

We remain standing for our final hymn

Guide me, O thou great Redeemer,
pilgrim through this barren land;
I am weak, but thou art mighty;
hold me with thy powerful hand:
bread of heaven,
feed me now and evermore.

Open now the crystal fountain
whence the healing stream doth flow;
let the fiery cloudy pillar
lead me all my journey through:
strong deliverer,
be thou still my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,
bid my anxious fears subside;
death of death, and hell's destruction,
land me safe on Canaan's side:
songs and praises
I will ever give to thee.

**We will use these Orders of Service at other Visitations, so
please leave them with us at the end of the service.**

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**“What do these stones
mean?”**



The Archdeacon of Stoke-upon-Trent's Visitation 2016



Archdeacon

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
I do now admit you to your office of Churchwarden,
and I do now commission you in His service.
May God who has called you to this work of Churchwarden
give you also the strength and the enthusiasm
to do it well, to his glory
and for the wellbeing of all in your parish.
May his blessing be with you in all that you do for him.

All: **Amen.**

We all stand to say:

All: **Lord Jesus Christ,
you have no body on earth but ours,
no hands but ours,
no feet but ours;
ours are the eyes
showing your compassion to the world,
ours are the feet
with which you go about doing good,
ours are the hands
with which you are to bless us now,
Lord Jesus, take us and use us
in your service. Amen.**

The Peace

Peace to this house from God our heavenly Father.
Peace to this house from his Son who is our peace.
Peace to this house from the Holy Spirit, the life-giver.

The Blessing

Christ, whose glory is in the heavens,
fill your churches and illuminate your hearts;
and the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always.
Amen

All **Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins. as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever.
Amen.**

¶ **The Admission of Churchwardens**

Churchwardens stand

The churchwardens when admitted to their office are Lay Officers of the Bishop. They shall discharge their duties as are by Law and Custom assigned to them. They shall be foremost in their parish in representing the laity, and in co-operating with the Incumbent. They shall use their best endeavours, both by their own personal example and by their teaching, to encourage in their parishioners the practice of true religion and to promote true unity and peace among them. Will you, Churchwardens, now elected to this office in your own parish, gladly and willingly serve God in this way, and now make your declaration together?

The Churchwardens together:

**Yes, we will, and we ask God to help us.
I..... having been duly appointed and chosen
Churchwarden of the Parish of
do solemnly and sincerely declare
that I will faithfully and diligently perform
the duties of the office of Churchwarden for the year ensuing.
Father we thank you for calling us to this office and duty
in the life of our congregations and parish.
Remember what you have wrought in us,
and not what we deserve,
but, as you have called us to your service,
make us worthy of our calling.
In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

¶ **Preparation**

We love the place, O God,
wherein thine honour dwells;
the joy of thine abode
all earthly joy excels.

It is the house of prayer,
wherein thy servants meet;
and thou, O Lord, art there
thy chosen flock to greet.

We love the sacred font;
for there the holy dove
to pour is ever wont
his blessing from above.

We love thine altar, Lord;
O what on earth so dear?
for there, in faith adored,
we find thy presence near.

We love the word of life,
the word that tells of peace,
of comfort in the strife,
and joys that never cease.

We love to sing below
for mercies freely given;
but O, we long to know
the triumph-song of heaven.

Lord Jesus, give us grace
on earth to love thee more,
in heaven to see thy face,
and with thy saints adore.

O God, make speed to save us.
All **O Lord, make haste to help us.**

This is none other than the house of God;
All **this is the gate of heaven.**

**Almighty God,
we thank you for our fellowship in the household of faith
with all who have been baptized in your name.
Keep us faithful to our baptism,
and so make us ready for that day
when the whole creation shall be made perfect in your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Prayers of Penitence

A Rural Dean leads us in the prayers of penitence
We are a temple of God's indwelling Holy Spirit, yet we have grieved him. The temple of our bodies does not belong to us, but was bought at the price of Christ's precious blood. So we come, in sorrow yet with confidence, to ask forgiveness of our Father in heaven.

Zeal for your house has eaten me up
and the taunts of those who taunt you have fallen upon me.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

The Lord will defend your going out and your coming in
from this time forward for evermore.
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

The Rural Dean declares God's forgiveness

May God who loved the world so much that he sent his Son to be our
Saviour forgive you *your* sins
and make you holy to serve him in the world,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

As we gather as leaders of your church in this Diocese,
we remember your promise
that when two or three are gathered in your name
you are there in the midst of them,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For our places of worship,
that we may be still and know that you are God,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For the fulfilling of our desires and petitions as you see best for us,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For your blessings in the past and for a vision for the future,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For the gift of the Holy Spirit and new life in baptism,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For the pardon of our sins when we fall short of your glory,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For a foretaste of your eternal kingdom
in the sacrament of the Eucharist,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For the faith of those who have gone before us
and for grace to persevere like them,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For the benefactors of our churches who have died in the peace of Christ
and are at rest,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

For a sense of our fellowship with all your saints,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

O God, from living stones
you prepare an everlasting dwelling-place for your majesty.
Grant that in the power of the Holy Spirit
those who serve you here
may always be kept within your presence.
This we pray through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Stand to sing

Gospel Canticle: *The Magnificat*

With Mary let my soul rejoice,
and praise God's holy name -
his saving love from first to last,
from age to age the same!

How strong his arm, how great his power!
the proud he will disown;
the meek and humble he exalts
to share his glorious throne.

The rich our God will send away
and feed the hungry poor;
the arms of love remain outstretched
at mercy's open door.

So shall God's promise be fulfilled,
to Israel firmly made:
a child is born, a Son is given
whose crown will never fade.

All glory to the Father, Son
and Spirit now proclaim;
with Mary let the world rejoice
and praise God's holy name!

Tune: St Peter ©David Mowbray

Sit for

The Archdeacon's Charge

A Lay Chair leads us in these intercessions

The risen Christ is here in the midst of us.
We bring our prayers to him as Lord of the Church.

For the Church universal, of which our buildings are a visible symbol,
Lord, receive our thanks and prayer.

The day is almost over, and the evening has come;
let us pray with one heart and mind.

Silence is kept.

As our evening prayer rises before you, O God,
so may your Spirit come down upon us
to set us free to sing your praise
for ever and ever.

All **Amen.**

The Visitation Notices

Let us build a house where love can dwell

and all can safely live,
a place where saints and children tell
how hearts learn to forgive.
Built of hopes and dreams and visions,
rock of faith and vault of grace;
here the love of Christ shall end divisions:

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

Let us build a house where love is found
in water, wine and wheat:
a banquet hall on holy ground
where peace and justice meet.
Here the love of God, through Jesus,
is revealed in time and space;
as we share in Christ the feast that frees us:

All are welcome ...

Let us build a house where hands will reach
beyond the wood and stone
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,
and live the Word they've known.
Here the outcast and the stranger
bear the image of God's face;
let us bring an end to fear and danger:

All are welcome ...

¶ **The Prayers**

Let us build a house where all are named,
their songs and visions heard
and loved and treasured, taught and claimed
as words within the Word.
Built of tears and cries and laughter,
prayers of faith and songs of grace,
let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:
*All are welcome, all are welcome,
all are welcome in this place.*

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¶ The Word of God

Father, your eternal Word speaks to us
through the words of Holy Scripture.
Here we read about your mighty acts and purposes in history,
and about those whom you chose as the agents of your will.
Inspired by the revelation of your Son,
we seek your present purposes.
Give us ears to hear and hearts to obey.
May the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart

All **Be acceptable to you, O Lord our God**

We sit for

The Reading: *Joshua 3.17 - 4.9*

The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ² 'Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, ³ and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight.'

⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, ⁵ and said to them, 'Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, ⁶ to serve as a sign among you. In the future,

when your children ask you, "What do these stones mean?" ⁷ tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel for ever.'

⁸ So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had told Joshua; and they carried them over with them to their camp, where they put them down. ⁹ Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where the priests who carried the ark of the covenant had stood. And they are there to this day. *(NIVUK)*

This is the word of the Lord.

All **Thanks be to God.**

Silence is kept

How awesome is this place.
**This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gateway of heaven.**

I saw a ladder which rested on the ground
with its top reaching to heaven,
and the angels of God were going up and down it.
**This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gateway of heaven.**

You will see greater things than this.
You will see heaven wide open,
and God's angels ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.
**This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gateway of heaven.**

You are the temple of the living God,
and the Spirit of God dwells in you.
The temple of God is holy, and you are that temple.
**This is none other than the house of God,
and this is the gateway of heaven.**