness and righteousness; that we who confess your name may be united in your truth, live together in your love, and reveal your glory in the world. Bless the churches of our circuit with a fresh anointing of your Holy Spirit as we seek to bring our Mission Action Plans to life, to the glory of your name.

Lord, we ask you to give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace; that we may honour one another, and seek the common good as we care for one another and for our planet. Bless the preparations for COP26, to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Lord, we ask you to comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, giving them courage and hope in their troubles; and bringing them the joy of your salvation. Bless those who care for them with wisdom and with fortitude.

Lord, we ask you to comfort those who mourn. May they hold fast to the words of Jesus, that He has gone to prepare a place for us, so that where He is, we may be also.

We gather all our prayers in the words that Jesus taught us:

Lord's Prayer

Hymn StheF 338 There is a Redeemer <https://youtu.be/G0LA3GvAUGU>

There is a redeemer
Jesus, God's own son
Precious lamb of God, Messiah
Holy one
*Thank you oh my father
For giving us your son
And leaving your spirit
'Til the work on earth is done.*

Jesus my redeemer
Name above all names
Precious lamb of God, Messiah
Oh, for sinners slain.

*Thank you oh my father
For giving us your son
And leaving your spirit
'Til the work on earth is done.*

When I stand in glory
I will see his face
And there I'll serve my king forever
In that holy place.
*Thank you oh my father
For giving us your son
And leaving your spirit
'Til the work on earth is done.*
Keith Green

FINAL PRAYER

The Lord God almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
the holy and undivided Trinity,
will guard us, save us,
and bring us at the last to that heavenly Jerusalem
where he lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.