

Worship for 25th October 2020

Wherever we worship, whether alone or with others; whether in chapel, at home or elsewhere; whether we are full of joy or overwhelmed by fear and despair; we are thankful that we worship together as a community of Christ. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven.....

Let's sing, read, pray this fantastic hymn

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.

Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation,
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation,
perfectly restored in thee:
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Let's praise, thank and confess

Holy God, creator of all things and source of all holiness,
we praise you for all that you provide for us materially
and spiritually;
we give thanks for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, who
showed to us that perfect example of human love;
we praise you for your Holy Spirit, who empowers us to
share that love with others.
We give thanks for our local Christian communities and
the worldwide church to which we belong; may we praise
you with one voice.
We give thanks for the love we know in our lives.
God the Creator, Jesus, Spirit; Amen.

We are sorry for the times when our lives have lacked
love, and ask for strength and focus to look to your Holy
Spirit's energy to keep us on track with You. AMEN

OUR OFFERING PRAYER

Generous and loving God, we thank you for all
we have, and give of our abundance to you in
love, to work your miracles in your people's
lives. AMEN

 *For I have found The one
Whom My soul loves*

Song of Solomon 3:4

OUR BIBLE READINGS - Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying:

²Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and
say to them: You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am
holy.

¹⁵You shall not render an unjust judgement; you shall not
be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice
you shall judge your neighbour. ¹⁶You shall not go around
as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not
profit by the blood of your neighbour: I am the LORD.

¹⁷You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you
shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt
yourself. ¹⁸You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge
against any of your people, but you shall love your
neighbour as yourself: I am the LORD.

Matthew 22:34-46

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the
Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a
lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶'Teacher,
which commandment in the law is the greatest?' ³⁷He
said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your
mind.'" ³⁸This is the greatest and first
commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: "You shall love
your neighbour as yourself." ⁴⁰On these two
commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

Time to Reflect

Over the past months there seems to be more debate on
the television and radio than ever before. One thing
which I often find infuriating is when people skirt around
questions or issues to avoid answering the questions
which has been asked. Also, when people talk and won't
let the other get a word in, or when people ask loaded
questions) I don't expect I'm alone here.

We're highly unlikely to be interviewed but I'm sure
many questions have been on our minds throughout the
Covid-19 crisis. They are difficult questions and it's even
more difficult to find answers which satisfy. We all know

that one slip of the tongue from ourselves, a politician or someone else could lead to trouble. It's no wonder people are reluctant to give a straight answer!

All this is nothing new. In the Gospel reading, Jesus is asked a loaded question by a lawyer

"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" *Matt. 22:36*

This question is dynamite. Jesus is being asked which of God's commandments, written in the laws of Moses, is the greatest. This is like asking a politician which law of the land is the most important. Imagine the field day the tabloid press would have!

I dare say that the lawyer was very pleased with his question, certain he had Jesus trapped. There was no answer he could give that wouldn't land him in deep trouble, but how wrong could he be? Rather than picking out two of the laws, Jesus expertly sums up the whole of God's law - **love God and your neighbour**. This answer silences the lawyer and the Pharisees, as there's absolute nothing they can say to argue. We often argue over and discuss what we call 'important points' in our lives and in our churches. Yet if our prime motivation in life was always to simply love God and neighbour surely the whole world would be a much better place.

Forget the difficult questions, focus instead on Christ's simple answer – love! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind; and love your neighbour as yourself. Amen.



**LET THERE BE LOVE shared among us,
Let there be love in our eyes;
May now Your love sweep this nation,
Cause us, O Lord, to arise.
Give us a fresh understanding
Of brotherly love that is real;
Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love.**

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Prayers for others and ourselves

Loving God,
as we mediate on Christ's commandment to love,
we pray for the church throughout the world;

for justice and peace between and within nations;
for political leaders and all in authority;
for the communities in which we live;
for people who suffer in any way;
and for all those on our minds today.

Let's be silent for a while.....

May the presence of your love be felt in every situation.

We give thanks for those who have died, especially those who have lived in the love of Christ.

May we be united with them in your eternal kingdom. Amen.

OUR RESPONSE.....

God be in my head and in my understanding

God Be in my eyes, and in my looking

God be in my mouth, and in my speaking

God be in my heart, and in my loving AMEN

Hymn 615 Sung to the tune Londonderry Aire

(O Danny Boy)

Let love be real, in giving and receiving,
without the need to manage and to own;
a haven free from posing and pretending,
where every weakness may be safely known.
Give me your hand, along the desert pathway,
give me your love wherever we may go.

*As God loves us, so let us love each other:
with no demands, just open hands and space to
grow.*

Let love be real, not grasping or confining,
that strange embrace that holds yet sets us free;
that helps us face the risk of truly living,
and makes us brave to be what we might be.
Give me your strength when all my words are
weakness;
give me your love in spite of all you know.

Let love be real, with no manipulation,
no secret wish to harness or control;
let us accept each other's incompleteness,
and share the joy of learning to be whole.
Give me your hope through dreams and
disappointments;
give me your trust when all my failings show.

Michael Forster (b. 1946)

A prayer of blessing

May everything we do be guided by Love; and may
the blessing of God: the Father, the Son and the Holy
Spirit, be with us this day and forevermore. **Amen.**