

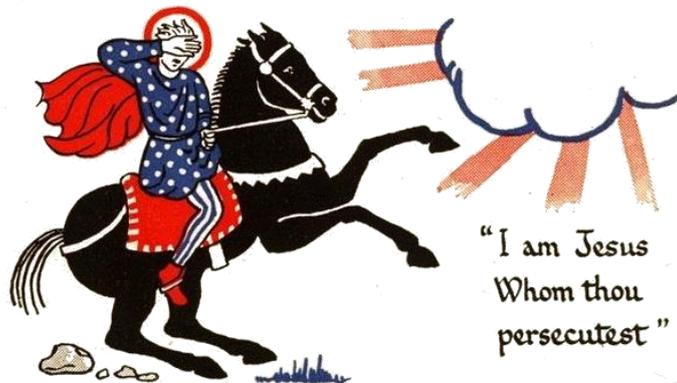
Meon Bridge Benefice

Corhampton & Meonstoke, Droxford, Exton with Preshaw



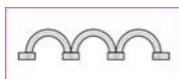
&

CONVERSION OF S. PAUL



The Second Sunday of Epiphany
Eucharist with **Spiritual Communion**
(Order One – Eucharistic Prayer B)

In Time of Pandemic



HYMNS

Voluntary

STRACATHRO

Processional

Christ Whose Glory Fills The Skies (RATISBON)

Gradual:

Forth In Thy Name, O Lord, I Go (SONG 34 (ANGELS' SONG))

Offertory:

Amazing Grace

Post Communion:

Lo round the throne a glorious band
(DEUS TUORUM MILITUM)

Recessional:

Rejoice in God's Saints (HANOVER)

Voluntary

With Joy We Meditate The Grace (TALLIS' ORDINAL)

Spiritual Communion

The Prayer Book instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we may be unable receive the sacrament physically in ourselves at this time. For as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy Sacrament; (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us;) From the Third Exhortation in the BCP. Making a Spiritual Communion is especially fitting when we cannot receive the sacrament at the great feasts of the Church, and it fulfils the duty of receiving Holy Communion 'regularly, and especially at the festivals of Christmas, Easter and Whit Sunday.' (Canon B 15 of the Church of England).

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our service of the Eucharist – our small sacrifice of thanksgiving on this the Third of the Epiphany; when Jesu is revealed as the Christ, the Messiah to his disciples at the Wedding in Cana in Galilee.

Tomorrow is Feast of the Conversion of St Paul, so in our service we shall also recall how the zealous persecutor of Christians became the fervent apostle Paul, following the revelation of Jesus to him on the road to Damascus.

Our service comes from the **Church of St Peter & St Paul, Exton**, in the Meon Valley in Hampshire.

INTROIT HYMN Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies

- 1 Christ, whose glory fills the skies
Christ, the true, the only Light
Sun of Righteousness, arise
Triumph o'er the shades of night
Dayspring from on high, be near
Daystar, in my heart appear.
- 2 Dark and cheerless is the morn
Unaccompanied by thee
Joyless is the day's return
Till thy mercy's beams I see
Till they inward light impart
Glad my eyes, and warm my heart.
- 3 Visit then this soul of mine
Pierce the gloom of sin and grief
Fill me, radiancy divine
Scatter all my unbelief
More and more thyself display
Shining to the perfect day.

Meter: 77.77.77

Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

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RATISBON

German traditional melody

in Johann Gottlob Werners' *Choralbuch* of 1815

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THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

A Reading from Genesis



¹⁷After Abram's return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. ¹⁹He blessed him and said,

'Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
maker of heaven and earth;

²⁰and blessed be God Most High,

who has delivered your enemies into your hand!'

And Abram gave him one-tenth of everything.

Genesis 14.17-20

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Some verses from Psalm 139

Response:

How abundant is your goodness, O Lord.

- 1 Blessed are all those who fear the Lord,
and walk in his ways.
- 2 You shall eat the fruit of the toil of your hands;
it shall go well with you, and happy shall you be. **R**
- 3 Your wife within your house
shall be like a fruitful vine;
your children round your table,
like fresh olive branches.
- 4 Thus shall the one be blest
who fears the Lord. **R**
- 5 The Lord from out of Zion bless you,
that you may see Jerusalem in prosperity
all the days of your life.
- 6 May you see your children's children
and may there be peace upon Israel.

R: How abundant is your goodness, O Lord.

Psalm 139.1-5,12-18

O Christ, our true vine,
may we your branches
be ever fruitful in your service
and share your love and peace with all your children,
in the power of the Spirit and to the glory of the Father. **Amen.**

SECOND READING

A Reading from the Revelation to St John

⁶I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunder-peals, crying out,

'Hallelujah!

For the Lord our God
the Almighty reigns.

⁷Let us rejoice and exult
and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready;

⁸to her it has been granted to be clothed
with fine linen, bright and pure' –

for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

⁹And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God.' ¹⁰Then I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, 'You must not do that! I am a fellow-servant with you and your comrades who hold the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'

Revelation 19.6-10

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN Forth in thy Name, O Lord, I go

- 1 Forth in thy Name, O Lord, I go,
my daily labour to pursue;
thee, only thee, resolved to know
in all I think or speak or do.
- 2 The task thy wisdom hath assigned,
O let me cheerfully fulfil;
in all my works thy presence find,
and prove thy good and perfect will.
- 3 Thee may I set at my right hand,
whose eyes mine inmost substance see,
and labour on at thy command,
and offer all my works to thee.
- 4 Give me to bear thy easy yoke,
and every moment watch and pray,
and still to things eternal look,
and hasten to thy glorious day.
- 5 For thee delightfully employ
whate'er thy bounteous grace hath given;
and run my course with even joy,
and closely walk with thee to heav'n.

Meter: LM

Forth in thy Name, O Lord, I go

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

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SONG 34 (ANGELS' SONG)

Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625)

with descant arranged by Richard M S Irwin

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GOSPEL READING.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Christ was revealed in flesh,
proclaimed among the nations
and believed in throughout the world.

All Alleluia.

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ
according to St John. (+)

All (+) Glory to you, O Lord.

¹On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.

²Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.'

⁴And Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.' ⁵His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.'

⁶Now standing there were six stone water-jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. ⁷Jesus said to them, 'Fill the jars with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. ⁸He said to them, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward.' So they took it.

⁹When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, ¹⁰'Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now.'

¹¹Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

John 2.1-11

At the end:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

SERMON

Nowadays, wedding invitations come in ever more inventive forms, surpassed only by the 'save-the-date' cards, and even the bookmarks and even fridge-magnets that can precede them; each elaborately 'sign-posting' the 'Big Day' ahead.

John's Gospel describes events at the wedding in Cana as 'the first of Jesus' signs', which 'revealed his glory' (John 2:11).

And, much of the Revelation to John is a signpost, searching for imagery, that grasps out to be even remotely adequate, for a vision of the glory of God in Jesus: a vision of what is in store for those who put their trust in Jesus.

One powerful image is the 'Marriage of the Lamb', and the feasting that follows. It pictures the consummation of Christ's love for his bride -- the Church, us. And, as we all know, what comes next for God's people is: 'We all live happily ever after'. It is a vision that is almost too wonderful to take in.

So, John of Patmos warns against being distracted by the 'invitation card' and its delivery – for him that was the temptation to worship the Angel. For us, distraction may mean trying to pin down the apocalyptic language that strives to signal the sublime; that tries to fit the transcendent; into mundane pigeon-holes, losing the mysterious and glorious nature of God's love for us.

Another great sign occurred a while after Jesus' death on the road to Damascus to Saul of Tarsus. Saul used his formidable energy, his fastidious attention to the law and his zeal for his privileged ancestral religion to establish himself perhaps as the most notorious and fanatical opponent of the fledgling followers of Jesus. That dramatic divine voice and light in the well-known account of his journey to Damascus stopped him dead in his tracks. This was all beyond his control and the implications were far reaching.

His conversion was one of Jesus' most dramatic manifestations, which is why it is appropriate to remember this event in Epiphanytide – the season of manifestations. Like the miraculous conversion of water into wine, like the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism, this manifestation demanded far more than a change of mind. It required a drastic abandonment of all the norms, values and beliefs to which those present had previously adhered with utter passion and conviction. These events require a mental change, a metanoia, that is so momentous that they still constitute unparalleled demands on a mere human being.

Paul, like the disciples before, was being asked to trample all over his most sacred convictions; and in their place embrace the incredible and unprecedented notion of the suffering God

now revealed to him in a vision of Jesus Christ. That was some shock but there was a further surprise still to come. Saul, now Paul, was experiencing not only a conversion but also a call, a commissioning to be a missionary to the people he had, moments before, believed could have no stake in the promises of God, the very people he been persecuting and bringing to their deaths. What's more, he was also being called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, not even the chosen people of God as he had believed.

We are called with the disciples and Paul to grapple with a grace that was and is incongruous to most of us; a grace that is indiscriminate, given alike to the bad and the reprehensible as well as to the good and the virtuous. As Paul was later to affirm in his letter to the church in Rome, in words echoing his own experience,

'When we were still sinners, Christ died for us'.

Paul's calling to follow Jesus and to grow the Church, which must be our vocation too, rests entirely on God's call before, and quite independently of, the manner in which we lived our lives previously. This is an unexpected character of grace that is without conditions.

As with the sign at the wedding in Cana, and the transcendent power that struck Paul, what matters is that we, like Paul, those on the banks of the Jordan and the disciples at the Wedding, recognise God's glory; and respond by directing our lives of faith of mission and service, towards the great 'Wedding Feast' that is yet to come. **Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Priest

Encouraged by our fellowship with all the saints,

let us make our prayers to the Father through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Intercessor

The response to 'Lord, have mercy' is 'Christ, have mercy'.

OFFERTORY HYMN **Amazing Grace**

Sung at the inauguration of President Biden, this hymn is chosen here to encourage each of us to reflect on the Grace of God at work in human lives. It is the same Grace, freely given by the Father, that led to his Son being revealed to real, flawed people such as the disciples, and not least the Grace that transformed the ardent persecutor Saul into the passionate apostle Paul; that same Grace that transformed John Newton from a slaver into an apostle through the medium of hymnody; and the same Grace that can re-form each one of us.

- 1 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.
- 2 T'was grace that taught my heart to fear.
And grace, my fears relieved.
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.
- 3 Through many dangers, toils and snares
I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far
and grace will lead me home.
- 4 The Lord has promised good to me.
His word my hope secures.
He will my shield and portion be,
As long as life endures.

- 5 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.
- 6 When we've been here ten thousand years
Bright shining as the sun.
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we've first begun.

Meter: *CM*

Amazing Grace

John Newton (1725 – 1807) – a reformed slaver
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AMAZING GRACE

Traditional American

Arrangement © 2013 Richard M S Irwin

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POST-COMMUNION HYMN Lo! round the throne, a glorious band

- 1 Lo! round the throne, a glorious band,
the saints in countless myriads stand,
of every tongue redeemed to God,
arrayed in garments washed in blood.
- 2 Through tribulation great they came;
they bore the cross, despised the shame;
from all their labours now they rest,
in God's eternal glory blest.
- 3 They see their Saviour face to face,
and sing the triumphs of his grace;
him day and night they ceaseless praise,
to him the loud thanksgiving raise:
- 4 "Worthy the Lamb, for sinners slain,
through endless years to live and reign;
thou hast redeemed us by thy blood,
and made us kings and priests to God."
- 5 O may we tread the sacred road
that saints and holy martyrs trod;
wage to the end the glorious strife,
and win, like them, a crown of life.

Meter: *L.M.*

Lo! round the throne, a glorious band

Rowland Hill (1744-1833)

DEUS TUORUM MILITUM

Anon., Grenoble Antiphoner (1753)

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Silence is kept.

Almighty God,
who on the day of Pentecost
sent your Holy Spirit to the apostles
with the wind from heaven and in tongues of flame,
filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel:
by the power of the same Spirit
strengthen us to witness to your truth
and to draw everyone to the fire of your love;
Your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world:
may your people,
illuminated by your word and sacraments,
shine with the radiance of his glory,
that he may be known, worshipped, and obeyed
to the ends of the earth;
for he is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

Amen.

The Post Communion Prayer is followed by:

All **Almighty God,**
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out
[Strengthen us]
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.

RECESSIONAL HYMN REJOICE IN GOD'S SAINTS

- 1 Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days;
a world without saints forgets how to praise.
Their faith in acquiring the habit of prayer,
their depth of adoring, Lord, help us to share.
- 2 Some march with events to turn them God's way;
some need to withdraw, the better to pray;
some carry the gospel through fire and through flood:
our world is their parish; their purpose is God.
- 3 Rejoice in those saints, unpraised and unknown,
who bear someone's cross or shoulder their own;
they shame our complaining, our comforts, our cares:
what patience in caring, what courage, is theirs!
- 4 Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days;
a world without saints forgets how to praise.
In loving, in living, they prove it is true:
the way of self giving, Lord, leads us to you.

Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days
Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

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HANOVER

Arr: Richard Mark Stephen Irwin (b. 1955)

William Croft (1678 – 1727)

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Music**Mass Setting**

© David Thorne -The Mass of St Thomas

© played by John Key and both acknowledged with thanks.

Opening Voluntary:

STRACATHRO

Charles Hutchinson (1792 – 1860)

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Hymns**Processional:****Christ Whose Glory Fills the Skies**

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

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RATISBON

German traditional melody in Johann Gottlob Werners' *Choralbuch* of 1815

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Gradual:**Forth in thy Name, O Lord, I go**

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

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SONG 34 (ANGELS' SONG)

Orlando Gibbons (1583 – 1625)

with descant arranged by Richard M S Irwin

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Offertory:**Amazing Grace**

John Newton (1725 – 1807) – a reformed slaver

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AMAZING GRACE

Traditional American

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Post Communion:**Lo! round the throne, a glorious band**

Rowland Hill (1744-1833)

DEUS TUORUM MILITUM

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Recessional:

Rejoice in God's saints, today and all days

Fred Pratt Green (1903-2000)

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Closing Voluntary:

With Joy We Meditate The Grace Lyrics

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Tallis' Ordinal

Thomas Tallis (c1505 – 1585).

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With Joy We Meditate the Grace

1. With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above;
His heart is made of tenderness,
And ever yearns with love.
2. Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean
For he has felt the same.
3. He in the days of feeble flesh
Poured out his cries and tears;
And, in his measure, feels afresh
What every member bears.
4. He'll never quench the smoking flax,
But raise it to a flame;
The bruised reed he never breaks,
Nor scorns the meanest name.
5. Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and his power:
We shall obtain delivering grace
In every needful hour.

Meter: CM.