



**ST. LAURENCE CHURCH
THE PARISH EUCHARIST
SERVICE CELEBRATED IN CELTIC
STYLE**

The Fourth Sunday of Lent
19th. March 2023
Mothering Sunday

The Sidesmen today are
Stephen and Norma Crowe



The Zoom details for this service are:

Meeting ID: 457 244 0784
Passcode: 5i1UCa

Hymn

Longing for light, we wait in darkness

Longing for truth, we turn to You
Make us Your own, Your holy people,
Light for the world to see

Christ, be our light
Shine in our hearts
Shine through the darkness
Christ, be our light
Shine in Your church gathered today

Longing for shelter, many are homeless

Longing for warmth, many are cold

Make us Your building, sheltering others,
Walls made of living stone

Christ, be our light
Shine in our hearts
Shine through the darkness
Christ, be our light
Shine in Your church gathered today

Many the gifts, many the people
Many the hearts that yearn to belong

Let us be servants to one another
Making Your kingdom come

Christ, be our light
Shine in our hearts
Shine through the darkness
Christ, be our light
Shine in Your church gathered today

Welcome/The Gathering

Gather us in, the lost and the lonely,
the broken and breaking, the tired and aching,
who long for the nourishment found at your feast.

Gather us in

The done and the doubting, the wishing and wondering,
the puzzled and pondering, who long for your company,
found at your feast.

Gather us in

The proud and pretentious the sure and superior
the never inferior who long for the levelling found at your feast.

Gather us in

The bright and the bustling, the stirrers,
the shakers, the kind laughter

makers who long for the deeper joys found at your feast

Gather us in

From corner or limelight, from mansion or campsite, from fears and obsession, from tears and depression, from untold excesses, from treasured successes; to meet, to eat, to be given a seat; be joined to the vine; be offered new wine; become like the least; be found at the feast

Gather us in!

Confession

Create a clean heart within me, O God, so that it may become your chosen shelter and the resting place of the Holy Spirit. I take the cross upon me, over the tablet of my heart, and I beseech the living God of the universe, may the light of lights come to my dark hard heart so that I may live in the power of your love. Amen.

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**

Collect

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to

heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Amen

First Reading - 1 Samuel 16:1b, 6-7, 10-13a read by Jane Cooper

The LORD said to Samuel: "Fill your horn with oil, and be on your way. I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem, for I have chosen my king from among his sons."

As Jesse and his sons came to the sacrifice, Samuel looked at Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed is here before him." But the LORD said to Samuel: "Do not judge from his appearance or from his lofty stature, because I have rejected him.

Not as man sees does God see, because man sees the appearance but the LORD looks into the heart." In the same way Jesse presented seven sons before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any one of these." Then Samuel asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?" Jesse replied, "There is still the youngest, who is tending the sheep." Samuel said to Jesse, "Send for him; we will not begin the sacrificial banquet until he arrives here." Jesse sent and had the young man brought to them. He was ruddy, a youth handsome to behold and making a splendid appearance.

The LORD said, "There—anoint him, for this is the one!" Then Samuel, with the horn of oil in hand, anointed David in the presence of his brothers; and from that day on, the spirit of the LORD rushed upon David.

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found; was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved; how precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come; 'tis grace hath brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

The Lord has promised good to me, his word my hope secures; he will my shield and portion be, as long as life endures.

Yea, when this flesh and heart shall fail, and mortal life shall cease, I shall possess, within the veil, a life of joy and peace.

When we've been there ten thousand years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise than when we first begun.

Gospel Reading

The Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us. To those who accepted him, he gave power to become children of God.

The Lord be with you
And also with you

From the Holy Gospel according to John

Glory to you O Lord

As Jesus passed by he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Jesus answered, "Neither he nor his parents sinned; it is so that the works of God might be made visible through him. We have to do the works of the one who sent me while it is day. Night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world." When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva, and smeared the clay on his eyes, and said to him, "Go wash in the Pool of Siloam" — which means Sent—. So he went and washed, and came back able to see.

His neighbours and those who had seen him earlier as a beggar said, "Isn't this the one who used to sit and beg?" Some said, "It is, " but others said, "No, he just looks like him." He said, "I am." So they said to him, "How were your eyes opened?" He replied, "The man called Jesus made clay and anointed my eyes and told me, 'Go to Siloam and

wash.' So I went there and washed and was able to see." And they said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I don't know."

They brought the one who was once blind to the Pharisees. Now Jesus had made clay and opened his eyes on a sabbath. So then the Pharisees also asked him how he was able to see. He said to them, "He put clay on my eyes, and I washed, and now I can see." So some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, because he does not keep the sabbath."

But others said, "How can a sinful man do such signs?" And there was a division among them. So they said to the blind man again, "What do you have to say about him, since he opened your eyes?" He said, "He is a prophet."

Now the Jews did not believe that he had been blind and gained his sight until they summoned the parents of the one who had gained his sight. They asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How does he now see?" His parents answered and said, "We know that this is our son and that he was born blind. We do not know how he sees now, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him, he is of age; he can speak for himself." His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for the Jews had already agreed that if anyone acknowledged him as the Christ, he would

be expelled from the synagogue. For this reason his parents said, "He is of age; question him."

So a second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give God the praise! We know that this man is a sinner." He replied, "If he is a sinner, I do not know. One thing I do know is that I was blind and now I see." So they said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" He answered them, "I told you already and you did not listen.

Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?" They ridiculed him and said, "You are that man's disciple; we are disciples of Moses! We know that God spoke to Moses, but we do not know where this one is from." The man answered and said to them, "This is what is so amazing, that you do not know where he is from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if one is devout and does his will, he listens to him.

It is unheard of that anyone ever opened the eyes of a person born blind. If this man were not from God, he would not be able to do anything." They answered and said to him, "You were born totally in sin, and are you trying to teach us?" Then they threw him out.

When Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, he found him and said, "Do you believe in the Son of

Man?" He answered and said, "Who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, the one speaking with you is he." He said, "I do believe, Lord," and he worshiped him. Then Jesus said, "I came into this world for judgment, so that those who do not see might see, and those who do see might become blind."

Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not also blind, are we?" Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you are saying, 'We see,' so your sin remains.

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

Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

There is no other God, there never was and there never will be, than God the Father, unbegotten and without beginning, the Lord of the universe, as we have been taught.

And His son Jesus Christ, whom we declare to have always been with the Father in a way that baffles description. He was made man, defeated death and received into heaven by the Father and given power over all names, in heaven, on earth and under the earth.

We believe in Him and look for His coming soon as a judge of all,

treating everyone according to their faith and deeds.

He has poured out His Spirit on us in abundance, the gift and guarantee of eternal life.

We acknowledge and adore Him as one God in the Trinity of the Holy Name. Amen.

The Prayers of the Church led by Julian van Kan

Holy God, you gave us our Mothers, for which we give you joyful thanks. Today, we especially thank you for all that our mothers gave to us from the moment we were born into this amazing life. We remember the love and care they surrounded us with through our early years; the guidance they continued to give as we grew to maturity; the support that they continued to give as many of us became parents ourselves and the role they played as grandparents, playing such a vital role in society.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Gracious God, we thank you for the role that so many mothers played in introducing us to you and your son Jesus Christ, through bedtime prayers and stories, in the way they served as an example of Christian life and introducing us to public worship in the fellowship of our Mother Churches and our first spiritual homes.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Creator God, as we watch and read the news we see the brokenness of our world and that for many families life is more dangerous than ever before. We pray for healing among the nations; for food where there is hunger; for freedom where there is oppression; for joy where there is pain; that your love may bring peace to all your children.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Father God, your Son, was born into the human family of Mary and Joseph; bless all those that we live amongst who are parents and all who care for children in our local communities. Strengthen all families who are living under stress and shine your love into homes where no human love is found.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Loving God, we pray for all mothers of children suffering from serious illness, recognising not only their anguish but also the way that their love and determination really makes a big difference to chances of recovery. We thank you for the many hours our parents spent caring for us when we were ill, and thank you too for the many children who grow up to be their parent's

carers in later life. We pray for: Gillian Robinson, Robbie Robinson, Eleanor Ash, Colin White, David Winston, Christian Jervis-Read, Cressida Jervis-Read, Nigel Barter, John Tanner, Jan Edwards, Jill Fitzpatrick, Geraldine Nurney.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Merciful God, like a mother, you gather your people to you as gently as any human mother with her children. Turn the despair that comes through the parting of death into hope, and may we, through your gentleness, find comfort and restoration in our sadness and loss. We pray for: Spencer Charles Edwards, Douglas Brown, Kathryn Louise Bembridge, William Bennett, Joseph William Ringer, Kitty Weguelin, William David Potter, Peter Lewis, Winifred Richard, Brian Lawrence, Lily Collins, Gillian Appelbe, John Else.

Lord, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

Everlasting God, you alone can see the future, and so we pray to you, who can see ahead of us, asking for your protection for each of us, for our families and those who we love.

Lord Jesus, we give you thanks and praise because the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty belong to you and you

reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever. Lord Jesus, in your Mercy: **Hear our Prayer**

We pray together: **Hail Mary, Full of Grace, The Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Amen.**

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

So, in the presence of the Bread of Life who refused food for himself in order to nourish others, we deepen our devotion by praying His words:

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

Hymn

For Mary, Mother of our Lord God's holy name be praised, who first the Son of God adored, as on her child she gazed.

Brave, holy Virgin, she believe, though hard the task assigned,

and by the Holy Ghost conceived the Saviour of mankind.

She gave her body as God's shrine, her heart to piercing pain; she knew the cost of love divine, when Jesus Christ was slain.

Dear Mary, from your lowliness and home in Galilee there comes a joy and holiness to every family.

Hail, Mary, you are full of grace, above all women blest; and blest your Son, whom your embrace in birth and death confessed.

Prayer of Adoration

Heaven is here, and earth and the space between them is thin. Distance may divide, but Christ's promise unites those bounded by time, those blessed by eternity.

Let heaven be glad;

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Heaven is here, and earth, and the Church above and below is one. Peter is here, and Paul, Martha and all the Mary's, the saints from far back and those who left us not long ago. And only sight prevents us from seeing them, one with us on the other side.

Let heaven be glad

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Heaven is here, and earth, and the God who made them is present. The lamb, glorious on the throne, sits beside us; the Spirit of God, the

Dove makes her resting place among us.

God inhales the breath of our prayers and spreads a table for our satisfaction.

Let heaven be glad.

Let the whole earth cry GLORY!

Blessing and honour and glory and power be to our God for ever and ever. **Amen!**

The Invitation

He was always the guest. In the homes of Peter and Jairus, Martha and Mary, Joanna and Susanna. At the meal tables of the wealthy where he pleaded the case of the poor, he was always the guest. Upsetting polite company, befriending isolated people; welcoming the stranger, he was always the guest. But here, at this table, He is the host. Those who wish to serve Him must first be served by Him, those who wish to follow Him, must first be fed by Him, those who would wash His feet, must first let Him make them clean. For this is the table where God intends us to be nourished. This is the time when God can make us new. So come, you who hunger and thirst for a deeper faith, a better life, a fairer world. Jesus Christ who has sat at our tables, now invites us to be guests at His.

The Story

What we do here, we do in imitation of what Christ first did. To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example and command rooted in the

experience he shared with his disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.

On the night when he was betrayed, as they were sitting at a meal, Jesus took a piece of bread and broke it, he gave it to the disciples saying 'This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me.'

Later after they had eaten, he took a cup of wine and said 'This cup is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Drink this all of you, to remember me.'

So now, we do as Jesus did. We take this bread and this wine, the produce of the earth and fruit of human labour. In these Jesus has promised to be present; through these, Christ can make us whole.

**All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have, I offer now to you.**

**Take and sanctify these gifts
for your honour, Lord.**

**Knowing that I love and serve you
is enough reward.**

**All that I am, all that I do,
all that I'll ever have I offer now to you.**

The 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 our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right for you made us, and before you made us you made the world we inhabit, and before the world you made the eternal home in which, through Christ we have a place.

All that is spectacular, all that is plain have their origin in you; all that is lovely, all who are loving point to you as their fulfilment. And grateful as we are for the world we know and the universe beyond our ken, we particularly praise you, whom eternity cannot contain, for coming to earth and entering time in Jesus. For his life which informs our living, for his compassion which changes our hearts, for his clear speaking which contradicts our harmless generalities, for his disturbing presence, his innocent suffering, his fearless dying, his rising to life breathing forgiveness, we praise you and worship him. Here too our gratitude rises for the promise of the Holy Spirit, who even yet, even now, confronts us with your claims and attracts us to your goodness. Therefore we gladly join our voices to the song of the Church on earth and in heaven:

**Holy, holy, holy, holy.
Holy, holy, Lord God almighty!
And we lift our hearts before you
as a token of our love:
holy, holy, holy, holy.
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit,**

**come and fill our hearts anew,
Holy Spirit.**

**And we lift our voice before you
as a token of our love,
Holy Spirit, Holy Spirit.**

And now, lest we believe that our praise alone fulfils your purpose, we fall silent and remember him who came because words weren't enough. Setting our wisdom, our will, our words aside, emptying our hearts and bringing nothing in our hands, we yearn for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving which Christ alone can offer...

Merciful God, send now in kindness, your Holy Spirit to settle on this bread and wine and fill them with the fullness of Jesus. And let that same Spirit rest on us, converting us from the patterns of this passing world, until we conform to the shape of Him whose food we now share. **Amen.**

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread and broke it, and said, 'This is my body—broken for you'. Later he took a cup of wine and said 'This is the new relationship with God made possible because of my death. Take it, all of you, to remember me.' He whom the universe could not contain, is present to us in this bread. He who redeemed us and called us by name now meets us in this cup. So take this bread and this wine. In them God comes to us so that we may come to God.

Holy, holy, holy, holy.

**Holy, holy, Lord God almighty!
And we lift our hearts before you
as a token of our love:
holy, holy, holy, holy.**

**A Prayer as we join with those
watching and worshipping with
us on Zoom**

**My Jesus, I believe that you are
present in the most Blessed
Sacrament. I love You above `all
things and I desire to receive you
into my soul. Since I cannot now
receive You sacramentally, come
at least spiritually into my heart. I
embrace You as if You were
already there, and unite myself
wholly to You. Never permit me to
be separated from You. Amen.**

The Distribution of Communion

*We advise those who do not wish to
receive the wine to indicate this by
raising their hand when offered it.*

**The chalice bearers today are:
Brian Elliott and Charles Vernede**

Communion Hymn

Lord Jesus Christ
You have come to us
You are one with us
Mary's Son
Cleansing our souls from all their sin
Pouring Your love and goodness in
Jesus, our love for you we sing
Living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ
Now and every day
Teach us how to pray

Son of God
You have commanded us to do
This in remembrance Lord of you
Into our lives your power breaks
through
Living Lord

Lord Jesus Christ
You have come to us
Born as one with us
Mary's Son
Led out to die on Calvary
Risen from death to set us free
Living Lord Jesus, help us see
You are Lord

Lord Jesus Christ
I would come to you
live my life for you
Son of God
All your commands I know are true
Your many gifts will make me new
Into my life your power breaks
through
Living Lord

Post Communion Collect

**Loving God, as a mother feeds
her children at the breast you
feed us in this sacrament with the
food and drink of eternal life: help
us who have tasted your
goodness to grow in grace within
the household of faith; through
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen**

The Peace

Christ who has nourished us, is our
peace. Strangers and friends, male

and female, old and young. He has broken down the barriers to bind us to him and to each other. Having tasted His goodness, let us share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you.

The Peace is shared.

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people, we give ourselves to you. Take us out to live as changed people because we have shared the Living Bread and cannot remain the same. Ask much of us, expect much from us, enable much by us and encourage many by us. So Lord may we live to your glory, both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven. Amen.

Benediction

On our heads and our homes

The blessing of God

In our coming and going

The Peace of God

In our life and believing

The Love of God

Be with us all

Today until the end of time. **Amen.**

Please sit for the Notices

The flowers are placed on the altar to be blessed by the Vicar. They are then distributed to the children who take them to their mothers and grandmothers.

The Blessing

May the Lord who brought us to birth by his Spirit, strengthen us for the Christian life.

May the Lord who provides for all our needs sustain us day by day.

May the Lord whose steadfast love is constant as a mother's care, send us out to live and work for others.

And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Hymn

Ye who own the faith of Jesus,
sing the wonders that were done
when the love of God the Father
over sin the victory won,
when he made the Virgin Mary
mother of his only Son.

Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full
of grace.

Blessed were the chosen people
out of whom the Lord did come;
blessed was the land of promise
fashioned for his earthly home;
but more blessed far the mother,
she who bare him in her womb.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full
of grace.

Wherefore let all faithful people
tell the honour of her name;
let the Church, in her foreshadowed,
part in her thanksgiving claim;
what Christ's mother sang in glad-
ness let Christ's people sing the
same.

Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full of grace.

Let us weave our supplications,
she with us and we with her,
for the advancement of the faithful,
for each faithful worshiper,
for the doubting, for the sinful,
for each heedless wanderer.

Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full of grace.

May the Mother's intercessions
on our homes a blessing win,
that the children all be prospered,
strong and fair and pure within,
following our Lord's own footsteps,
firm in faith and free from sin.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full of grace.

For the sick and the aged,
for our dear ones far away,
for the hearts that mourn in secret,
all who need our prayers today,
for the faithful gone before us,
may the holy Virgin pray.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full of grace.

Praise, O Mary, praise the Father,
praise thy Saviour and thy Son,
praise the everlasting Spirit,
who hath made thee ark and throne
o'er all creatures high exalted,
lowly praise the Three in One.
Hail Mary, hail Mary, hail Mary, full of grace.

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Let us bless the Lord
Thanks be to God

May the divine assistance remain with us always.

And with all our brothers and sisters in Christ.

May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God, rest in peace. **And rise in glory. Amen.**

We listen to the Organ Voluntary

NOTICES

ELECTORAL ROLL - if you would like to be registered on the Electoral Roll of St Laurence or wish to know more about being a member, please speak to Stephen Ringer. Names can be added up to the date of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting which will be held on Sunday 23 April. Application forms are available on the table at the back of the church.

EASTER LILIES – if you would like to purchase an Easter lily in remembrance of a loved one, please place cash or a cheque in an envelope and clearly print the person's name on the front of the envelope. Please give the envelopes to the Churchwardens (Ali or Liz) or post them in the wall safe inside the church where they will be collected.

A minimum donation of £4.50 per lily is requested. Cash is preferred.

If you wish to pay by cheque it should be payable to **St Laurence Flower Guild**.

The deadline for receiving orders is Sunday 26 March.

The Flower Guild are planning a Flower Festival in St Laurence Church over the weekend of King Charles' coronation. Monetary donations for flowers would be most welcome.

PLEASE NOTE - we now have the facility to accept donations by Credit Card/Apple Pay etc. The machine will be on the table opposite the pew leaflets after the service.

PARISH LENTEN COURSE - please do purchase the book below if you wish to join the Lenten course, every Wednesday evening after Compline on zoom.

Lent with St Francis – Daily Reflections
PAPERBACK £10.03 KINDLE
EDITION £2.24

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATIONS OF CLEAN JAM JARS - No more are required at present.

LENT LUNCHESES 2023 – to be organised by Hawkhurst Churches Together and held at the Baptist Church Hall, Cranbrook Road,

Hawkhurst TN18 4BT from 12 noon to 1.30 pm. Lunches will take place on the following dates, served by:

Friday 24th March – Baptist Church

Friday 31st March – St Barnabas Church

Good Friday 7th April – all Churches together

If you would like to help with serving or donations of soup/bread/butter/cheese/fruit on the 7th April, please speak to Sandra.

Loves and Fishes Sunday every 3rd Sunday monthly. The next collection date will be Sunday 23rd April. All contribution of non-perishables will be collected and donated to the Hawkhurst Food Bank.