

Morning Service

14th June 2020

You may wish to light a candle.

Introduction

Welcome to our online service on this Music Sunday – we celebrate today with joy God’s gift of music, and give thanks for the Royal School of Church Music – for the way it has enriched the worship of the Christian Church.

In this service we make our prayer in word and song, as we seek God’s blessing. Today we welcome those joining us from Co Wicklow, Scotland and the Wirral. Wherever you are we hope that our time together will help you feel the joy and peace that comes from worshipping together. On our website there is Sunday Club at Home, the June Parish Magazine and details of the Bible Study Group. If you have any prayer requests or we can help in anyway do contact us. And I ask as restrictions ease for some we do not forget to keep caring for those still isolating.

Let us worship together.

Opening Sentences

Grace and peace be with you,

and keep you in the love of Christ.

Hymn **To God be the glory** <https://youtu.be/C9mYkaIZDzY>

The Collect

God of all creation, for whom the church, in liturgy and song, has borne faithful witness through the centuries; let us be your instruments of praise, that in us may be found that new dimension of sound which tunes our souls and bodies to the infinite beauty of your truth and the profound glory of your eternal light. For you reign, Trinity in unison, God in harmony, now and forever.. **Amen**

Bible Readings

Epistle – Ephesians 5: 15-20

read by David Manning-Fox

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel – Luke 1: 46-55

read by Cat Appleton

Mary’s Song of Praise

And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.

Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.’

Sermon – Rev Anne Taylor – see below

Hymn O praise ye the Lord. <https://youtu.be/oRauK1m7Pko>

Prayers

by Sue Gillam

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

Today we pray for Paul and Beverley our Bishops, for Anne our Vicar, Ted, for our new Curate Simon Macauley as he prepares to join us in July, and all those who are helping to keep the life of our church going through lockdown. Bless and guide Elizabeth our Queen and our leaders, both nationally and in our local community. Help them to make wise and just decisions for our common good.

We pray for all the people in the world living daily amongst political and civil unrest, war, famine, oppression and random Violence. For refugees who have had to flee their homes and all they know. For victims of road accidents and crime, for those in prison and their families who live with the repercussions of their actions. Give them strength and hope that their lives will get better. Help us to understand that even when life seems hard and unfair, we can grow and use our experiences of difficulties to help others.

God of love, be present in every heart and home to cherish, re-assure and comfort us. In our cycle of prayer, we remember especially today the residents of West Lane, Stanley Road, Rimmers Avenue and Massams Lane.

We pray for those whom we love, the special people You have given to us, WHEREVER they may be. We thank You for Each of them and what they give to us, and pray will stay safe and well and feel both OUR love and YOUR love reaching out to encircle them. We thank You for our friendships— may we never be too busy to be kind.

As the sick were brought to Jesus by their loved ones, so we bring to You now those who are weighed down with suffering, or imprisoned by fear. We remember all those who are sick in body, mind or spirit, especially Barbara, Graeme, Mike - and those known personally to us.

We thank You for the bravery and commitment of all Keyworkers, for the special skill and dedication of our Health Workers. We pray for our housebound Parishioners, those who live and work in Nursing Homes and Care Homes, all those in hospital today and all those dealing with the uncertainty of postponed operations, tests and treatments. Give them strength, resolve and patience and re-assure them of Your loving presence in their lives.

Lord, comfort and strengthen all who mourn and hold close to You those whom we love and can see no more. We give thanks for their lives and example, for the time we had with them, and remember their inspiration and support. We hold them in our hearts, knowing that You, Lord hold them in YOURS.

We thank You, Lord, for the beauty of nature, the creativity and skill of musicians and the joy and comfort that music gives us, for the glory of all your gifts. Help us to see them, to count them, to remember them, that our lives may resound to Your praise.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers, for the sake of Your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Peace

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
and with gratitude let us sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
And also with you

Taking of the Bread and Wine

The Lord is here.
His Spirit is with us.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should always sing of your glory,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord:
for at this time we celebrate your gift of music,
through which earth and heaven combine.
At the creation of the world,
the morning stars sang together,
and the heavenly beings shouted for joy.
At the deliverance of your people from Egypt,
Moses and Miriam sang of your salvation.
At the birth of your Son, Jesus,
the angels sang 'Glory in the highest'.
And so, with the saints and angels around your throne
who offer you ceaseless songs of praise,
we join to glorify your name, for ever praising you.

**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.**

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.
We proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Jesus Christ is Lord:
**Lord, by your cross and resurrection
you have set us free.
You are the Saviour of the world.**

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 St Peter and 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.
Amen.

Wherever you may be let us pray together with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**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.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.
Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in the one bread.

Prayer after Communion

God of majesty,
Whom saints and angels delight to worship in heaven:
be with your servants who make music for your people,
that with joy we on earth may glimpse your beauty;
and bring us to the fulfilment of that hope of perfection
which will be ours as we stand before your unveiled glory,
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Hymn Now thank we all our God. <https://youtu.be/ltfKjxkXhMk>

The Blessing

May the songs of the angels sustain you,
may the praises of the saints inspire you,
may the silent music of the Unseen Trinity be in your heart;
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you, and all
who you care for this day and always. **Amen.**

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SERMON – Rev Anne Taylor

Music is a very personal and I imagine for many it is one of the ways that people have coped over these last months. You can get lost in music whether it is Beethoven or the Beatles. Whether in the car it is Classic, Smooth or Rock FM. Whether you can play an instrument, sing in tune or like me can do neither you can still love music.

Music can have a spiritual dimension. It has the ability to make us feel very close to God – it helps us worship and even get lost in awe and wonder and praise. Hymns can be very powerful and connect us with God. Hymns are also very personal and provoke strong feelings of likes and dislikes – whether it is a favourite tune or a hymn that brings up memories like The Church’s One Foundation or Shine Jesus Shine. As a Vicar you can never please them all when selecting hymns.

It is appropriate that we mark Music Sunday and give thanks for all those who have written and composed, played and sung over the years and still do.

In the church that Ted and I served in Rathfarnham, Dublin there was an unusual stained glass window. The window was of Saint Cecilia.

Saint Cecilia is the patron saint of musicians, composers, singers, Church music, poetry and musical instrument makers. Her feast day is celebrated on the 22nd November.

In Rathfarnham Church St. Cecilia's window faced the choir stalls, no doubt to inspire them. When the sun shone the simplicity of the window let so much light into the church it created a real glow. But I often wondered why Cecilia looked so miserable and it had nothing to do with the quality of the choir for as in St Peter's they are very good.

Cecilia's face is sad because she was martyred for her faith.

According to legend, Cecilia was a young Christian of high rank and had an arranged marriage to a Roman named Valerian. She had protested at this marriage as she made a vow of celibacy. But through her influence Valerian was converted, along with his brother. But both were martyred for organizing proper burials for other martyrs. Cecilia's death would follow as she refused to worship false idols and continued to openly worship God.

The source of the connection between Cecilia and music is obscure and does not seem to date back much before the 15th century. Innumerable paintings and stained glass windows depict her solemnly with an organ, lute or viola.

However the connection arose, it soon became lodged in folklore, and by the second half of the 16th century festivals and celebrations in her honour (and that of music in general) begin to be recorded. She has inspired many musicians and writers throughout the centuries, from Benjamin Britten to Simon & Garfunkel. The old £20 note withdrawn in 2010 had on the back Saint Cecilia and the composer Sir Edward Elgar.

The great influence of Cecilia is that she has become a symbol of the Church's conviction that good music is an integral part of the liturgy, of greater value to the Church than any other art.

Our lives would be poorer without music. But so would our worship for music has a spiritual quality - a quality that takes us out of ourselves, that suggests something deeper, helps us to draw closer to God.

Singing is not simply a technique but a gift that God gives to all his people. If we were part of the Orthodox Christian tradition, all our services from beginning to end would be sung. As it is we sing hymns and these hymns are meant to help us focus our minds on worshipping God.

In normal times during the Eucharist the choir sing as the congregation receive communion. This is not there to fill a gap but to help the congregation to focus on the significance of communion with God. It is there as a form of prayer.

When large crowds of people come together to support their team they sing as a way of expressing their sense of community and support for their team. And hopefully very soon a certain YNWA will be sung from many roof tops!

Christians also sing as sign of unity, as a sign of community. Singing gives a shared identity, and we hope that when services resume again, singing will also be permitted as we recover that sense of community.

Music in worship also teaches us. We retain our sense of what it is to be Christian, partly through singing hymns and partly through the doctrines we absorb through melody and rhythm. Both Martin Luther and John and Charles Wesley clearly understood the teaching function of hymns. And that a good hymn with good sound teaching and a fine tune is worth many sermons.

It is so important to make sure the songs that children sing help them learn positive Christian messages. For children to sing songs that have catchy tunes and good teaching they remember and they learn. In fact we all do.

Hymns can teach us so much - sometimes without us even realizing it.

Hymns can lay the foundation of what we know and believe about a loving God.

And down the ages, particularly when men and women have been subject to cruelty and oppression, music has given them hope. From the Jewish ghettos of twentieth century Europe, from the cotton fields of the enslaved American south, from the Salvation Army hostels of nineteenth century East London, singing hymns of praise have lifted people spiritually, have bound them together in a common cause, re-affirmed their sense of God, helped them to survive spiritually and morally even when their life was difficult.

Today we give thanks for music and how we can be inspired as generations have to use music to help us draw closer to God. In these times when we cannot easily gather let music still bind us together – don't worry what the neighbour's think – let us sing out in praise of a God who loves us and who will sustain us through the days and weeks ahead.