



St Mary
the Virgin



**St. Mary's Feast
Songs of Praise**

**781st Anniversary of the
Dedication of the New Church
Sunday 14th September 2024
6.00pm**

Welcome

We are an inclusive church embracing a hospitable Christianity. Everyone is welcome at this service.

We are five Church of England churches, some large and some small, serving the town of Witney and the villages round about.

We are here to worship God and to help each other to grow in faith.

We are committed to living our lives in the love, joy and hope of the Risen Christ.

You can find us in church, in schools, in hospitals, village halls, supermarkets, nursing homes, up late with the Street Pastors, at the toddler group ... wherever people are.

Order of Service

The congregation stands to sing the Processional Hymn.

O for a thousand tongues to sing
my dear Redeemer's praise,
my dear Redeemer's praise,
the glories of my God and King,
the triumphs of His grace! (x3)

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
that bid's our sorrows cease;
'tis music in the sinner's ears;
'tis life, and health, and peace.

He speaks and, listening to His voice,
new life the dead receive,
new life the dead receive;
the mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
the humble poor believe.

Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb,
your loosened tongues employ,
your loosened tongues employ;
ye blind behold your Saviour come,
and leap, ye lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,
assist me to proclaim,
assist me to proclaim;
to spread through all the earth abroad
the honours of Thy name.

Words: Charles Wesley 1707-1788;
Music: LYNGHAM, T. Jarman, 1782-1862

The Greeting

We come joyfully to the house of the Lord.

All **We bring our praise and offer our lives to God.**

This is our gift and our joy.

All **So let us celebrate God's love with our voices and our lives.**

The service is introduced.

The Collect

Let us pray:

Almighty God,
to whose glory we celebrate the dedication
of this house of prayer:
we praise you for the many blessings
you have given to those who worship you here
and throughout our town:
and we pray that all who seek you may find you,
and, being filled with the Holy Spirit,
may become a living temple acceptable to you;
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.

All **Amen.**

Hymn

We sit as the Bishop introduces his choice of hymn, and then stand to sing:

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?

'Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!
Who can explore his strange design?
In vain the first-born seraph tries
To sound the depths of love divine!
'Tis mercy all! let earth adore,
Let angel-minds inquire no more.

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!

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.

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 the eternal throne,
And claim the crown, through Christ my own.

Charles Wesley (1707-88)

First Reading

We sit for the reading: Matthew 5.1-12.

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

Hymn

We remain seated as our recently licensed Team Vicar introduces the next hymn, and then stand to sing:

Jerusalem the golden,
With milk and honey blest,
Beneath thy contemplation
Sink heart and voice opprest.
I know not, O I know not,
What social joys are there,
What radiancy of glory,
What light beyond compare.

They stand, those halls of Sion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And all the martyr throng;
The Prince is ever in them,
The daylight is serene,
The pastures of the blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.

There is the throne of David,
And there, from care released,
The song of them that triumph,
The shout of them that feast;
And they who, with their Leader,
Have conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white.

O sweet and blessed country,
Shall I ever see thy face?
O sweet and blessed country,
Shall I ever win thy grace?
Exult, O dust and ashes!
The Lord shall be thy part:
His only, his for ever,
Thou shalt be, and thou art!

*Words: Bernard of Cluny (1145),
tr. John Mason Neale (1818-1866)*

Poem

*Love Bade me Welcome by George Herbert.
Read by Dr Catherine Wilcox*

Sermon

Hymn

O Thou Who camest from above,
The pure celestial fire to impart,
Kindle a flame of sacred love
Upon the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for Thy glory burn
With inextinguishable blaze,
And trembling to its source return,
In humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire
To work and speak and think for Thee;
Still let me guard the holy fire,
And still stir up Thy gift in me.
Ready for all Thy perfect will,
My acts of faith and love repeat,
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,
And make my sacrifice complete.

Words: Charles Wesley, 1707-1788
Music: HEREFORD, SS Wesley, 1810-1876

Ending:

Uniting our prayers with the whole company of heaven
let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

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.**

Blessing of the Mayoral Chain of Office and the Councillors

We stand

The Mace Bearer is invited to stand before the Bishop

We now come to the point in the service when we bless the Mayoral Chain of Office, the Mayor and Councillors.

As we do so, the Mace Bearer comes to join me, as the mace is a symbol of authority of the Crown.

Maces are depicted in the famous Bayeux Tapestry being carried by William, Duke of Normandy, and Odo, Bishop of Bayeux. And Odo was involved in the building of this very church.

So, with this sign of the authority of the Crown, we come to bless the mayoral chain — the chain is a tradition originating with the Dukes of Normandy. Since then, civic authorities have borne an official seal incorporating the arms of the authority. The seal was originally worn on a gold chain around the neck of the chief official. This 'decoration' has evolved into the modern Chain of Office.

The Bishop invites the mayor to hold the chain of office, then prays for the mayor:

Almighty God,
we give thanks for this seal of office and ask You to bless it.
May all who wear it exercise justice, compassion and wisdom.
May Your blessing be upon Owen
as he seeks to be Your faithful servant.
May his leadership end the dissensions
that divide us one from another,
and bring us back into a unity of loving purpose;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Final Hymn

We sit as the mayor introduces his choice of hymn, then stand to sing:

I, the Lord of sea and sky,
I have heard my people cry.
All who dwell in dark and sin
my hand will save.
I, who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear my light to them?
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of snow and rain.
I have borne my people's pain.

I have wept for love of them.
They turn away.
I will break their hearts of stone,
give them hearts for love alone
I will speak my words to them.
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them.
My hand will save.
Finest bread I will provide
till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give my life to them.
Whom shall I send?

*Here I am, Lord. Is it I, Lord?
I have heard you calling in the night.
I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart.*

Daniel L. Schutte, SJ
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Blessing

Go forth into the world in peace;
be of good courage;
hold fast that which is good;
render to no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;
help the afflicted; honour everyone;
love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;
and the blessing of God almighty;
the Father, the Son
and the Holy Spirit, be among you
and remain with you always.

Amen.

Following the service, we move down to the Fairground for the Gallopers Service where we bless the Fair and bless the town. Do please join us!

We then invite everyone to come back and join us for a drink in S Mary's

As we process to the Fairground, we sing the following:

Onward Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus
Going on before.
Christ, the royal Master,
Leads against the foe;
Forward into battle,
See, His banners go!

*Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus,
Going on before.*

At the name of Jesus
Satan's host doth flee;
On then, Christian soldiers,
On to victory!
Hell's foundations quiver
At the shout of praise:
Brothers, lift your voices,
Loud your anthems raise!

Like a mighty army
Moves the Church of God:
Brothers, we are treading
Where the saints have trod;
We are not divided,
All one Body we—
One in faith and Spirit,
One eternally.

Crowns and thrones may perish,
Kingdoms rise and wane;
But the Church of Jesus
Constant will remain.
Gates of hell can never
'Gainst the Church prevail;
We have Christ's own promise,
Which can never fail.

Onward, then, ye people!
Join our happy throng;
Blend with ours your voices
In the triumph song.
Glory, laud and honour
Unto Christ, the King;
This through countless ages
Men and angels sing.

Onward, Christian soldiers!
Marching as to war,
With the cross of Jesus,
Going on before.

Showman's Prayer

O my God, I believe in You,
I trust in You, I love You
and thank You for my blessings.

I ask forgiveness for my sins.
I ask that You guide and protect me,
and those dear to me.

Make me mindful of my privilege as a Showman
to bring joy and happiness to all people,
especially the young, the lonely and the less fortunate.
And when my last Fair on earth is complete
and the final journey ends,
take me to Yourself to be happy with You forever. Amen

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