

15th November 2020

Hearsall at Home

Hello, and welcome to Hearsall at Home.

In today's service we share Holy Communion, so please have some bread and wine or juice prepared. You may want to open the service words on the front page of our website to help you sing hymns and songs and to take part in our communion time.

Please join me in speaking prayers aloud wherever you'd like to do that.

Our preacher today is Revd Stephen Mitchell, a good friend of Hearsall based in Suffolk with his wife Elaine, who also shares in our worship today. We thank them both for their very welcome contributions.

Our time of fellowship this Sunday is on Zoom from 11:30am.

Please go to:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85454368639>

Meeting ID: 851 6681 8535

No password is required for this session.

And now let us draw close to the God who promises to draw close to us.

Order of Service 15th November 2020

Investing in God

Call to Worship

Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. (Psalm 84:10)

This may seem a hard time, but let us find comfort by making our faith central to our lives as we sing, *Jesus, be the Centre*.

Song (WT 222) **Jesus, be the Centre**

Jesus, be the centre,
Be my source, be my Light,
Jesus.

Jesus, be the centre,
Be my hope, be my song,
Jesus.

Be the fire in my heart,
Be the wind in these sails,
Be the reason that I live,
Jesus, Jesus.

Jesus, be my vision,
Be my path, be my guide,
Jesus.

Jesus, be the centre,
Be my source, be my Light,
Jesus.

Be my source, be my Light,
Jesus, Jesus, Jesus.

Prayers

Adoration and Confession

Lord, in our locked-down world we may feel lonely, empty and restricted. Open the eyes of hearts to your beautiful presence seen in such things as frosty windscreens, shafts of sunshine, robins in trees, delicious food, a friend's phone call, the comfort of the Bible, the contentment of reading by a fire, a brisk walk in cold air, a chatty email, the curiosity of a cat, the exhilaration of a hot shower, great music, kind neighbours, a caring church, brilliant TV shows and faraway children giggling on zoom...

We thank you for all the good things we can enjoy at this time. Forgive us if we are sinking into despair, self-pity or bad-temperedness; forgive all our sins for the sake of Jesus; and lead us, even now, to find delight in your loving presence. For Jesus' sake. Amen,

I am delighted that Jackie's sister, Elaine, has agreed to share Doors Ajar for us this week. She and husband, Stephen, are good friends of Hearsall where it was my privilege to conduct their wedding a few years ago.

What a privilege to be invited to take part in the now legendary Hearsall "Doors Ajar" series. Following in the footsteps of so many insightful and engaging personal contributions, I certainly feel the weight of responsibility on my shoulders! Thank you for drawing us closer into the Hearsall family, and for allowing the net to spread as far as the wilds of Suffolk...

The impact of lockdown for us on "normal" life back in March was difficult to process at the time, as circumstances were anything but normal. We'd not long returned from 3 weeks touring New Zealand's North Island, with me having broken my foot on the second day of the holiday and still only achieving minimum mobility on crutches, or relying on Stephen's awesome wheelchair steering skills (but that's another story!)

A sense of impending doom hung over a whole raft of our activities, in terms of cancelled teaching, concerts, students' exams, and most importantly, planned visits to and from family and friends over Easter.

On a practical level, within a few weeks and thanks to Stephen's technological know-how and DIY wizardry, my music room had been converted into a Zoom factory, complete with laptop, microphone, speaker, multiple cameras, blackout facilities, and

an ethernet cable that stretched pretty much halfway round the house by means of a Spaghetti Junction of cables and wires.

I can't pretend that teaching piano and singing on Zoom was a pleasurable experience; communication was so much harder, sound quality was unreliable, and of course nothing can rival the experience of making music together "live" in the same room. It was exhausting and often frustrating, but it had positive and energising knock-on effects; when I was finally able to invite pupils back into the studio in July, admittedly under very strict anti-Covid conditions, (Doors AND Windows Ajar!) the sheer joy of seeing and hearing them again in person was overwhelming. I'm not 100% sure the feeling was mutual, as I was able to pinpoint wrong notes more easily and no-one could blame the sound quality on a poor wifi signal!

Other sources of joy soon followed; spending several days during the summer visiting family members and friends, garden and kitchen-hopping around Coventry while based in an Airbnb in Spencer Avenue. At times we felt rather like the Vicar of Dibley on Christmas Day, groaning under the weight of having been generously fed and watered at every stop...

During the toughest period of lockdown, priorities changed; we took longer walks and cycle rides together in some beautiful, hitherto unexplored parts of Suffolk. We took great delight in rising to the weekly challenge set by granddaughters Hannah and Clara in St Albans, to see who could produce, along with, (and perhaps even in competition with!) several other branches of the family, the most imaginative and creative video on a topic of the girls' choosing; frankly I don't think Stephen Spielberg had too much to worry about!

The thrill of finally being able to invite our children and grandchildren (admittedly not all at once) to stay with us when lockdown measures were eased in July made the meetings so much more precious and vivid; we savoured every moment, counting our blessings, while sparing a thought for those without the luxury of a garden in which to meet, or who were restricted by having to shield, or not being able to travel. And now, I can't believe I'm saying it, but here we are again; Zoom looms once more and sleep is proving more elusive, as in the early hours I lie awake worrying about my girls, Miriam living just over the border in Essex and Aggie back at home in

Bradford. She never complains, but living and working from home alone in a 2nd floor apartment can't be much fun.

However, as for many of you, I've had more time for reflection, for recognising what really matters to me, finding solace in music and in Stephen's love and companionship; or even combining all 3, which is an added bonus.

I'd like to leave you with one of my favourite Vaughan Williams songs. In *The Sky above the Roof*, a prisoner alone in his cell reflects on his life, partly with regret, but also focussing on the present, on the beauty of a single bell that drowsily rings or the sound of a solitary bird outside. Ah God, a life is here, simple and fair.....murmurs of strife are here lost in the air. Perhaps there's a message for us in Mabel Dearmer's words? Love to you all, and keep well.

Song: **The Sky above the Roof** (Vaughan Williams, recorded by Elaine & Stephen)

Music: Ralph Vaughan Williams, Words: Mabel Dermer

The sky above the roof
Is calm and sweet,
A tree above the roof
Bends in the heat.

A bell from out the blue
Drowsily rings,
A bird from out the blue
Plaintively sings.

Ah, God! A life is here,
Simple and fair.
Murmurs of strife are here
Lost in the air.

Why dost thou weep, O heart,
Poured out in tears?
What hast thou done, O heart,
With thy spent years?

Thanks so very much Elaine... Let's glimpse good things even in this strange time...

Offering

Dear Lord, those of us who are able to continue giving are grateful for a steady income when many face uncertainty. Please use these and all our gifts to support those in need at this time. For Jesus's sake. Amen.

Prayers of intercession

Our wonderful brother Nick Leonard this week brings our prayers of intercession.

Before we start our prayers of intercession let us remember who we are:

We are not people of fear, we are people of courage.

We are not people who protect our own safety, we are people who protect our neighbours' safety.

We are not people of greed, we are people of generosity.

We are your people God, giving and loving, wherever we are, whatever it costs, for as long as it takes, wherever you call us.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples,

'I am with you always'.

Be with us today, as we offer ourselves to you.

Hear our prayers for others and for ourselves, and keep us in your care.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy in this time of uncertainty and distress.

Sustain and support the anxious and fearful, and lift up all who are brought low, that we may rejoice in your comfort, knowing that nothing can separate us from your love.

Lord Jesus Christ, you taught us to love our neighbour and to care for those in need as if we were caring for you.

In this time of anxiety, give us strength to comfort the fearful, to tend the sick and to assure the isolated of our love, and your love, for your name's sake.

Merciful God, we entrust to your tender care those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens, your everlasting arms are there to

hold them safe. Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick, and your wisdom to those searching for a cure. Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to health, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

For the health and well-being of our nation and city, guide our leaders, give them wisdom, teach them compassion.

For the isolated and housebound, that we may be alert to their needs, and care for them in their vulnerability.

For our homes and families, our church community, our schools, teachers and young people, and all in any kind of need or distress.

For a blessing on our local community, that our neighbourhoods may be places of trust and friendship, where all are known and cared for.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

Merciful Father, Prayers for the World:

Almighty Father, whose will is to restore all things in your beloved Son, the King of all, govern the hearts and minds of those in authority, and bring the families of the nations, divided and torn apart by the ravages of sin, to be subject to his just and gentle rule.

Dear Lord, we ask that you share your peace with the world; give peace to your Church, peace among nations, peace in our dwellings, and peace in our hearts, through thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Heavenly Father, you are the source of all goodness, generosity and love. We thank you for opening the hearts of many to those who are fleeing for their lives. Help us now to open our arms in welcome, and reach out our hands in support. That the desperate may find new hope, and lives torn apart be restored.

We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, who fled persecution at His birth, and at His last triumphed over death.

God of compassion, your love for humanity was revealed in Jesus, whose earthly life began in the poverty of a stable and ended in the pain and isolation of the cross, we hold before you those who are homeless and cold, especially in this bitter weather. Draw near and comfort them in spirit and bless those who work to provide them with shelter, food and friendship.

God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.

Enlighten those who possess power and money, that they may avoid the sin of indifference, that they may love the common good, advance the weak, and care for this world in which we live.

The poor and the earth are crying out. O Lord, seize us with your power and light, help us to protect all life, to prepare for a better future, for the coming of your Kingdom of justice, peace, love and beauty.

We commend ourselves, and all for whom we pray, to the mercy and protection of God.

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

Many thanks Nick for those prayers. And now we hear our Bible readings from 1 Thessalonians and from Matthew.

Readings

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

The day of the Lord

5 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, ²for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. ³While people are saying, 'Peace and safety', destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

⁴But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. ⁵You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not

belong to the night or to the darkness. ⁶ So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober. ⁷ For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at night. ⁸ But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate, and the hope of salvation as a helmet. ⁹ For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. ¹⁰ He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. ¹¹ Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

Matthew 25:14-30

The parable of the bags of gold

¹⁴ 'Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag,^[a] each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ 'After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more."

²¹ 'His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

²² 'The man with two bags of gold also came. "Master," he said, "you entrusted me with two bags of gold: see, I have gained two more."

²³ 'His master replied, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!"

²⁴ 'Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. "Master," he said, "I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where

you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”

²⁶ ‘His master replied, “You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Well, let us be generous people, and offer our gifts to others and to God that all may thrive. We sing, *I give you all the honour...*

Song (WT171) I give you all the Honour

I give You all the honour
And praise that's due Your Name,
For You are the King of Glory,
The Creator of all things.

Chorus

*And I worship You,
I give my life to You,
I fall down on my knees,
I worship You.
Yes, I worship You,
I give my life to You,
I fall down on my knees.*

Verse 2

As Your Spirit moves upon me now,
You meet my deepest need,
And I lift my hands up to Your throne;
Your mercy I've received.

Chorus

*And I worship You,
I give my life to You,
I fall down on my knees,
I worship You.
Yes, I worship You,
I give my life to You,
I fall down on my knees.*

Verse 3

You have broken chains that bound me;
You've set this captive free.
I will lift my voice to praise Your Name
For all eternity.

Chorus

Ending

*And I worship you,
I worship you x 3*

So now Lord, as we hear Stephen's reflections, let us each listen for your living Word into our hearts and lives. Amen.

Sermon

Investing in God

Thank you for the invitation to share a few thoughts with you this morning. As someone who is always being accused of checking up obsessively on the current value of his savings, our second reading, the Parable of the Talents, caught my attention.

There's a straightforward economic lesson to be learnt from the story. It's better to put your money in mattresses than under the mattress! I can't say I'm well up in mattress manufacturing. Perhaps it's been badly hit by the growing futon and bed-settee industry. But still, better to invest your money rather than hide it under the

bed. The travelling man of property was right to invest his money and right to expect a return on his return from his travels.

There's a straightforward business lesson to be learnt too. Entrust your business to people who can double your money. Promote those who have your interests at heart. Give responsibility to people in proportion to their abilities.

And there's a moral lesson. Use your talents. Don't hide your light under a bushel.

But parables go beyond illustrating a select few of life's lessons. Parables are about the Kingdom of God. They are given to challenge us and help us to look at our life in God.

The Parable of the Talents is about investment - the landlord investing in his servants, the servants investing his money in the market.

Money has no value buried in the ground. Indeed, in time it may rust or rot away. Even if you dig up some old gold coins, until they are put on the market, they are of little monetary value. Money only has value in circulation.

And values aren't fixed. If we all start sleeping on the floor for the good of our spinal health, then pity the sprung mattress manufacturers. Their sales will plummet. Or if advertising convinces us that we'll all have a more peaceful, more sensual and more satisfying sleep on a futon, then shares in the futon industry will soar.

Values in life have to be given and sustained by us, and that is what it means to invest in something. The word has some interesting connotations.

In Hearsall Church there is a fine vestry, which if I remember rightly has all kinds of things in it - books, a photocopier, a desk and some chairs. I have to say Anglican church vestries are just the same with everything from folding tables to smelly old flower vases.

In fact, St Gregory's Church in Sudbury, not far from us, lays claim to perhaps the grizzliest relic of any vestry - the shrunken head of Simon, one time Archbishop of Canterbury.

But a vestry is supposed to be the room where the minister puts on his robes. David doesn't wear robes of course, so I suppose he ought to call his vestry an office and perhaps he does.

In Anglican churches, vicars like to wear robes, some enriched with fine embroidery. They call them vestments which just means clothing really. So a vestry is a dressing room.

When we invest our money, we do indeed clothe it. It becomes enrobed in our work, in our productivity and in our service and becomes enriched and given value. When we invest in people, we clothe them with our trust and our responsibility, with a sense of importance and worth. We empower them.

Those of you with a very long memory will remember the investiture of Prince Charles as Prince of Wales in 1969. He was presented with symbolic gifts of his authority - a sword, a coronet, a gold ring and a gold rod and he was also clothed with a fine mantle.

The mantle might remind some of you of a story from the Old Testament. Just before Elijah ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire, he went up to Elisha and threw his mantle over Elisha's shoulders, investing him, clothing him, with power and thereby making him his successor.

In the first reading this morning, we were told of our investiture -

Put on the breastplate of faith and love, the helmet of hope and salvation.

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, expands on the metaphor -

Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, your feet shod with the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, the word of God.

We have had a divine mantle thrown over our shoulders. We are made in the image of God, clothed in righteousness, enriched with the gifts of the spirit, invested as children of God.

We must take the risk of investing in others, clothing them with our trust and love, to empower, value and enrich them.

At the beginning of lockdown, when schools and nurseries were closed, my daughter Jenny was looking after her two children, Hannah and Clara, at home. On Wednesdays she set their grandparents and aunty and uncle a challenge - to send a short video or picture relating to a given theme of the week.

You can imagine the panic on Tuesday nights. What on earth are we going to do on the theme of monsters or outer space?

Of course at a one level, we were doing this to help Jenny out. But Jenny, by involving us in Hannah and Clara's work and play, was making us feel useful, part of the family and not quite so isolated.

I think one of the great dangers at this time, when we are limited in our contact with each other, is that we stop investing in each other and only look inwards to ourselves.

We may have a restricted view of the world at the moment, and we may be limited in the contact we can have with each other, but like the prisoner in Vaughan Williams' song, we can look out into the world and see and hear ordinary sights and sounds - in the case of the prisoner, a tree, a bell and a bird - and we can clothe them and value them, making them symbols of beauty, joy, hope and comfort.

We must reach out in whatever way we can - even if it's only writing a letter, sending a postcard or a piccy, an email or a text or making a phone call - because people need to know they are valued by us and clothed with our love and trust.

There is another parable that resonates strongly for us at this time as we approach Advent - the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. On the great judgement day the hungry and the thirsty and the prisoners come forth and make their accusation saying, "I was hungry and you did not feed me. I was thirsty and you did not give me a drink" and, the most telling one of all, "I was naked and you did not clothe me".

You didn't clothe me. You didn't clothe me with power to speak and to act. You didn't

invest in me. You didn't think I was worth entrusting power to. You didn't think I was capable of doing anything. You left me hidden, out of sight, out of mind and naked.

Not so the landowner in our parable. He entrusted all his servants, whatever their ability, with his talents.

The fault of the one servant who was sent to grind and gnash his teeth in outer darkness, was not that he failed to make money for his employer, but that he didn't enable others to make some for themselves. With that one talent he could have empowered others to make a living, to do something useful and find their fulfilment. He didn't invest in them, he didn't clothe them; he left them naked.

My elder daughter Frances, like many young people, is a great enthusiast of crowd-funding. She doesn't have much in the way of savings but she chooses to invest a small sum into Funding Circle which provides loans for small businesses. It enables them to take on a few more staff or buy new equipment and so increase their turnover. During the present crisis their funds are being channelled through the Government's Corona virus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

Each investor earns a small amount of interest but collectively their money is enormously helpful to people in growing their businesses.

The symbolism of clothing and investiture recurs throughout the Bible and the history of humanity from Adam and Eve's awareness of their nakedness in the Garden of Eden to the holy ones clothed in white robes, gathered around the throne of heaven, in the Book of Revelation.

But finally, to return to the song, *The Sky Above The Roof*; it ends with the lines - Why dost thou weep O heart, poured out in tears. What hast thou done O heart, with thy spent years?

We can all regret mistakes we've made and opportunities lost, but we must now commit to investing in others our time, attention, care and love.

Let's take a moment to be quiet and reflect on the message today...

And now we clothe our experience of life with love.

We clothe so much of what we see, making small things symbols of beauty, joy, hope and comfort.

We clothe the people we reach out to in value, love and trust....

So we sing, *God is love, let heaven adore him...*

Hymn (BPW 374) **God is Love, let Heaven Adore Him**

1 God is love: let heaven adore him;

God is love: let earth rejoice;

let creation sing before him,

and exalt him with one voice.

He who laid the earth's foundation,

he who spread the heavens above,

he who breathes through all creation,

he is love, eternal love.

2 God is love: and he is holding

all the world in one embrace,

with unfailing grasp enfolding

every child of every race.

And when human hearts are breaking

under sorrow's iron rod,

all the sorrow, all the aching,

wrings with pain the heart of God.

3 God is love: and though with blindness

sin afflicts the souls of men,

God's eternal loving-kindness

holds and guides them even then.

Sin and death and hell shall never

o'er us final triumph gain;

God is love, so love for ever

o'er the universe must reign.

Holy Communion

So we are invited to share in the Lord's supper as each have bread and wine or juice before us in our respective homes. Jesus says *'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'*

Come to this table, not because you must, but because you may,

Not because you are strong, but because you are weak.

Come, not because any goodness of your own gives you a right to come, but because you need mercy and help.

Come, because you love the Lord a little and would like to love him more.

Come because he loved you and gave himself for you.

Come and meet the risen Christ, for we are his body.

Let us pray

Almighty God,

to whom all hearts are open,

all desires known,

and from whom no secrets are hidden:

cleanse the thoughts of our hearts

by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,

that we may perfectly love you,

and worthily magnify your holy name;

through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

We share in the words of the Lord's Prayer

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

The Words of Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: the Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Loving God,
We praise and thank you for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ.
We thank you for his life and ministry,
announcing the good news of your kingdom
and demonstrating its power in the lifting of the downtrodden,
and the healing of the sick,
and the loving of the loveless.
We thank you for his sacrificial death upon the cross for the redemption of the world,
and for your raising him to life again, as a foretaste of the glory we shall share.
We thank you for the bread and wine we have in our homes,
symbols of our beautiful word and signs of your transforming love.
Send your Holy Spirit, we pray,

that we may be renewed into the likeness of Jesus Christ
and formed into his body.

This we pray in his name and for his sake.

Amen

Peace

As members of one body, Christ calls us to peace.

Let us invest in one another by praying for each other in our hearts now,
and by sharing signs of peace with one another in the coming hours and days.

Sharing

Of the bread Jesus said, This is my body which is for you; do this in memory of me.

Of the wine Jesus said, This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever
you drink it, do this in memory of me.

As we listen to some music,
when we feel ready we share bread and wine,
communing with him and with one another.

Closing prayer

Father of all,
we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

We sing with faith and hope our closing hymn, *Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah.*

Hymn (BPW 593) **Guide me, O thou Great Jehovah**

Guide me, O thou great Jehovah,
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 of praises
I will ever sing to thee.

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;
And the love of God;
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
Be with us all, evermore.
Amen

Sung Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you

Wherever he may send you;

May he guide you through the wilderness;

Protect you through the storm;

May he bring you home rejoicing

At the wonders he has shown you;

May he bring you home rejoicing

Once again into our doors.