

## Order of Service for 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021

### ***Realistic Assessments***

#### Welcome

Welcome to our service for 21st February 2021. Our service includes Holy Communion, so please find some bread and some wine or juice if you would like to take part in the Lord's Supper.

Today is the first Sunday of Lent and our theme, Realistic Assessments, concerns taking responsibility for our actions. We begin a short preaching series, reading each Sunday from the suggested gospel passage for Lent and also from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, as we pray and seek God's guidance concerning any work we may need to do on our buildings.

#### Call to worship

Psalm 25:1

In you, Lord my God, I put my trust.

We sing the beautiful hymn, *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*.

#### Hymn **Dear Lord and Father of Mankind** (BPW 84)

Verse 1

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,

Forgive our foolish ways;

Re-clothe us in our rightful mind;

In purer lives Thy service find,

In deeper reverence, praise.

In deeper reverence, praise.

Verse 2

In simple trust like theirs who heard,

Beside the Syrian Sea,

The gracious calling of the Lord,

Let us, like them, without a word

Rise up and follow Thee.

Rise up and follow Thee.

### Verse 3

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!  
O calm of hills above,  
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee  
The silence of eternity,  
Interpreted by love!  
Interpreted by love!

### Verse 4

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,  
Till all our strivings cease;  
Take from our souls the strain and stress,  
And let our ordered lives confess  
The beauty of Thy peace.  
The beauty of Thy peace.

### Verse 5

Breathe through the heats of our desire  
Thy coolness and Thy balm;  
Let sense be dumb let flesh retire;  
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,  
O still small voice of calm.  
O still small voice of calm.

### Prayer

Still, small voice of calm, beyond all earthquake wind and flame, we ask to hear your voice again. As we begin to listen, we feel that you know us better than we know ourselves.

You must surely hear the echoes of our stress and strain,  
the noises of inner disquiet and disorder,  
yet you remain with us in love.

We seek the stillness that comes from resting now with you.

A stillness in our bodies...

A stillness in our minds...

A stillness in our hearts....

If any specific part of our lives does not fit with the call to love and truth, we name it now in our hearts.

For these and all our sins, forgive us, gracious Lord, for the sake of Jesus, who died to bring us life.

So we rest in you, stilling our hearts, and allowing you to find a silence within us.

And our silent hearts communing with you speak adoration more eloquently than the finest of spoken prayers.

We worship you most holy God, Three Persons in One Godhead, mighty and mysterious, intimate and familiar, our reason for living and our hope in suffering and dying. Receive the adoration of our hearts. Amen.

#### 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

This week, our dear brother, Alan Pritchard, introduces our *Through the Window* guest speaker...

*Through my Window* is brought to us today by one of the stalwart members of our English conversation group at Hearsall, our 'Talking English' group, Kristina Basnina. Some of you might have met her, or remember her delightful daughter, Milla, really

getting stuck into the dance session at our International Evening a couple of years ago. Kristina has been coming to the group for a long time now, and she is a regular in our Zoom meetings and WhatsApp group that are thriving during lockdown. She tells us some of what she has been experiencing in recent times. All of us who take part in the group are learning so much from each other and about each other, and about other parts of world.

### Through my Window Christina Basnina

Hi everyone! Let me introduce myself - My name is Kristina, I'm from Saint-Petersburg, Russia. I have lived here in Coventry for three and a half years. I have dreamt of visiting England since I was a child, as a tourist or a student, but I had never dreamt of escaping my home country. My husband had been invited to the UK as a valuable specialist so we decided that it could be a very interesting experience for both of us - to travel abroad and to live somewhere else. During previous years I was living in both countries at the same time. That was the best period of my life. My daughter was too small to go to school and we travelled a lot.

My home town is a very beautiful place, full of nice and cosy spots. It is like an open air museum and I miss it very much.

We are spending our lockdown here in the UK because my daughter now has her reception year classes. At the same time my husband has to stay here because of his work and I can't leave him as well.

During the lockdown I have a lot of time to think about what is happening in my life and in the world. The coronavirus crisis triggered huge changes in the world order. A year ago it was impossible to imagine that you can't go to your home country to visit family and friends, but today it is real. Now I need to think about my future more seriously. I have to understand that I could be cut off from my family and roots. I should keep in mind that the situation could stay as it is even if the virus goes. I don't want to make a choice, I just want to be free, but I understand that it is childish.

Living abroad has made my mind wider. Today I don't use stereotypes as I did before. I have found out a lot of interesting things about your country and, suddenly, about my native one. Some things in Russia work in different ways, and some things

are much better. At the same time, some other things in Russia don't work at all, or work badly. I can give you some examples:

There is a really very effective transport system in Russia, - public transport is cheap and always on time. There are a lot of types of it - trams, trolleys, subway, buses, small commercial buses and even car-sharing. No one spends more than 15 minutes waiting for a bus. It is not necessary for a person to buy a car if he lives in town.

There are no zones in the subway, you just need to pay 50p to enter. The subway is very clean, safe and looks beautiful inside. So public transport in Russia is better.

At the same time I love the British elderly people care system. British elderly people can get very good high standard service and the help they need. Elderly people in the UK are extremely well protected and I didn't know anything about it before I came here.

I'm looking for new friends to learn more about the local life and to become an open minded person. Of course, 2020 was not the best time to make new friends, but I still hope for the future. I am really happy to stay in contact with the Hearsall Speaking English group and now I'm talking to you. It helps me to go through depression and worries and to hope for the best.

Thank you for spending your time listening to me. Stay safe and take care. The coming spring will bring more sunshine and joy to all of us I believe.

Thanks Christina, and thanks Alan....

Let's sing reminding ourselves that in Christ we all belong together... *Jesus stand among us.*

**Song Jesus stand among us (WT 243)**

*Verse 1*

Jesus, stand among us  
At the meeting of our lives.  
Be our sweet agreement  
At the meeting of our eyes.

*Chorus*

O Jesus, we love You,  
So we gather here.  
Join our hearts in unity  
And take away our fears.

*Verse 2*

So to You we're gathering  
Out of each and every land,  
Christ the love between us  
At the joining of our hands.

*Chorus*

*Verse 3*

Jesus, stand among us  
At the breaking of the bread,  
Join us as one body  
As we worship You our Head.

*Chorus (and repeat last line)*

Offering

Loving Lord, your generous heart blesses us on each day of our lives. All we have is yours and so make us a giving people, that your steadfast love and endless mercy may be known across our church, our city, our world. Amen.

And now our dear brother, Eric, will lead our prayers of intercession...

Prayers of Intercessions Eric Bremner

Almighty God, the God who is stronger than man's strength, we rely on you to guide, protect and control our lives. We rely on Jesus, who had the strength to voluntarily endure the cross, to enable our access to you, as one of your family.

Oh Lord, our strength and shield, we thank you for those you provide to ensure this happens; for leaders who make decisions re our welfare; for scientists whose great skills and abilities produce outcomes that enhance our protection; for doctors, nurses

and others with support skills that enable the healing of our bodies and minds; for police who protect us from harm; for people who ensure our food supply, and for those that provide services to us, we thank you for them all.

O Lord, who gives strength to his people and renews their strengths, we ask for your strength to sustain us and all our friends and neighbours during the term of the pandemic. Help all to cope with the impacts of it on all of our lives. Renew our strength when we are downcast for the continuation of the fight against covid-19. May we soon see the light at the end of the tunnel and continue in that light.

Oh God, who turns weakness into strength, we ask for this for the down trodden and disadvantaged in the world. Help them to endure and to succeed against their aggressors and oppressors. For the people of Myanmar and Yemen, we ask for a special touch from you. For all peoples impacted by wars, riots and insurrections, may they cease. We also ask for those among us who have been worn down to a weakened state, may they be sustained and strengthened.

Oh God, who is our refuge and strength, we thank you for the warm and comfortable dwellings you have provided for us. We ask particularly for all peoples in UK and overseas who do not have a suitable roof over their heads. For refugees in camps and tents and many poor forms of accommodation, for those who are homeless, we pray that their situation will be improved. We think of the Church family house in Queensland Ave that, at this stage, is beyond our use. We also pray for the deliberations of our Church family re our building's future. Lord, may you guide and control directions in this area and give us the insight and wisdom to follow the directions. May the outcome not only provide good accommodation for our present users but for the Church family over the next 50 years.

The Joy of the Lord is our strength. We have asked for strength, Lord, may the Joy come with it. Lord help us to navigate 2021 full of your Joy and help us to spread it among others. Amen

Thanks Eric for those prayers.

Our Bible readings today come from Nehemiah and from Mark.

## Bible readings

### **Nehemiah 1: 1 - 11**

#### Nehemiah's Prayer

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, <sup>2</sup> Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

<sup>3</sup> They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

<sup>4</sup> When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. <sup>5</sup> Then I said:

"LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, <sup>6</sup> let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. <sup>7</sup> We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

<sup>8</sup> "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, <sup>9</sup> but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

<sup>10</sup> "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. <sup>11</sup> Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favour in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king.

## Mark 1: 9 - 15

### The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

<sup>9</sup> At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. <sup>10</sup> Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. <sup>11</sup> And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

<sup>12</sup> At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, <sup>13</sup> and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted<sup>[a]</sup> by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

### Jesus Announces the Good News

<sup>14</sup> After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. <sup>15</sup> "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!"

So even the Lord Jesus had to face temptations in the wilderness. Let us remember him and pray too for ourselves as we seek to hear God's voice this Lent.

We sing, *When he was baptised in Jordan...*

### Hymn **When He was Baptised in Jordan** (BPW 234)

When he was baptised in Jordan,  
Jesus knew his chosen role:  
Ready now for time of testing  
In the desert of the soul.

Starved of bread to feed the body,  
Starved of rest to feed the brain,  
Starved of friends to feed the spirit,  
Jesus daily bore the strain.

During six long weeks of trial  
Evil masquerades as good:  
Points false roads to instant lordship,  
Tempts him with the word of God.

He attacks the great impostor:  
Evil shall not win this day!  
Ready now to serve his calling,  
Sets his face Jerusalem way.

In the hour of our temptation,  
As we meet each vital choice,  
Make us wise and make us willing,  
Lord of life, to heed your voice.

Now, O Lord, may we each hear your voice as we reflect on your Word to us. Amen.

### Sermon

#### ***Realistic Assessments***

On October 2nd 1945 a parcel was posted to the White House in the United States. Inside the parcel was a painted glass sign with some words on it, and thereafter the sign was often to be seen on the desk of President Harry S. Truman. Perhaps you already know what words were on the sign? Yes: They were, *The buck stops here*. The *buck* was a marker passed round in a game of poker indicating who was to deal next; typically it was a knife with a buckhorn handle. Whoever had the buck, they were next to deal and if a person didn't want to deal, they passed the buck onto the next player. Of course the phrase passing the buck came to mean denying responsibility and blaming someone else. Perhaps we could post such a sign to 10 Downing Street so that prime ministers present and future could be reminded of the same idea.

Our country and our world faces huge problems. Climate change, coronavirus, travel and business restrictions and economic downturns. Even our little church faces problems. With buildings crumbling and facilities way past their best-before date, who should take the blame for the muddle that we seem to be in?

The book of Nehemiah is regarded by scholars as an accurate historical record. It's in part a kind of memoir of a powerful Jewish man probably born in Persia, into a community of exiles, about 440 years before Jesus. The previous century, some

Jews had returned to their historic homeland under the very progressive policy of the new king, Cyrus.

But many remained in what had been Babylon, and was then Persia - now Iran - where there was a thriving Jewish community. Indeed some think that the idea of the Jewish synagogue may have originated at this time and place. Persia was also the cradle of the Zoroastrian religion, and some think the Jewish community that lived on through the subsequent centuries was connected with the Magi - possibly Zoroastrian priests - who visited the baby Jesus after seeing a star.

Nehemiah is called Cupbearer to the king. He may have been a eunuch, as there is no mention of a Mrs Nehemiah, and he is permitted to be in the presence of the Queen, we read in chapter 2. Either way, we can picture a powerful, intelligent, capable and trusted aid to King Artaxerxes. A cupbearer didn't just hold the cup and test for poison - he had the ear of the King and might have even been in some cases like a Dominic Cummings to the king's Boris Johnson.

Anyway, our story begins with Nehemiah having a visitor: his brother, Hanani, with some of his pals! They've come from Judah, so Nehemiah naturally wants to hear of the community back there. But it's upsetting news. The community of Jews who had returned to Jerusalem are in great trouble and disgrace. The walls of Jerusalem are broken down and its gates show fire damage.

Now this should not have been news to Nehemiah: Jerusalem had been largely destroyed about 150 years previously by the Babylonians. So Nehemiah's shock at Jerusalem's state would be like us being surprised that Queen Victoria had been declared Empress of India in 1876.

But then there's knowing something, and knowing something, isn't there? I can learn in a history book that Victoria was happy to be styled Empress of India as a mere fact, but what about the implications of that fact? What do I think now about a British Queen being called an Empress of a faraway subcontinent? What, I might think today, does it say about the nature of Britishness?

So, yes, Nehemiah obviously already knew of a fact that Jerusalem had fallen a century and a half previously. But perhaps the historical fact struck home for Nehemiah when his brother gave his eyewitness account. Perhaps Nehemiah realised he had been complacent in his role as a top Persian official, well respected

in the developing Jewish diaspora community, feathering his own nest but forgetting his ancestral homeland.

So now, Nehemiah very much takes things to heart. He weeps, fasts, mourns and prays before the God of heaven for several days. Later, in this memoir, he reconstructs the logic of his prayer.

The prayer weaves together a religious conviction of divine goodness and a confession of human failure. It uses the framework of the covenant to do this, and is informed by an awareness of God's character as revealed in the scriptures.

Now Nehemiah had probably never ever been to Jerusalem or Judea, so one thing stands out in his prayer. He prays to God saying, as it were, **the buck stops here!** *I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you.*

We might have expected him to blame previous rebellious generations whose sin, according to the prophets, had led them to being given over into the hands of the Babylonians. But no, for Nehemiah, he and his family are a part of the problem.

We don't know whether Nehemiah has any **specific** sins in mind. Maybe, as I said earlier, he felt guilty of a certain indifference towards the fate of Jerusalem. Perhaps he also accepts in a **general** way that he is a sinner. The Jews have sinned, he is a Jew. He belongs to the whole system that has led to the status quo; of him living in comparative luxury in a faraway country and the home city of Jerusalem lying desolate. Anyway, he makes it plain in his prayer: He sees himself as being a part of the problem.

Lent could be framed in this way. Are we prepared to consider seeing ourselves as a part of the world's problems, or does the blame always belong elsewhere? Our gospel text reminds us that even Jesus had to look honestly into his own heart.

Jesus knew who he was. His identity was rooted in being the beloved Son of Father God, as revealed at his baptism. But after that, he spent forty days in the wilderness being tempted by Satan, a time we commemorate now in Lent.

Welcome to the wilderness. Is this a time to look into your own heart and consider: Am I, too, a part of the problems the world faces? Or does the buck always stop

elsewhere?

Where does the buck stop for our planet's climate crisis, for example? Are we part of the **general** problem, because we enjoy freely the fruits of a world in which resources are extracted and processed and distributed without due concern for the environment? Are we **specifically** part of the problem, if aspects of our personal lifestyle might be seen as far from green?

In Lent we remember that if we point an index finger elsewhere, three other fingers point back at ourselves. Before we blame others, can we consider our own complicity, complacency or involvement? Don't blame women or men or teachers or politicians or foreigners or gay people or Muslims... At least don't start there: start with yourself! Dare you consider: what responsibility do you have for the ills of society?

Now happily for my purposes, Nehemiah can be seen as being a book about a building project. As we read it, along with our Lenten texts over the next few weeks, we are unlikely to draw many direct tips about how to build a new eco-friendly church centre fit for the 21st century, but I do hope that some underlying principles may help us.

Our school rooms on Queensland Avenue are in a bad way! We've been advised that it's not really possible to fit a new, green heating system in our old shell. We've known about this for years, and sorting it out has dragged on all through my ministry. So who's to blame?

Perhaps I could do with Harry S. Truman's sign to remind me that the decisions of the church operate under my pastoral oversight. Be that as it may, in a Baptist church, everyone contributes to decision-making. The buck does stop at the church meeting. Deacons, by the way, as trustees of the church, might sometimes feel a bit nervous that legally the buck stops with them, but only if they are shown to have behaved very negligently or blatantly against the church's interests. But do pray for your deacons.

So Lent is a time when we think: maybe the buck also stops with each one of us. Certainly, if you have insights to share about the possibility of a Hearsall rebuild project, remember the right thing to do is not to complain on the side-lines

anonymously to an individual, but to share your perspective in a church meeting. We need to hear it. We should each take our own responsibility in helping the church find its way.

In Lent we may continue to ask: am I part of the problem? But we can also begin to be a part of the **solution**, by praying. Now Nehemiah was a very practical man, as we'll see in the coming chapters of the book. Nehemiah is a man who rolls up his sleeves and gets involved in all the practicalities of the building project, and other matters too. So, he begins though with prayer, and then moves on. As well lamenting our own collusion with the ills of the church and the world, we can cry out to God in prayer, trusting that his unfailing love is still available for us, as we turn to him.

So let this Lent be a time of soul-searching and responsibility-taking. And let it also be a season of prayer: prayer for the world at large, but also for God's guidance for Hearsall, as we dare to dream of being a thriving community in a new home. In short, I'm calling the church to prayer.

To help us in that last part, I've written a short prayer.

*Loving Lord, make us the people you would have us be.*

*Forgive us for when we've been slow to develop your work.*

*Guide us to a new home for our worship and service in the coming decades.*

*Amen*

After our next song we share in Holy Communion together. However we may be feeling it's good to know that God is our hiding place, a secure fortress, a strong tower. We sing, *You are my hiding place*.

**Song You are my Hiding Place** (WT 482)

Verse X 2

You are my hiding place;

You always fill my heart

With songs of deliverance,

Whenever I am afraid.

### *Bridge*

*I will trust in You,*

*I will trust in You.*

*Let the weak say I am strong*

*In the strength of my God.*

### Verse

### *Bridge X 2*

*I will trust in you.*

### Communion

The Table of the Lord is spread - you see it in the tables of your own homes. It is for those who will see in broken bread and poured out wine symbols of his life shed for us on the cross and raised again on the third day. The Risen Christ is present among his people scattered across Coventry and beyond, but we each meet with him in our own homes. It is for those who know him a little and long to know him more. So I invite all who are seeking him and all who are weary of their sin to come and share in this feast.

### Prayer

Lord, as we will eat bread and drink wine, of necessity in our respective homes, we dedicate to you all of the sharing taking place around coffee tables and in dining rooms, praying that, by the power of your Holy Spirit, we may sense a unity with you as you come to us, and a unity with one another. We dedicate this time to you now. Amen.

### Bible words

But he was pierced for our transgressions,  
    he was crushed for our iniquities;  
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,  
    and by his wounds we are healed.  
We all, like sheep, have gone astray,  
    each of us has turned to our own way;  
and the Lord has laid on him  
    the iniquity of us all.     (Isaiah 53: 5 - 6)

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,  
so great is his love for those who fear him;  
12 as far as the east is from the west,  
so far has he removed our transgressions from us.

13 As a father has compassion on his children,  
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him...

(Psalm 103:11-13)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 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.

(Matthew 11:28 - 29)

### Words of Institution

19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, 'Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.'

22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, 'Surely you don't mean me, Lord?'

26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.'

27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink from this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.'

(Matthew 26: 19 - 22 & 26 - 29)

### Thanksgiving

Lord, for the bread and wine we have in our homes, we praise your holy name.  
For wheat and vine, sunshine and rain, baker and winemaker, shop and supermarket, kitchen and table, we bless you.

Though we share in our different homes, you draw especially close as we eat and drink according to your invitation; and you unite us one with another in your holy love. We thank you Lord.

Amen.

### Sharing

Jesus said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

Jesus said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

As we listen to some music now, please share the bread and wine wherever you may be...

### Prayer

Lord, thank you that space and time present no boundaries to you, and you have been present as we have each met with you in Holy Communion.

In our spirits, we were hungry and you fed us; praise you Lord.

In our hearts we were thirsty and you slaked our thirst; bless you Lord.

Take us from this hour of worship and let our words, deeds, silence and stillness all be filled with the abundance of your love.

Amen.

So we sing together of the faith, hope and love we need to follow Christ in the coming weeks, *Men of Faith...*

### Song Men of Faith (WT 292)

Verse 1

Men of faith rise up and sing

Of the great and glorious King.

You are strong when you feel weak,

In your brokenness complete.

*Chorus*

*Shout to the north and the south,*

*Sing to the east and the west,*

*Jesus is Saviour to all,*

*Lord of heaven and earth.*

Verse 2

Rise up women of the truth,  
Stand and sing to broken hearts.  
Who can know the healing power  
Of our awesome King of love?

*Chorus*

*Bridge*

We've been through fire,  
We've been through rain,  
We've been refined  
By the power of His name.  
We've fallen deeper  
In love with You,  
You've burned  
The truth on our lips.

Verse 3

Rise up church with broken wings,  
Fill this place with songs again  
Of our God who reigns on high,  
By His grace again we'll fly.

*Chorus X 2*

*Shout to the north and the south,  
Sing to the east and the west,  
Jesus is Saviour to all,  
Lord of heaven and earth.*

*Lord of heaven and earth,  
Lord of heaven and earth,  
Lord of heaven and earth.*

### 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.