

Meon Bridge Benefice

Corhampton & Meonstoke, Droxford, Exton with Preshaw



The Sunday Next Before Lent

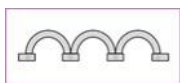
The Eucharist

with

Spiritual Communion

(Order One – Eucharistic Prayer B)

In Time of Pandemic



INTROIT HYMN New Every Morning Is The Love

- 1 New every morning is the love
Our waking and uprising prove;
Through sleep and darkness safely brought,
Restored to life and power and thought.
- 2 New mercies, each returning day,
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.
- 3 If, on our daily course, our mind
Be set to hallow all we find,
New treasures still, of countless price,
God will provide for sacrifice.
- 4 Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,
As more of heaven in each we see;
Some softening gleam of love and prayer
Shall dawn on every cross and care.
- 5 The trivial round, the common task,
Will furnish all we ought to ask;
Room to deny ourselves, a road
To bring us daily nearer God.
- 6 Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love,
Fit us for perfect rest above,
And help us, this and every day,
To live more nearly as we pray.

Meter: LM

New every morning is the love

John Keble (1796 – 1866)

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MELCOMBE

Samuel Webbe (1740 – 1816)

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THE COLLECT

The Lord be with you
And also with you.

Almighty Father,
whose Son was revealed in majesty
before he suffered death upon the cross:

give us grace to perceive his glory,
that we may be strengthened to suffer with him
and be changed into his likeness, from glory to glory;

who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.



THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING

A Reading from the Second Book of Kings

¹When the LORD was about to take Elijah up to heaven by a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. ²Elijah said to Elisha, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me as far as Bethel.' But Elisha said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they went down to Bethel. ³The company of prophets who were in Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he said, 'Yes, I know; keep silent.'

⁴Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here; for the LORD has sent me to Jericho.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So they came to Jericho. ⁵The company of prophets who were at Jericho drew near to Elisha, and said to him, 'Do you know that today the LORD will take your master away from you?' And he answered, 'Yes, I know; be silent.'

⁶Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here; for the LORD has sent me to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.' So the two of them went on. ⁷Fifty men of the company of prophets also went, and stood at some distance from them, as they both were standing by the Jordan. ⁸Then Elijah took his mantle and rolled it up, and struck the water; the water was parted to the one side and to the other, until the two of them crossed on dry ground.

⁹When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, 'Tell me what I may do for you, before I am taken from you.' Elisha said, 'Please let me inherit a double share of your spirit.' ¹⁰He responded, 'You have asked a hard thing; yet, if you see me as I am being taken from you, it will be granted you; if not, it will not.' ¹¹As they continued walking and talking, a chariot of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them, and Elijah ascended in a whirlwind into heaven. ¹²Elisha kept watching and crying out, 'Father, father! The chariots of Israel and its horsemen!' But when he could no longer see him, he grasped his own clothes and tore them in two pieces.

2 Kings 2.1-12

At the end the reader may say

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Some verses from Psalm 50

Please join me in saying the second part of each verse of the psalm, which is emboldened on the screen

- 1 The Lord, the most mighty God, has spoken *
and called the world from the rising of the sun to its setting.
- 2 Out of Zion, perfect in beauty, God shines forth; *
our God comes and will not keep silence.
- 3 Consuming fire goes out before him *
and a mighty tempest stirs about him.
- 4 He calls the heaven above, *
and the earth, that he may judge his people:
- 5 'Gather to me my faithful, *
who have sealed my covenant with sacrifice.'
- 6 Let the heavens declare his righteousness, *
for God himself is judge.

Psalm 50.1-6

SECOND READING

A Reading from St Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians

³Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. ⁴In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Corinthians 4.3-6

This is the word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL HYMN 'Tis good, Lord, to be here

1. 'Tis good, Lord, to be here,
thy glory fills the night;
thy face and garments, like the sun,
shine with unborrowed light.
- 2 'Tis good, Lord, to be here,
thy beauty to behold,
where Moses and Elijah stand,
thy messengers of old.
- 3 Fulfiller of the past,
promise of things to be,
we hail thy body glorified,
and our redemption see.
- 4 Before we taste of death,
we see thy kingdom come;
we fain would hold the vision bright,
and make this hill our home.

5 'Tis good, Lord, to be here,
yet we may not remain;
but since thou bidst us leave the mount,
come with us to the plain.

Meter: SM

'Tis good, Lord, to be here

Joseph Armitage Robinson (1858-1933)

CARLISLE

Charles Lockhart (1745 – 1815)

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GOSPEL READING

Please remain standing.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.

You have the words of eternal life.

All **Alleluia.**

The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

When the Gospel is announced the reader says

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to *St Mark*.

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them any more, but only Jesus.

As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen, until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead.

Mark 9.2-9

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

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

SERMON – CATHY MATHEWS LLM

Happy St Valentine's Day! But I am not going to talk about that.

All of today's Bible passages speak, in some way, about the light of God and whether people can see it or not. In the passage from Kings, one way of looking at it might be that Elisha is able to see an event, in this case Elijah going up to heaven that is not a normal physical phenomenon but supernatural. The implication is that not everyone would have been able to see it. Elisha's eyes are spiritually open. He can see the light. He thus proves that he is worthy to receive a double portion of Elijah's spirit and be his successor.

Then we have Psalm 50. The psalmist talks about God shining forth from Zion - the idea of light again. And of course this could be seen as a prophecy concerning the coming Messiah, who will indeed be literally shining in the gospel passage about the transfiguration.

The passage from Corinthians is about the devil shutting the minds of many so that “they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ”. We know the things that can stop us seeing Jesus’s glory: sin, lack of forgiveness, materialism, scepticism, etc. - all the normal stuff of life.

And then there is the passage from Mark about the transfiguration of Jesus.

What is transfiguration? The dictionary definition is “a change of form or appearance into a more beautiful or spiritual state; a metamorphosis”. Though not all metamorphoses are transfigurations of that type – take, for example, Franz Kafka’s book *Metamorphosis*, in which the hero becomes a beetle!

One example of transfiguration might be a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. It is of the same essence, but very much more beautiful.

People can be transfigured by joy. When we are filled with joy our faces become radiant, though admittedly, not our clothes!

One might almost say that a landscape or a person might be transfigured by the artist’s paintbrush or by the poet’s pen.

This morning I watched a programme meant for twelve year old children in lockdown (no rude comments, please!) in which they were taught how a substance changes its state. In this case milk was turned into ice cream via a chemical reaction involving salt and ice –I guess the same content but immeasurably more appealing. Not quite the same, but I hoped it might make you smile!

So what is the significance of the transfiguration of Jesus?

He takes his closest disciples up a mountain. He is transfigured and they witness him talking to Moses and Elijah.

For Jesus it gives him affirmation that he is on the right path. He has just predicted his death. He knows what lies ahead. He wants to do God’s will. Now he knows beyond doubt that he is doing it. It also rubber-stamps the notion that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Law (represented by Moses) and the prophets (represented by Elijah). And it is also one of the places in the Bible which hints at the idea of the Trinity. The voice comes from God the Father, Jesus is the Son, and the cloud is the Spirit.

This is not the only example of transfiguration in the Bible. Moses was also transfigured when he came down from Mount Sinai, thirteen hundred years before Jesus, having received the Ten Commandments. I quote:

“When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him.”

This would also have been tremendously affirming for Moses and for the Israelites.

From the disciples’ perspective, the transfiguration of Jesus prepares them for their coming ministry. They are seeing the glory of God in Jesus. Perhaps they are seeing what Jesus might look like after the resurrection; perhaps even how we might look in heaven. They are also hearing God acknowledging Jesus as his son, as he did at Jesus’s baptism, except this time he also tells the disciples to listen to him.

They have been told they will have to take up their crosses and follow him. They are ordinary people, as we are. They must have found the whole thing about following Jesus a bit confusing. Now they are being given this wonderful mountain top experience. They are being given a wonderful visual aid. It would have strengthened their faith hugely. They can be certain that God is in control. In fact, Peter never forgets it. In his second letter, he refers to hearing God’s voice on this occasion, when he says,

“We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.”

You might say that the transfiguration is a sort of epiphany for the disciples. Seeing Jesus literally in a different light must give them that moment of realisation of who he actually is; that epiphany moment.

At the time it was a gift only for his closest disciples. Now it is a gift for us.

It is of course a very strong faith builder. We have to believe it happened. This sort of supernatural event does not happen every day, but if we ask other Christians, we will find that many have experienced something out of the ordinary, that greatly strengthened their faith. Many years ago I know that I had such an experience. Forgive me if you have heard me mention it before! I knew the peace and joy of heaven. It was not just emotional. It definitely had an element of the physical. My body felt quite different. It did not last, but I will never forget it.

One thing we can do now, as we live through this difficult time, which is hard for us all in similar ways and also in different ways, is to focus on this passage and hang on to the thought of the future that lies in store for us. No one truly understands all this, but let's just believe. The transfiguration shows us God's glory. We pray and sing about it often enough. Just believe.

Amen

OFFERTORY HYMN And Can It Be

1. And can it be that I should gain
An interest in the Saviour's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain—
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
2. 'Tis mystery all: th'Immortal dies:
Who can explore His strange design?
In vain the firstborn seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,
Let angel minds inquire no more.
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore;
Let angel minds inquire no more.
3. He left His Father's throne above
So free, so infinite His grace—
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For O my God, it found out me!

4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
 Fast bound in sin and nature's night;
 Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—
 I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
 My chains fell off, my heart was free,
 I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
5. No condemnation now I dread;
 Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;
 Alive in Him, my living Head,
 And clothed in righteousness divine,
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.
 Bold I approach th'eternal throne,
 And claim the crown, through Christ my own.
- Meter: 88 88 88 extended.

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FOR THOSE UNABLE TO BE AT COMMUNION

ACT OF SPIRITUAL RECEPTION

The people who are unable to remain for the Eucharist may say:

**In union, dear Father, with Christian people
 throughout the world
 and across the centuries gathered
 to make Eucharist,
 hearing your holy Word and
 receiving the Precious Body and Blood,
 I offer you praise and thanksgiving.**

**Even though I am exiled from
 tasting the Bread of Heaven
 and drinking the Cup of Life
 I pray that you will unite me with all the baptised
 and with your Son who gave his life for us. Amen.**

**Come Lord Jesus, dwell in me
 and send your Holy Spirit
 that I may be filled with your presence.**

Amen.

POST-COMMUNION HYMN The Lord will come and not be slow

1. The Lord will come and not be slow,
his footsteps cannot err;
before him righteousness shall go,
his royal harbinger.
2. Truth from the earth, like to a flow'r,
shall bud and blossom free;
and justice, from her heav'nly bow'r,
bless all humanity.
3. The nations all whom thou hast made
shall come, and all shall frame
to bow them low before thee, Lord,
and glorify thy name.
4. For great thou art, and wonders great
by thy strong hand are done:
thou in thy everlasting seat
remainest God alone.

Meter: CM

The Lord will come and not be slow

John Milton, 1608-1674 (alt.)

SAINT MAGNUS

Jeremiah Clarke (1670 – 1707)

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PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Silence is kept.

Holy God,
we see your glory
in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who are partakers at his table
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know his power
to change and save.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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
in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory. Amen.

THE DISMISSAL

RECESSIONAL HYMN Jesus shall reign

- 1 Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.
- 2 People and realms of every tongue
Dwell on His love with sweetest song;
And infant voices shall proclaim
Their early blessings on His Name.
- 3 Blessings abound wherever He reigns;
The prisoner leaps to lose his chains;
The weary find eternal rest,
And all the sons of want are blessed.
- 4 As rain on meadows newly mown,
So shall He send his influence down:
His grace on fainting souls distils,
Like heav'nly dew on thirsty hills.
- 5 Let every creature rise and bring
Peculiar honours to our King;
Angels descend with songs again,
And earth repeat the loud amen!

Meter: LM

Jesus shall reign

Isaac Watts (1674 – 1748)

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TRURO

Thomas Williams

in *Psalmodia Evangelica* (1789)

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Music

Mass Setting

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Opening Voluntary

Arrival of the Queen of Sheba (from Solomon HWV 67)

(Music from the start of Act 3 of Händel's Oratorio "Solomon", which tells the story the building of Solomon's Temple.)

Georg Friderich Händel (1695 – 1759)
Arr and performed by Richard Irwin.
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Hymns

New every morning is the love

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The Lord will come and not be slow

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Closing Voluntary

Little Prelude and Fugue #1 in C (BWV 553)

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 -1750) – BWV 553. One of the eight little preludes and fugues attributed to Johann Sebastian Bach but probably written by a pupil, Johann Tobias Krebs or Johann Ludwig Krebs.

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