

Order of Service May 16th 2021 (Communion)

Being Loyal: *Love and Service*

Welcome

A warm welcome to Hearsall at home for 16th May 2021. Our service today includes Holy Communion, so you might like to find some bread and wine or juice so you can take part in that. The liturgy for communion includes some words in bold type which are designed for everyone to say aloud, so it could be handy to follow the text of the service that is available on the front page of our website. Let's still our hearts for worship.

Call to worship

I delight greatly in the Lord;

my soul rejoices in my God.

For he has clothed me with garments of salvation

and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,

as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,

and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

Isaiah 61:10

Let's remember how lovely it is to believe in the name of Jesus as we sing, *How sweet the name of Jesus sounds...*

Hymn (BPW 339) **How Sweet the Name of Jesus Sounds**

1. How sweet the name of Jesus sounds

In a believer's ear!

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,

And drives away his fear.

2. It makes the wounded spirit whole,

And calms the troubled breast;

It's manna to the hungry soul,

And to the weary, rest.

3. Dear name! the rock on which I build,
My shield and hiding-place,
My never-failing treasury, filled
With boundless stores of grace.
4. Jesus! my shepherd, brother, friend,
My prophet, priest, and king;
My Lord, my life, my way, my end,
Accept the praise I bring.
5. Weak is the effort of my heart,
And cold my warmest thought;
But when I see you as you are,
I'll praise you as I ought.
6. Till then I would your love proclaim
With every fleeting breath,
And may the music of your name
Refresh my soul in death.

We're going to share in a version of the Lord's prayer and then have another prayer, which will lead us to a simple song...

The Lord's Prayer (The Message version)

Our Father in heaven,
Reveal who you are.
Set the world right;
Do what's best --
As above, so below.
Keep us alive with three square meals.
Keep us forgiven with you and
forgiving others.
You're in charge!
You can do anything you want!
You're ablaze in beauty!
Yes. Yes. Yes.

Prayer (Angela Ashwin)

Lord,
this moment is yours;
mine for you,
and yours for me.
I need you,
I cannot survive without you;
and yet I go on rushing through life
as if I could do everything in my own strength.
Forgive me.

I know
that you care for me at all times,
and that I am always in your hands;
but I still need to pause
and let my heart and spirit
be loved by you
into loving you again.

Song (WT 432) **To be in Your Presence**

To be in Your presence,
To sit at Your feet
Where Your love surrounds me
And makes me complete,

Chorus

*This is my desire, O Lord,
This is my desire;
This is my desire, O Lord,
This is my desire.*

To rest in Your presence,
Not running away,
To cherish each moment,
Here I would stay.

Chorus (Repeat whole song)

Saints Alive!

For our *Saints Alive* this week I'm here with Sylvia Woodward and Sylvia's very carefully thought through what she wants to share with us about her journey through faith and life...

As far back as I can remember I have been a Christian. I went to Sunday School, joined the Brownies then became a Girl Guide, all run as outreach to the developing area of the town where we lived, by the Baptist Church in Stafford.

That church had a vision of eventually building a church in the area and I was there right at the start, how exciting was that? After much fund raising the church was built in the shape of a multi-purpose hall and all the organisations moved there. A group of dedicated Christians from the town church committed themselves to the new venture and became our example of Christianity.

The church grew under the pastoral leadership of a deaconess, Sister Grace Hovard, who we all loved. I became more involved, singing in the Junior Choir, Sunday School teaching, and eventually becoming Lieutenant, then Captain in the Guide Company.

It was during an outreach campaign when we had a group of 16 students from Regents Park College Oxford at the church that I realised that I needed to accept Jesus Christ as my own personal Saviour which I subsequently did, was baptised and became a church member.

As I remember it, the challenges of those early days were few. I was a member of the school Christian fellowship so I wasn't alone there. The facts of being a Christian were very straight forward and I had no doubts.

I started work, Roger and I became engaged and he went off to college for four years to train for the ministry. Then the excitement of getting married and moving to our first church in Leicester.

The challenges of ministry for a young minister's wife were exciting but had their ups and downs, for example I was at work all day and Roger was often at meetings or visiting in the evenings, we hardly saw each other. However, God sent us good Christian friends to support us.

It was at Leicester that we had our first baby, Mark, and two years later Nicola was born, three days before we moved to Quinton Park Coventry. Again God saw us through. Our Mum's were wonderful and Quinton Park had several young Mums, one of which is a friend to this day.

It was at Quinton Park that I think God tested my faith, some personally and some supporting Roger over problems in the church. Not good times but God saw us through. I still question some things but I try not to let it affect my basic faith.

It was at Quinton Park that I became more involved in the church, starting a Guide Company, running a Young Peoples' Bible Study group (based on my older Guides) taught in the Sunday school from time to time and helping to start a Young Wives' Group. I always saw my work in the church as working with Children and Young People (this sounds a lot but we were there for 26 years and I always tried to put Roger and the children first.)

After 26 years, mostly very happy ones, at Quinton Park, it was time to move on. To Northfield in Birmingham. I particularly didn't want to go to Birmingham. I'd much rather have gone to somewhere near the sea, if I had to go but obviously God had other plans (I never did understand why God can't make me want to do what he wants). This move was made all the more difficult because neither Mark nor Nic would be coming with us. Mark had a job in Guildford and Nic had a job as a Staff Nurse at Walsgrave Hospital.

God does know best. We had a great time in Northfield. I made many good friends. I again led a Bible Study Group and became a Lieutenant in the Girls' Brigade Company, not something I really wanted to do, but the company was running with only a Captain, which would mean it would have to close and with 30 plus girls on the books it would have been a tragedy.

Meanwhile the church's vision of rebuilding on part of its site to accommodate a community restaurant, new coffee bar and meeting rooms and connecting it to the sheltered flats on the site, became a reality. Roger was in his element and over saw the demolishing and building from start to finish. What better way to run down to retirement!

I took on the role of one of the day volunteer organisers making sure that there were enough volunteers on duty and helping in the restaurant when needed.

All this would not have been possible without God's guidance and the prayers of many over several years.

Our faith was tried just after we went to Northfield when Roger had to have surgery for Prostate cancer and had several nasty hiccups after our move. But the prayers of the church saw us through and helped to bind us closer together.

Then all too soon, after 10 years, it was time to retire.

Our faithful God had been with us during all this time. We both had several serious health problems and family deaths but we were never alone, and were both aware of the very privileged position we were in, as the prayers of many surrounded us.

We are both now very happily settled at Hearsall and I am beginning to make friends. So after a shaky start to retirement when my faith took a bit of a battering, I am starting to build it up again thanks to David and his inspirational sermons. I still have many questions but I feel that some will not be answered until I meet my maker. My basic faith has remained firm and I do wonder whether the rest really matters?

Thank you to you all for taking us into your hearts and making us feel so welcome, may we be able to do the same for others in our turn.

The hymn that I've chosen - I had so many that were favourites - is: *May the Mind of Christ my Saviour live in me from day to day, by his love and power controlling all I do or say...* Because I think that in all of our lives we're aiming to be more like Christ so that we can be effective in evangelisation really, so I thought that was very suitable.

Lovely. Let's sing now, *May the Mind of Christ my Saviour...*

Hymn (BPW 537) *May the Mind of Christ my Saviour*

1. May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,
Live in me from day to day,
By his love and power controlling
All I do or say.

2. May the word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through his power.
3. May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.
4. May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self-abasing,
This is victory.
5. May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.
6. May his beauty rest upon me,
As I seek to make him known,
So that all may look to Jesus,
Seeing him alone.

Offering

Lord, you have loved us with extravagance and passion.
May our gifts at least hint of the beauty of your love.
For Jesus' sake. Amen

Our prayers of intercession today have been written by Sandra Noel.

Prayers of intercession Sandra Noel

Be still and know that I am God.
I am the Lord that healeth thee.
In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust.

Father, we come to You now knowing that your love surrounds us and holds us whatever age we are or whatever our situation is. At this moment now we feel your love binding us together in fellowship and faith.

At the close of Christian Aid Week we thank you for all that we have in our daily lives—food and shelter, friends and families and all the benefits which our welfare society gives us. Help us to be grateful and share what we have with those who have so little.

As we watch our News Programmes we see many people who are just surviving, not truly living. We see children suffering from severe malnutrition in Yemen and other countries, whose mothers know they will have very little chance of growing up into healthy adults. Father, may the money from Christian Aid bring hope to many, giving life in all its fullness.

As we aim to control the Covid virus, we give thanks for all who have helped in the Vaccination Programme—for scientists, medical staff, government and all volunteers. May our country gradually get back to being as normal as possible. Bless all who work so hard in the N.H.S., many who have had such a difficult time and will feel the trauma of such suffering for years to come.

We pray for countries like India and Brazil where the Covid virus is still out of control. May our government aid the desperate situation by offering help in many ways.

We pray for youngsters in our society today. Especially, Father, we bring to you those whose lives seem to have been damaged by lack of love and lack of purpose. We hear news of stabbings causing injuries and sometimes death. May our churches be open to all youngsters who need help in developing good relationships with others. Give youth organisations guidance and protection as they aim to show your love and care to all they come in contact with.

Today, Father, we pray for Lee and Sarah and their children Rouven, Livia, Yves and Baby Avelyn. We hold them all in your love as they demonstrate that love, in all they do in Benin. We hold this lovely family in your care. Keep them safe and keep them well. Protect them from Covid and malaria now and in the months ahead.

And now, Lord, as we begin to plan returning to our church building, may all our future plans be guided by you. This Covid lockdown has made us realise that our church

is our fellowship and although buildings are important, they are only secondary.

Bless David as he ministers your word to us. Bless his family too, especially his new little granddaughter. We bring them all to You.

May our service today draw us closer to You, Our God of Love.

Through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour we pray. AMEN

Thank Sandra for preparing our prayers today. Let's hear now our Bible readings.

Bible Readings

Romans 12: 1 – 2

A living sacrifice

12 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Mark 14: 1 - 11

Jesus anointed at Bethany

14 Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. ² 'But not during the festival,' they said, 'or the people may riot.'

³ While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

⁴ Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, 'Why this waste of perfume?' ⁵ It could have been sold for more than a year's wages and the money given to the poor.' And they rebuked her harshly.

⁶ 'Leave her alone,' said Jesus. 'Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ The poor you will always have with you, and you can help

them any time you want. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. ⁹ Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her.'

¹⁰ Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. ¹¹ They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

O Lord, touch the heart of our hearts with your Spirit of love as we reflect on your Word together now... Amen.

Sermon

Being Loyal

It's like... living in paradise, like a bride receiving her bridegroom, a sweet name, a friend whispering in your ear, a nation in peace and prosperity, a nightingale singing, a rock to stand on, a haven from a storm, a noble soldier standing for what is good, a hiding place, a safe room, a Jimmy Page guitar solo igniting a bluesy Led Zeppelin number, a treasury, a well-watered garden, a heavenly tailor, sheer beauty, the Hallelujah chorus in your heart, a shepherd's call, bread falling from the sky, a chop suey with a large bunch of friends, a wee dram of single malt in the night, transforming love, a pathway through the high mountains, a goal, a companion, a merciful king, a servant, everything....

It is....

Beyond definition, this thing, this inner loyalty to something, someone within us and yet beyond us... This thing we are experiencing as Christians... It's precious, and pure, and good, and wild, and true and wonderfully rare and eternally ordinary... It's elusive but freely given, suggested by religion but not contained by it.

God help me, I offered the ABC of faith - **admit** you need help, **believe** God's loving grace offers that help and **commit** yourself to living that way. Well, I hope that's helpful, and yet the A and the B and the C in the end collapse into a single sigh to God, a sigh or a groan that means variously YES and GO FOR IT, LORD and HELP and I ADORE YOU and none of those things...

George Herbert's sonnet Prayer puts it this way:

*Prayer the church's banquet, angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth
Engine against th' Almighty, sinner's tow'r,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days world transposing in an hour,
A kind of tune, which all things hear and fear;
Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
Exalted manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,
The milky way, the bird of Paradise,
Church-bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices; something understood.*

Something understood... I think I might know what George Herbert means: almost, something **not** understood; something not fully grasped by the mind; something too subtle for words; something simpler than a breath.

Something understood, or something not understood, that is the mystery at the core of faith. A heart prays with sighs and groans too deep for words... But can we cultivate our attention to this thing, so that, as it were, we might attune our ears to hear those church bells beyond the stars?

The woman described in Mark 14 seems to have understood... But her story is hard to pin down within the New Testament canon. Each of the other gospels also has a story of Jesus being anointed by a woman. One of these stories is very different from Mark's; one is very similar; and one is quite similar but a bit different!

The *very different* one is in chapter 7 of Luke's gospel, where a sinful woman - probably a lady of the night - steals into a Pharisee's dinner party and scandalises the company by pouring perfume on Jesus' feet, wiping them with her hair - even kissing those feet. Very soon after in Luke's narrative, we get introduced to Mary Magdalene, and I guess that's why we have the idea that Mary was a prostitute - something not actually said in the New Testament.

The *very similar* anointing story is in Matthew 26. You don't need to be an expert to see that it's an edited version of Mark's story - one that casts the disciples as the villains who were denouncing the woman. If all the anointing stories stopped there, we might be able to make sense of them all. Maybe Jesus was anointed twice by different women, and Luke tells one of the incidents, whilst Mark and Matthew tell the other.

But just when we think we've got it all tidied up, John's gospel famously also gives a story of a woman anointing Jesus. His story is quite similar to Mark's, but a bit different too. He names her as Mary of Bethany (not Mary Magdalene). Confusingly this happens in the same hamlet as Mark's story - Bethany - but the dinner is given by the famous Mary-Martha-Lazarus family, so that disagrees slightly with Mark's version where the dinner is hosted by Simon the leper. Mark's woman anoints Jesus' head; but Mary of Bethany anoints Jesus' feet as does the woman in Luke 7!

I like to believe the gospel stories are all rooted in real events, but my mind cannot tease out exactly what happened where and when with regard to Jesus being anointed by women. But the point might be not to worry too much about that, and, instead, focus on what each gospel writer intends to teach us. So, something not understood: how many times did this happen! Something we begin to understand: **why** did it happen, and what it might inspire us to do or be?

And it was something not understood - not by the other guests at the home of Simon the Leper in Bethany... Some of them indignantly gossiped to one another displaying their uncultured ignorance. They could only see the woman's expression of devotion in economic terms. On the disciples' end-of-year balance sheet an auditor might have had some questions. Twenty thousand pounds spent on... on what exactly?

Worship? Love? Romance? Passion? Spirituality? A prophetic gesture? Something not understood...

But Jesus understands it... He explains that she has prepared his body for burial... In a deeply meaningful gesture she has perhaps understood something. When Jesus dies, something tragic, wonderful, terrible, magnificent, brutal, healing and beautiful will occur. She wouldn't have been able to express it in so many words, least of all in an ABC of salvation.... Hence the perfume... for her I'd guess, something understood and yet something not understood...

But Jesus understands it... Her service of anointing will be linked with the worldwide proclamation of the gospel. Well, in reality, I guess it sometimes comes into gospel presentations, but perhaps not often. Is there a deeper meaning here? Is Jesus hinting that all hearts will respond in a similar way? Every person who **gets** the gospel will want to pour out the treasure of their heart to anoint Jesus, who mysteriously won universal salvation on Calvary's hill...

And others won't understand this *something* that has excited a human heart. The believer might then learn to keep their secret pearls away from the swine, and yet the response of their heart, to the love at the heart of the universe, will be the anchor of their life.

There's a narrative poem by Sufi poet, Rumi, about a person who is visited by the face of the moon. The moon enters the house and all the people leave the house and look up into the sky... *Where's the moon?* Everyone cries... And then, seeing no moon, *Where's the thief [who's stolen the moon]?* But all the while the moon is in the house! Rumi concludes:

*'And He is with you' means He is searching with you.
He is nearer to you than yourself. Why look outside?
Become like melting snow; wash yourself of yourself.
With love your inner voice will find a tongue
growing like a silent white lily in the heart.'*

Something understood? As one of my own poems puts it,
*the thing you say you're searching for
is safely lodged within the human heart...*

Now the apostle Paul certainly went to town on understanding in the book of Romans, but I always enjoy this comment from fellow apostle Peter when he wrote:
Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote to you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort...

(2 Peter 3:16)

Well, this mere mortal finds plenty of things in Paul and in Romans that are indeed

hard to understand, but here in chapter 12, we stop looking under the bonnet at Paul's bewildering theological engine and start driving the car of faith.

Our brief reading says that *in view of God's mercy* we should offer our bodies to God... By the way, this is the ABC of salvation yet again.... We admit we need mercy, and, believing we have that mercy, we commit ourselves to living God's way.

It's a bit of a surprise that Paul talks about offering our **bodies** here... Wouldn't you have expected *soul* or *heart*? Well, by 'body', he means our 24/7 interaction with the world: our embodiment. Everyday life should be offered to God as a living sacrifice.

That was an oxymoron... Sacrificial bodies were killed as they were offered. A living sacrifice was a strange idea. Indeed, the surrounding Roman communities would have thought Christians generally to be a strange old bunch. They were worshippers, but with no priests, no rituals, no temple and no sacrifice. The Christians had *understood something* at the heart of the universe; their non-Christian neighbours would have been mystified.

Paul says this living sacrifice is acceptable to God and, what's more, it is our *true and proper worship*. The Greek translated here, 'True and proper' meant 'true to the real nature of a thing'.

The word for 'Worship' meant the performance of religious rites, acts of devotion to God, veneration...

So the basic idea is: *Take your 24/7 life and let the whole shebang be a gift to God, because this is what it really means to worship.*

And then: *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.* The world around us has cultural norms, social groups, institutions and traditions that mould a person's attitude and behaviour. Non-conformity is being suggested!

What huge pressure we face to behave like the world around us, and in the post-truth age of the internet and the sound-bite in which every ignoramus is regarded as an international commentator on anything, the pressure has become intense.

Even so, to live as a loyal Christian is as easy as ABC. In fact, it's easier than that. It's cultivating an inner attitude of love - being loved and giving love - until that being

loved and the giving love are almost the same thing. It is a loving trust that's simpler than breathing, something a baby can manage, but something a sage can miss.

So let us pray...

We sit steady and still...

We breathe steady and normally...

With each in-breath we receive the love of Jesus...

With each out-breath we share the love of Jesus...

In... LOVED

Out... LOVING

In... LOVED

Out... LOVING...

In... LOVE...

Out... LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

LOVE

This is how to be loyal...

Inwardly we LOVE

Outwardly we SERVE...

Let's prayerfully sing, *I will offer up my life...*

Song (WT 195) **I Will Offer Up My Life**

Verse 1

I will offer up my life

In spirit and truth,

Pouring out the oil of love

As my worship to You.

In surrender, I must give my every part;

Lord, receive the sacrifice

Of a broken heart.

Chorus

*Jesus, what can I give, what can I bring
To so faithful a friend, to so loving a King?
Saviour, what can be said, what can be sung
As a praise of Your name
For the things You have done?
Oh, my words could not tell, not even in part
Of the debt of love that is owed
By this thankful heart.*

Verse 2

You deserve my every breath,
For You've paid the great cost,
Giving up Your life to death,
Even death on a cross.
You took all my shame away
There, defeated my sin,
Opened up the gates of heaven
And have beckoned me in.

Chorus X 2

Holy Communion

We come to share in Holy Communion.

Gathering sentences

Gather us in,
the lost and the lonely, the broken and breaking,
the tired and the aching,
who long for the nourishment found at your feast.

Gather us in,
the done and the doubting, the wishing and wondering,
the puzzled and pondering
who long for the company found at your feast.

Gather us in,

the proud and pretentious, the sure and superior,
the never inferior,
who long for the levelling found at your feast.

Gather us in,

the bright and the bustling,
the stirrers, the shakers,
the kind laughter makers
who long for the deeper joys found at your feast.

Gather us in,

from corner or limelight, from mansion or campsite,
from fears and obsession, from tears and depression,
from untold excesses, from treasured successes,
to meet, to eat, to be given a seat,
to be joined to the vine, be offered new wine,
become like the least, be found at the feast.

Gather us in!

Invitation

This is the table,
not of the church,
but of the Lord.

It is to be made ready for those who love him and who want to love him more.

So, come, if you have much faith,
and if you have little,
if you have been here often
and if you have not been for a long time,

if you have tried to follow,
and if you have failed.

Come,
not because it is I who invite you:

it is our Lord.

It is his will

that those who want him should meet him here.

The story

On the night on which Jesus was betrayed, he sat at supper with his disciples. While they were eating, he took a piece of bread, said a blessing, broke it, and gave it to them with the words, 'This is my body. It is for you. Do this to remember me.' Later, he took a cup of wine, saying, 'This cup is God's new covenant, sealed with my blood. Drink from it, all of you, to remember me.'

Thanksgiving

Gratitude, praise, hearts lifted high,
voices full and joyful:
these you deserve.

For when we were nothing, you made us something.
When we had no name and no faith and no future,
you called us your children,
When we lost our way or turned away, you did not abandon us.
When we came back to you, your arm opened wide in welcome.

And look, you prepare a table for us
offering not just bread, not just wine, but your very self
so that we may be filled, forgiven, healed, blessed and made new again.
You are worth all our pain and all our praise.

So now we join our voices
to those in the church on earth and in heaven:

Holy, holy, holy Lord.

God of power and might.

Heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Lord God,
as we come to share the richness of your table,
we cannot forget the rawness of the earth.

We cannot take bread and forget those who are hungry.
Your world is one world and we are stewards of its nourishment.
Lord, put our prosperity
at the service of the poor.

We cannot take wine and forget those who are thirsty.
The ground and the rootless, the earth and its weary people
cry out for justice.
Lord, put our fullness
at the service of the empty.

We cannot hear your words of peace and forget the world at war,
or, if not at war, then preparing for it.
Show us quickly Lord,
how to turn weapons into welcome signs
and the lust for power
into a desire for peace.

We cannot celebrate the feast of your family and forget our division.
We are one in spirit but not in fact.
History and hurt still dismember us.
Lord, heal our church in every brokenness. Amen.

The sharing

Among friends, gathered round a table, Jesus took bread, broke it and said,
'This is my body, it is for you'.

And later he took the cup of wine and said,
'This is the new relationship with God, made possible because of my death.
Take this - all of you - to remember me'.

Look, here is your Lord coming to you in bread and wine.
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.

In our own homes today, we share the bread and wine as we listen to the song,
Jesus, Jesus, Holy and Anointed One. (WT 232)

Jesus, Jesus

Holy and anointed One, Jesus.

Jesus, Jesus,

Risen and exalted One, Jesus.

Your name is like honey on my lips,

Your Spirit like water to my soul.

Your Word is a lamp unto my feet,

Jesus, I love You, I love You.

Closing prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,

You have put your life in our hands; now we put our lives into yours.

Take us, renew and remake us.

What we have been is past;

what we shall be, through you, still awaits us.

Lead us on.

Take us with you. Amen.

Responses

From where we are to where you need us

Jesus now lead on.

From the security of what we know to the adventure of what you will reveal

Jesus now lead on.

To refashion the fabric of the world until it resembles the shape of your kingdom

Jesus now lead on.

Because good things have been prepared

For those who love God

Jesus, now lead on.

Our closing song calls us to live our lives as expressions of God's mercy, righteousness and humility, echoing some celebrated words from the book of Micah, chapter 6...

Song (WT 406) **You Have Shown Us**

Verse 1

You have shown us, O God, what is good;
You have shown us, O Lord, what You require.
You have heard all our songs,
How we long to worship You,
Yet You've told us the offering You desire.

Chorus

*To do justly and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with You God;
You said to do justly and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with You God.*

Verse 2

You have shown us the riches of Your love;
You have shown us Your heart for those in need.
Lord, You're opening our ears
To the cries of the poor;
You have called us to be Your hands and feet.

Bridge X 2

To the oppressed and the broken,
To the widow and the orphan,
Let the river of Your justice flow through us.

Chorus

*To do justly and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with You God;
You said to do justly and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with You God;
To do justly and to love mercy,
And to walk humbly with You God.*

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.