



Heacham Parish Church



31st October 2021 – 4th Sunday before Advent

Opening music – Alison plays a short piece by Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) entitled Song 22.

This is Heacham Parish Church on-line. You join us for our Service of Worship for the 4th Sunday before Advent. Although we join this at various times, from various places and in various ways we come together as one body, the Church of Jesus Christ.

Welcome in the name of Christ.
God's grace, mercy and peace be with you
and also with you.

Let everything be said and done in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God through Jesus Christ.

Sing psalms, hymns and sacred songs:
let us sing to God with thankful hearts.

Open our lips, Lord:
and we shall praise your name.

We meet in the presence of God
who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

Lord, speak to us
that we may hear your word.
Move among us
that we may behold your glory.
Receive our prayers
that we may learn to trust you.
Amen.

Hymn: **A new commandment**

A new commandment I give unto you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you,
that you love one another
as I have loved you.

By this shall all men know
that you are My disciples,
if you have love one for another.
By this shall all men know
that you are My disciples,
if you have love one for another.

Prayers of penitence

The gospel calls us to turn away from sin
and be faithful to Christ.
As we offer ourselves to him in penitence and faith,
we renew our confidence and trust in his mercy.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you,
through our own fault,
in thought, and word, and deed,
and in what we have left undone.**

**We are heartily sorry,
and repent of all our sins.
For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake,
forgive us all that is past;
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

May almighty God have mercy on us,
forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible reading – Mark 12:28-34 read by Judith

A reflection – by John

Now we come to the question as to which is the greatest commandment of all. We have heard a reading today, including a series of questions asked of Jesus. Earlier in the chapter you read of somebody who asked about paying Caesar his Due, the second question asked is about marriage and marrying your brother's widow and what the results would be in heaven. The final question is about which is the greatest commandment of all. This was an example of the Pharisee trying to outwit Jesus, but of all three questions this was the most honest of all the three questions and alone received commendation from the Lord.

I am sure you are aware that the Jews had accumulated at least 600 laws and commandments, some quite major laws and many of them were minor ones. Around one third of the laws were good and sensible the rest were not so good and quite restrictive and demanding.

With so many laws and commandments how could anybody hope to keep up with them all? It was difficult to separate them and put them in some sort of table. Ones you should keep, some very important, and some you could almost ignore.

There are 66 books in the bible (approx. 1500 pages or more depending upon the print) which contains over 4000 years of history. I am sure for many of you this might be overwhelming. Not only is the bible a lot of reading but there is also a lot in there for you to remember and understand!

You might like to read about the battles in the Old Testament, or the history of the people and their ancestry, or about women in the bible, or many other things.

How would you encourage someone to dive into the Bible to enable them to find out about God from it?

What do you say about the Bible, like a brief endorsement, something which would spur you on to read it?

It seems to me that Jesus answered the question.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this Love your neighbour as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these.”

I am not suggesting everything in the Bible is irrelevant but what I am saying is that the love, respect, and honour shown to God is the high priority in our lives. We know that we cannot keep all the laws in His kingdom, which is why we are saved by grace.

There are many quotes in the Bible of love and loved, well over 850 in the NIV but I would like us to think of one of Paul's quotes:

“Though I speak with the tongues of man and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing.”

I wonder what the world would be without love. Would those around us mean nothing to us, would our children mean nothing to us, would God mean nothing to us; then it would be a world which means nothing to us.

You and I are different, we are God’s children, full of love and compassion we go to reach out with a hug or a telephone call and say, “I wanted to know and that I love in Christ.” You see that it was love of mankind that sent Jesus to Calvary and our love for him and our neighbour is what will send us to heaven.

The scribe who accepted this teaching of Jesus was assured that he wasn’t far from the Kingdom of God. He wasn’t there yet, but he was on the right track; he was on the highway to heaven not far away but surely heading there, making his way to those gates and when you do the same my friends, you too will not be far away from that wonderful Kingdom of God.

Amen

Affirmation of faith

Let us affirm our faith in Jesus Christ the Son of God.

**Though he was divine,
he did not cling to equality with God,
but made himself nothing.
Taking the form of a slave,
he was born in human likeness.**

**He humbled himself
and was obedient to death,
even the death of the cross.
Therefore God has raised him on high,
and given him the name above every name:
that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
and every voice proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.**

Hymn: **As the deer pants**

As the deer pants for the water,
so my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship You.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,
to You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
and I long to worship You.*

I want You more than gold or silver,
only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
and the apple of my eye.

You alone are

You're my friend
and You're my brother,
even though You are a king.
I love You more than any other,
so much more than anything.

You alone are

Prayers of Intercession - Led by Sue Spencer

Lord, once more we have the opportunity to meet with you. Lord we know that your son Jesus Christ is here with us, welcoming us as his people, greeting us as his friends, and offering us lasting nourishment, not just for our bodies but for our souls as well. We are reminded of how much you love us and of the sacrifice that your Son made so that we could worship you freely. Thank you for all you have done and all you have given us, so help us in return to give our all to you, in the name of Christ.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Almighty God, ruler of the ends of the earth, we pray for our Queen and thank you for the strong faith that she has with you and for the example she has shown us. We ask that you will help her as she has to come to terms with not being able to do as much as she would like. We also pray for those to whom you have entrusted power and responsibility, we pray especially for those who are in government and for all members of Parliament. We ask Lord that you will grant them wisdom, patience, dedication, insight, open mindedness, and humility.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Loving God, as the United Nations climate conference, COP26, begins in Glasgow, let us bring our prayers to you, who created the earth and all within it. We pray for world leaders: that they may all work together, through the decisions taken, to protect the planet and all who live within it. We praise your name with all you have created. You are present in the whole universe, and in the smallest of creatures.

We acknowledge the responsibilities you have placed upon us as stewards of your creation. May the Holy Spirit inspire all political leaders at COP26 as they seek to embrace the changes needed to foster a more sustainable society. Instil in them the courage and gentleness to implement fairer solutions for the poorest and most vulnerable and commit their nations to the care of Our Common Home.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

Almighty God, as All Saints' Day approaches, we come to you as ordinary everyday people, nothing special about us and no particular merits to boast of, yet you have called us to be part of your family, you have called us to be your church. Today you have called us to remember all who have gone ahead of us in the journey of faith. Merciful God give us the grace to follow in the footsteps of the saints, as they followed in the footsteps of your dear son. Keep alive the memory of those dear to ourselves whom you have called to yourself, let us bring them to mind in a moment of silence (Short silence) We ask Lord that you will be with those who come this afternoon to the service of remembrance, that the bereaved find comfort and strength to continue facing the future without their loved one. We also pray for the bereavement team as they console the bereaved and let them find the right words to comfort the bereaved.

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

Amen

The Lord's Prayer

Collect for today

God of glory,
touch our lips with the fire of your Spirit,
that we with all creation
may rejoice to sing your praise;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Closing prayers

O Lord, open my lips
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

When we were still helpless

Christ died for the ungodly.

The proof of God's amazing love is this:

while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

This is love, not that we loved God,
but that he loved us and sent his Son.

He is the sacrifice for our sins,

that we might live through him.

If God loves us so much

we ought to love one another.

If we love one another

God lives in us.

Conclusion

**In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

To a troubled world
peace from Christ.
To a searching world
love from Christ.
To a waiting world
hope from Christ.
Amen

Glory to God,
whose power, at work among us,
can do infinitely more
than all we can ask or conceive;
to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus,
for ever and ever.
Amen.

Closing music – *Alison plays an Aria by Brian Solomons (born 1948)*

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