



Heacham Parish Church



Holy Communion in Lent – 27th March 2022

Welcome to Heacham Parish Church, whether you are here in the church building, or watching on a screen or reading this, all are welcome and part of our church family today.

Today is 4th Sunday of Lent and Mothering Sunday, so we mark both in this service.

Mothering Sunday is a day of mixed emotions for many of us, we're not all mothers ourselves but we all have a mother, whether or not she is alive, whether or not she is in contact with us, and we are all children of God. He is our loving Father who shows us the way to live and walks beside us through our life. When our own family fail us or are absent, his love is perfect and constant.

So, as we gather to worship we come to Christ in whom we are given both comfort and family.

We have come together today to give thanks to God for all those people who have nurtured us, and to offer ourselves to nurture others, with God's help. We have also come to acknowledge the pain of a hurting world, where we have failed to nurture each other.

We come to receive again from the God of compassion and mercy.

So let us pray:

Loving, compassionate Father,

As a mother hen gathers her chicks,

so you draw the whole human family to yourself.

Bring us together now, Lord,

that we may today and forever be united under your wing

in all our sorrows and joys. **Amen.**

Hymn: **Come let us sing of a wonderful love (HON 121)**

Come let us sing of a wonderful love,
tender and true;
out of the heart of the Father above,
streaming to me and to you:
wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Jesus, the Saviour, this gospel to tell,
joyfully came;
came with the helpless and hopeless to dwell,
sharing their sorrow and shame;
seeking the lost,
saving, redeeming at measureless cost.

Jesus is seeking the wanderers yet;
why do they roam?
Love only waits to forgive and forget;
home! weary wanderer, home!
Wonderful love
dwells in the heart of the Father above.

Come to my heart, O thou wonderful love,
come and abide,
lifting my life till it rises above
envy and falsehood and pride:
seeking to be
lowly and humble, a learner of thee.

The Greeting

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus
Christ be with you
and also with you.

Prayer of preparation

**Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Compassion and forgiveness belong to the Lord our God, though
we have rebelled against him. Let us then renounce our wilfulness
and ask his mercy by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
we confess that we have sinned in thought, word, and
deed.**

We have not loved you with our whole heart.

We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

**In your mercy forgive what we have been,
help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be;
that we may do justly, love mercy,
and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.**

We confess to you our selfishness and lack of love:

fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

We confess to you our fear and failure in sharing our faith:
fill us with your Spirit.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

We confess to you our stubbornness and lack of trust:
fill us with your Spirit.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon
you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and
strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Collect

Hymn: **Lord of all hopefulness (HON 413)**

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,
whose trust, ever child-like,
no cares could destroy,
be there at our waking,
and give us, we pray,
your bliss in our hearts, Lord,
at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,
whose strong hands were skilled
at the plane and the lathe,
be there at our labours,
and give us, we pray,
your strength in our hearts, Lord,
at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,
your hands swift to welcome,
your arms to embrace,
be there at our homing,
and give us, we pray,
your love in our hearts, Lord,
at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,
whose voice is contentment,
whose presence is balm,
be there at our sleeping,
and give us, we pray,
your peace in our hearts, Lord,
at the end of the day.

Bible reading – Luke 2: 33-35 read by Sue T

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Richard C.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end

This is the Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ**

A reflection – by John

Mothering Sunday is a day not to be forgotten by children and fathers for the gifts of flowers, chocolates, and cards are anticipated, or the unhappy mothers will be upset to say the least. It's also a day of mixed emotions for many different reasons.

So where does the event come from?

Mothering Sunday began as an explicitly religious event in the 16th Century, with no connection to mothers at all. The word "mothering" referred to the "mother church" which is to say the main church or cathedral of the region. It became a tradition that, on the fourth Sunday of Lent, people would return to their mother church for a special service. This pilgrimage was apparently known

as "going a-mothering" and became something of a holiday event, with domestic servants traditionally given the day off to visit their own families as well as their mother church.

As they walked along the country lanes on their way home, children would pick wildflowers like violets to take to church or give to their mother as a small gift.

In the early 1900's a lady called Constance Penswick-Smith was concerned to revive the tradition of Mothering Sunday as a religious celebration over and against the secular Mother's Day established in the USA in 1907. She set up an office at 15 Regent Street in Nottingham with her friend Ellen Porter, the Superintendent of Nottingham's Girl's Friendly Society hostel, and they designed Mothering Sunday cards, collected hymns, researched, wrote articles and plays, and in 1920/1 produced a book.

She established The Society for the Observation of Mothering Sunday and together with her 4 brothers, who were vicars, held services in their churches. Gradually it became an established event and featured an event when a special hymn is sung, and the children collect primroses for their mothers.

So, we are to celebrate Mothering Sunday give thanks for our mothers and many women who had the caring and responsibility of children and also the church for what they did for us. (I include both mother and the many women who had caring and responsibility as 'mothers' for this talk.)

So, let's look at our Bible reading for today. Here we have Mary and Joseph talking with Simeon and how proud they must have felt when they hear in his words about Jesus and what he to achieve. But what do we learn of Mary?

First, we learn of her humility. When Gabriel came to her and told her, " Mary do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen you

are going to conceive and bear a son and you must name him Jesus". She did not say I am too young to be a mother.

Secondly, she was brave. Her decision to follow God could have been very costly. She agreed to have the baby Jesus although she was not married and could have been stoned to death. But Mary had the right perspective, she trusted God.

Finally, she was thoughtful about what people said concerning Jesus. Luke has written down the earlier life of Mary and Jesus, Luke records that Mary listened to what people said about Jesus and treasured the words and pondered them in her heart.

I wonder how Mary felt when Simeon had said the final words of his statement to her. "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too." Lk 2:34-35

We have plans for our children and sometimes God has different ones.

It must have broken her heart to see Jesus hanging on a Cross at just 33 years of age. It cost Mary a lot to be Jesus' mother – because like any good mother she loved and cared for him. But it is that same love and commitment to God and to His will that we too are called to give Him. If we want to be his disciples, we need like Mary to love and care for Jesus above anything else in our lives. And as we become closer to Christ, we learn to take on Christ like qualities.

So here we have a mothers love for her children and like so many mothers stop at nothing to give love, friendship, compassion, and sympathy to her children. We all have memories of our mothers hopefully they're good memories, ones that we can pass on to our own children of love, caring for us and especially about Jesus and what he has meant to us as a family.

Let's finish with a story. A woman goes to her rabbi and says, "Rabbi, I've done everything right, I brought up my son in the faith, gave him a very expensive Bar Mitzvah and it cost me a fortune to educate him. Then he tells me last week, he's decided to be a Christian. Rabbi, where did I go wrong?"

The Rabbi says, 'Funny you should come to me. I also brought up my Son according to the Law, paid for an expensive education, sent him to college, and now he too is a Christian.'

"What did you do?" the woman asks the rabbi.

"I turned to God for the answer."

"What did he say?"

He said, "Funny you should come to me..."

So Mothering Sunday. A good day to take an interval, a half time break in Lent, or maybe, if it's been a bit shaky, a time to start again and try to get through to Easter.

A time to bring the nest back together if you can, to stay safe.

And to remember and give thanks for what's most important in life. To the church where we belong, to a chance to thank them for their love, prayers, compassion and understanding, a time to thank Jesus who died on the cross and insured us eternal life and most of all not to forget about our mothers. Amen.

The Nicene Creed

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father, God from God,
Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;**

through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Amen

Prayers of Intercession - Led by Sue B

Loving Heavenly Father, on this special day we thank you for mothers - our own mothers and mothers everywhere. You know what it is to love your children, to watch over them tenderly, anxiously, proudly, and constantly. You know what this means, for you have called us your children, and you care for each of us as deeply as a mother cares for her child. So now we pray for those entrusted with the responsibility of motherhood, all those who watch over children with the same intensity. Grant to each one your wisdom, guidance, and strength.

Lord in your Mercy.....

A Prayer for Ukraine.

Loving God there is so much despair in our world, and for many there seems little reason to hope. Reach out, we pray to all whose belief in the future has been destroyed, and grant new dreams where the old have died, rekindle purpose where confidence has

been undermined, support when there seems to be nothing left to hold on to. We lift the situation in Ukraine to you now Lord, and we ask that you will uphold those desperately trying to bring an end to the destruction being wrought on that country. We pray for the thousands who have fled with nothing as they fear for their loved ones left behind. Lord we bring you their grief, their pain and despair. We ask for your strength in this time of darkness, hold on to them even when they find it hard to hold on to you. Draw close to them in their need Lord and support them in the days ahead. Lord in your Mercy....

Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the life of our Queen and her heart for You and her people and for the wisdom, righteousness and integrity reflected in her life. In this pandemic season we ask for your protection, strength and health for her and her family. Lord in your Mercy....

We pray for all those who preach and proclaim the message of Christ, who challenge people with the message of the Gospel, we ask that you give those who minister in this place inspiration, courage, and sincerity, so that their witness may lead others to know you. We ask a special blessing on our own Veronica, Simon, and Kaitlyn at this time, you know their needs Lord, grant them your peace which passes understanding, that quiet confidence which only you can bring, and so may their burdens be lifted, and their souls refreshed. Lord in your Mercy.....

We pray for those who feel they have lost control in their lives, overwhelmed perhaps by tragedy or the heart break of watching a loved one wrestling with pain or a terminal illness. Watch with them Lord, surround them with your presence and give them your peace. When death parts us from those we love, bless us with the comfort of your love that we may face each new day with hope and the certainty that nothing can destroy the good that has been given. May our memories become joyful, our days enriched with friendship, and our lives encircled by your love.

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

The Peace

Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace.

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

Let us offer one another a sign of peace

Hymn: Tell his praise in song and story (HON630)

Tell his praise in song and story,
bless the Lord with heart and voice;
in my God is all my glory,
come before him and rejoice.
Join to praise his name together,
he who hears his people's cry;
tell his praise, come wind or weather,
shining faces lifted high.

To the Lord whose love has found them
cry the poor in their distress;
swift his angels camped around them
prove him sure to save and bless.
God it is who hears our crying
though the spark of faith be dim;
taste and see! beyond denying
blest are those who trust in him.

Taste and see! In faith draw near him,
trust the Lord with all our pow'rs;
seek and serve him, love and fear him,
life and all its joys are ours-
true delight in holy living,
peace and plenty, length of days:
come, my children, with thanksgiving
bless the Lord in songs of praise.

In our need he walks beside us,
ears alert to every cry;
watchful eyes to guard and guide us,
love that whispers, 'It is I'.
Good shall triumph, wrong be righted,
God has pledged his promised word;
so with ransomed saints united
join to praise our living Lord!

Eucharistic Prayer

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 and good to give you thanks and praise,
Almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your
Son. For in these forty days, you lead us into the desert of
repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we
may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.
Through fasting, prayer, and acts of service you bring us back to
your generous heart.
Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your
presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others
into the radiant splendour of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and *singing*:

**Holy, holy, holy is Lord,
Holy is the Lord God Almighty.
Holy, holy, holy is Lord,
Holy is the Lord God Almighty.
Who was, and is, and is to come;
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.
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.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
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 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.**

Let us pray 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.**

Every time we eat this bread
and drink this cup,
**we proclaim the Lord's death
until he comes.**
God's holy gifts for God's holy people.



**Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God
the Father.**

Distribution of Communion

Those of us in church after we have received Communion have the opportunity to light a candle, to pray, to remember our mothers or children who have died, or whom we are separated from, or to give thanks for those who have nurtured us. If you are at home why not find and light a candle.

Prayer after communion

God of our journey, as we walk with you on the path of obedience, sustain us on our way and lead us to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Hymn: Tell out my soul (HON 631)

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!
unnumbered blessings, give my spirit voice;
tender to me the promise of his word;
in God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name:
make known his might, the deeds his arm has done;
his mercy sure, from age to age the same;
his holy name, the Lord, the mighty one.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might:
pow'rs and dominions lay their glory by;
proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight,
the hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of his word:
firm is his promise, and his mercy sure.
Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord
to children's children and for evermore.

Blessing

May God the Father, who does not despise the broken spirit, give to you a contrite heart.

Amen.

May Christ, who bore our sins in his body on the tree, heal you by his wounds.

Amen.

May the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth, speak to you words of pardon and peace.

Amen.

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

We go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ, Amen.



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