



It is with great sadness that we add a note of explanation at the beginning of this service. Sadly, Ian died shortly after preparing the service and recording the accompanying video sermon. It now stands as his final service. Let it be a fitting memorial to his years of ministry; to the many ways that God spoke through him and to the love and esteem in which he was held, both in the Ipswich Circuit and further afield.

Call to Worship – Come and worship, worship our God of Love; our God loves you. **Amen.**

Hymn - STF 152 - This is the day Watch on YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXZwW0D2OZ4&list=RDTXZwW0D2OZ4&start_radio=1

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made, that the Lord has made.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day that the Lord has made ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day that the Lord has made.

This is the day, this is the day when he rose again, when he rose again.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day when he rose again ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day when he rose again.

This is the day, this is the day when the Spirit came, when the Spirit came.

We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it, and be glad in it.

This is the day when the Spirit came ; we will rejoice and be glad in it.

This is the day, this is the day when the Spirit came.

Prayers of Adoration & Thanksgiving : Lord, we come before you, individual and complex people; yet all with the same desire to worship you. We pray that you will speak your love deep into our hearts this morning. Be with us, Lord. Let us praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his glory is above earth and heaven.

Let us praise the name of the Lord together.

Risen Lord, we understand so little of what your glory really means. Yet we dare to approach you. Have mercy on us, and fill us with wonder, understanding what we need to understand, and marvelling at that which is beyond understanding. **Amen.**

Prayer of Confession : God of love, you have commanded us to love you with our whole being and to love one another. We confess that we have turned away from you, with cold and indifferent hearts. We have wandered from your ways and ignored your Spirit's voice. We confess that we have not loved one another as Christ has loved us. We have seen our brothers and sisters in need and yet refused to help. We have compromised with injustice and failed to act with kindness. God of love, forgive our failure to love. Make your face to shine upon us, and in your loving-kindness save us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Scripture: John 13: 31 - 35

Reflection : "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another ..."

The love which Christians show for one another has always been a compelling, even unanswerable argument for the truth of our faith. Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." So well did the early Christians follow Jesus' prescription that it was said of them: "See how they love each other." St. John Chrysostom, who was made Bishop of Constantinople in A.D. 398, remarked: "If we Christians lived as we should, non-believers would be more astonished at our lives than at miracles."

So, what does this passage from St John's Gospel tell us? Let's look at it. Jesus was talking to his disciples on the eve of his death (Maundy Thursday). He was telling his followers that they would no longer see him but that love was the most important thing in their lives. He told them that if they loved one another people would know that they were Jesus' disciples. He gives us the same message. If we love one another and show our love for everybody, people will know that we are Christians. We need to love people all the time, not just on Valentine's Day or Anniversaries or those special days. We need to love our friends and our enemies. We should even share our love with people who don't like us. We need to love Jesus. Loving Jesus and one another makes us all disciples. As Christians, we should

make every day a special day when we show our love to everyone. I hope you will all leave here today and try to show your love to everyone. Smile at everybody you meet. Share those joys with your brothers and sisters and friends. Share Jesus with others. Tell other people about Jesus and his wonderful love for us. We can all be disciples of Jesus.

We have in the gospel of Jesus Christ a formula for a love which can "bear all things," even the presence about us of people with whom we vigorously disagree. God loves everyone whether they love him or not. Because God loves them, so must we. "We love," John writes, "because God first loved us." There is no precedent in the Christian gospel for Augustine's policy of "righteous persecution" or for any similar, subsequent policy or attitude. Love does not insist on its own way.

Often, I am reminded that in most congregations we have very different theologies. We have different ideas about the mission of the Church, about the character of God, and the interpretation of Scripture. But that must not stop us from carrying out that prime objective of loving others.

John 13.31-35 brings us back, on the eve of Jesus' death, to the possibilities of the present. The followers of Jesus will no longer see him. The glory of God and humanity that shone forth from him will seem to elude them (v. 33). Yet, though they may not always be conscious of it, it will remain visible, for it will have rubbed off on them in their mutual love (vv. 34, 35).

But it all centres on how we react TODAY – How do we treat other people, particularly people from a different culture or background to us? This reading challenges us to recognise the other person as a creature and child of God, every bit as dignified and worthy of respect as us, every bit as much called to proclaim the Creator-Father AND TO LOVE THEM. That is the sure sign of a new creation that has already begun and will one day be complete through Jesus Christ when He returns again. Amen

Prayers of Intercession : God of justice and compassion, we pray for the rulers of the world, that they may not put the practice of economic theories or the fulfillment of political ideologies before their duty to meet the needs of their people. Guided by your Holy Spirit, may they seek peace, and not warfare, justice, and not the wielding of power for its own sake, to feed the hungry rather hoarding wealth. We pray for

we pray for human beings and their relationships, that we may not put our own rights, our own wants and desires before the rights and needs of those around us.

Guided by your Holy Spirit, may we be loving and giving, tolerant and respectful, forgiving and accepting. We pray for . . .

God of love and life, we pray for the church, that we may not put our own dogmas, our traditions and prejudices before our love for one another and the world. Guided by your Holy Spirit, may we be united in our witness to the gospel, welcoming to all, open to new visions of what we should do. We pray for . . . Open our lives to your Spirit: **Amen.**

Our Father, who art in heaven

STF 503 - Love divine, all loves excelling

Watch on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGGcqHkShQ8&list=RDJGGcqHkShQ8&start_radio=1

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)

Blessing

God is making all things new! We must go into the world to live out His new commandment, God is love, and so go with the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen