

Lent Liturgy:

God so loved the world...This love is all you need – all you will ever need. Take it. This love can save the world.

John 3:16 God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him won't perish but will have eternal life.

Let us pray: God of immeasurable grace, you sent your Son into the world in an act of love so great, it is hard to comprehend. Fashion your servant into a vessel of your love and light, that We may be worthy of the one who came to save us all. AMEN

Hymn: Great is Thy Faithfulness (Singing the Faith 51)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTKlqmdfHsk>

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not;
as thou hast been thou for ever wilt be:

*Great is thy faithfulness! Great is thy
faithfulness!*

*Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided.
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love:

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Thomas O. Chisholm (1866-1960)

Let us pray:

O God I give thanks to you this day for your great faithfulness.

May I match your faithfulness with my own.

You have sustained me in times of trouble, and carried me when I could not bear my own weight.

Thank you for the gift of your love and grace, shown to us in Jesus Christ.

I seek to give my life to you in service and to love others as you have first loved me.

May I do all these things with the help of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Bible reading Jeremiah 31: 31-34

As we prepare for the future of the Church post the Covid experience, we can see a very different Church to the one many of us have known throughout our lives, we are at a turning point and one of the biggest challenges to face us is the shortage of ministers, that will continue to decrease throughout this third decade of the twenty first century. Jeremiah talks in his prophesy about a change for the people of his time, God has always been a remote deity, speaking through prophets, priests, and kings, now in the new covenant, Jeremiah talks about, God will speak right into the hearts of his people.

Consider:

- *How does a Church with minimal Ordained input and much greater lay leadership make you feel? Excited at the prospect? Fearful? Sad that the Church has come to this? Ready to meet the challenge? Hopeful for a stronger, more dynamic Church?*
- *Under the current Methodist model we have an obligation to have ordained oversight of every Church, which elements of the life of the church do you feel are essentially the role of an ordained minister and what aspects of Church life can be handled by lay people.*
- *We are part of an evangelical movement, set on making disciples for Christ, do you find the image of God working within us through the power of the Holy Spirit helpful in equipping us for the missional Church of the twenty first Century?*



Hymn: Sweet is the work, my God, my King Singing the Faith 90

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSu4Mrdp5kl>

Sweet is the work, my God, my King,
to praise your name, give thanks, and sing;
to show your love by morning light,
and talk of all your truth at night.

Sweet is the day of sacred rest,
no mortal cares disturb my breast;
O may my heart in tune be found
like David's harp of solemn sound!

My heart shall triumph in my Lord,
and bless his works, and bless his word:

your works of grace, how bright they shine!
How deep your counsels, how divine!

Then shall I bear a glorious part,
when grace has well refined my heart,
and fresh supplies of joy are shed,
like holy oil to cheer my head.

Then shall I see, and hear, and know
all I desired or wished below;
and every power find sweet employ
in that eternal world of joy.

Bible Reading: John 12: 20-33

"The hour has now come for the Son of Man to be glorified" Jesus says. There is that old saying "don't put off for tomorrow what you can do today" and maybe that is true. When Filofaxes, time planning and action planning became such a core part of everyday life in the eighties and nineties and people became more obsessed with time management, we saw the "to do list" take centre stage and maybe we learned only to tackle the essential and put off that which would wait. Here in this passage the events of Holy Week were becoming uncomfortably close for Jesus and he was facing that sea of change. We are in an optimistic place in March 2021 with almost twenty-five million people vaccinated and some now on their second jabs, with proposed dates on a roadmap to escape the pandemic and the future beyond Covid is now imminent.

Consider

- *If all restrictions are lifted after Monday 21st June, what are you looking forward to most of all? In your private, home life? In your daily use of time, at work, or at home? In the Church?*
- *Are there any worries, doubts and fears surrounding any of this?*
- *There is talk at the moment about "Covid Keepers" the things that we have started to do because of this pandemic experience. What are your "Covid Keepers", what will you be glad to see the back of and what would you love to hang on to?*

Prayers for others:

Loving and gracious God,

We lift our prayers to you this morning, knowing that you hear all of our prayers, whether spoken or unspoken, for you know all that is on our hearts and minds.

We pray this day for the world... for the distribution of the vaccine, for people affected by war or natural disaster...

We pray this day for our nation... for the NHS and all who work hard to care for people within it, for our leaders, for all the people as we find new ways to live in community with one another...

We pray this day for our church... that we might shine with the light of Christ in the world, that others will come to know him through our actions, help us to be the hands and feet of Jesus...

We pray this day for our own concerns...

Oh God, let us pray now as Jesus taught us to pray...

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father

Hymn: I will offer up my life. Singing the Faith 446

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWP05Fm39sY>

I will offer up my life
in spirit and truth,
pouring out the oil of love
as my worship to you.
In surrender I must give my every part;
of a broken heart.

*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
to so faithful a friend, to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
as a praise of your name.
for the things you have done?*

Blessing

Lord, may I be as a grain of wheat that falls to the ground and dies so I can rise up to new life in Jesus Christ.

Amen.

*O, my words could not tell, not even in part,
of the debt of love that is owed by this
thankful heart.*

You deserve my every breath
for you've paid the great cost;
giving up your life to death,
even death on a cross.
You took all my shame away,
there defeated my sin,
opened up the gates of heaven,
and have beckoned me in.