

## Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> October

### Welcome

Thank you for joining with us to worship, you are very welcome from wherever you are tuning in. We are delighted that this service reaches many people and it is our prayer that it will be a source of comfort, will bring you closer to God and will inspire you for the week ahead.

My name is Mark Poole, and I am the curate serving our benefice to the East of York which is made up of the parishes of Dunnington, Holtby, Warthill and Stockton-on-the Forest.

In this service we remember that it is Bible Sunday, and our theme is thankfulness and hope.

### Gathering

May the light and peace of Jesus be with you all.

We come from scattered lives to meet with God, may His presence fill our hearts.

This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it!

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God who is worthy of all thanksgiving and praise.

Let us pray,

Your Word is the light we seek, and we give thanks.

**Guide our footsteps to where you are found.**

Your Word is the strength we find when darkness threatens to overwhelm, and we give thanks.

**Guide our minds to where you are found.**

Your Word is the power we need to become servants of Christ and we give thanks.

**Guide our hearts to where you are found.**

Your Word is the hope that gives us eternal life and peace everlasting and we give thanks.

**Guide our souls to where you are found.**

**We offer ourselves to be your people,**

**to follow where you lead,**

**to be obedient to your word**

**and bring your Good News**

**wherever we might go. Amen.**

### The Collect

Blessed Lord,

who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning:

help us so to hear them,

to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them

that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word,

we may embrace and for ever hold fast

the hope of everlasting life,

which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever. Amen.

### Lord of All Hopefulness

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy.  
Whose trust, ever child-like, no care could destroy.  
Be there at our waking and give us, we pray,  
Your place in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith.  
Whose strong hands were skilled at the plane and the lathe.  
Be there at our labours and give us, we pray,  
Your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace.  
Your hands swift to welcome, your arms to embrace.  
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
Your Love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm.  
Whose voice is contentment, whose presence is balm.  
Be there at sleeping, and give us, we pray,  
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

### Matthew 24.30-35

Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see “the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven” with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.  
‘From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that he is near, at the very gates. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

### Homily

#### Hope and thankfulness

In the midst of the current covid pandemic, with the pervading anxiety that has been felt by many over these past months, I arrived at one of our local supermarkets to do our family shopping. We are now used to wearing masks in stores, cleaning down trolleys and baskets, sanitizing our hands, and socially distancing from other shoppers. So you can imagine my lack of delight, with trolley at the ready, I went to enter the shop and paused to clean my hands with the alcohol rub. There was only one dispenser, and as I pushed the pump repeatedly, nothing came out – it was entirely empty!

The purpose of the hand rub was that no one should need to enter the supermarket carrying infection on their hands, to keep everyone apart and separate and safe – to maintain distance. Instead, every shopper entering was now being funnelled to touch the very same single point, sharing whatever they were carrying, and doing completely, precisely, the opposite of that which was intended! The common touching point was now not a point of safety, but of risk!

I wonder whether today's bible reading from Matthew's gospel might have the potential to do something similar, drawing people to a conclusion precisely opposite to its purpose.

The book of Revelation, that apocalyptic vision of heaven and earth, dragons and demons, angels and symbols, scrolls and lambs and lakes of fire, is a book that can be used to frighten the life out of people – coming to fear judgement and death, persecution and hell, indescribable torments and eternal suffering (I'm picking the darker parts, of course). But the purpose of the book of Revelation was to bring hope and peace and gratitude, not fear – comfort and not terror.

In speaking of what we might call his second coming, Jesus can sound as though his arrival will be some kind of great judgement (although 'coming on the clouds of heaven' gives me a picture of Christ arriving like a meteorological surfer, riding the cloudy waves across the sky). For many of us, the thought of Jesus coming again and snatching his people away to be with him is not sounding positive – it can feel scary and final and sudden and disruptive and...

But I really don't think that is what was intended. It is not an arrival to be feared like the arrival of the Spanish Inquisition, or of Her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes, or worse, OFSTED. No, rather it is more like the longed-for arrival of a lover, of a much missed child, of a parent whom we have yearned to be with us once more.

The image Jesus presents us with is not a story about fear, but a story about hope and thankfulness in dark and difficult circumstances, in persecution and exile, in suffering and separation – an image that brings us out of fear and into love, not the other way around.

Jesus repeatedly turned things on their head, and we perhaps need to keep on doing the same. Jesus arrives to call us out of all that is dark and fearful, and into a community of faithful love and joy, gratitude and worship, and, above all, hope.  
Alleluia! Thanks be to God.

Intercessions (see below)

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION----OCTOBER, 25<sup>TH</sup>. 2020

God invites us to be a people of prayer, so let us open our hearts to God's love and mercy as His children, loved, valued and forgiven.

Lord Jesus Christ, we cannot see your presence, but we sense that the world is suffering, darkness and doubt. Increase our faith and help us grasp that you will never leave us nor forsake us.

So quieten our hearts as we come to you, whose power is revealed in our weakness and whose grace is witnessed in our salvation.

LORD, YOU ARE OUR HOPE.....WE PUT OUR TRUST IN YOU.

Lord, we pray for our troubled world. We pray for all those who long for new hope, together with those who feel discarded and devalued, losing their sense of dignity and worth.

At this time, many parts of the world are facing the devastating effects of the pandemic. There are so many anxieties and concerns as the impact of the virus seems to be increasing, resulting in so many people being affected, either in health or circumstances

We think today of the plight of university students and their tutors. We continue to pray for medical staff; research workers, health visitors, social workers; and carers as they all try to balance the ever growing needs with their limited time.

In our helplessness, we pray for all who are in positions of power and have the burden of responsibility in decision making. Give them wisdom and integrity as they seek the common good and grant them insight into what their decisions mean for each of us. May we too share in the challenge of personal responsibility toward each other, including our family, friends and neighbours., valuing all those around us.

LORD, YOU ARE OUR HOPE .....WE PUT OUR TRUST IN YOU.

Lord, we pray for the church throughout the world during this difficult time, as it considers ways to sustain and nurture people. We pray too for all clergy and leaders both here in our diocese and benefice, and the wider world, who have to make decisions about the future role of the church. Give wisdom and courage, hope and guidance as they consider the way forward.

We pray for those churches yet to appoint new members for their particular PCC's ....give time and wisdom to those considering office.

We give thanks for the services prepared for us each Sunday and for all who use their skills and talents to collect and produce such a variety of content to communicate the gospel message. May those who receive it have an assurance

and confidence, so that whatever difficulties may arise, they can discover reasons to look forward, and reason to hope for better days ahead.

Lord, we look forward to the time when your Kingdom will come, bringing an end to disease, suffering and sorrow.

You summon us all to work for that Kingdom here and now.

LORD YOU ARE OUR HOPE.....WE PUT OUR TRUST IN YOU

Lord, grant your healing grace to all who are sick, injured or immobile.

Grant to all who are lonely, anxious or depressed, a knowledge of your will and an awareness of your presence.

Grant to all who minister to those who are suffering, wisdom and skill, patience and understanding.

Mend broken relationships and restore to those in distress, soundness of mind and serenity of spirit.

Sustain and support those who seek your guidance and lift up all who are brought low by the trials of this life.

We remember too all who have lost loved ones and find the restrictions of social distancing hard to deal with.....so different from what they would have chosen to do. May they know your comfort and strength as they try to adjust daily to the heartache of loss. In their pain, enfold them in your love and give them hope of your promises to all who believe, that they may have peace in the midst of sorrow.

LORD, YOU ARE OUR HOPE.....WE PUT OUR TRUST IN YOU.

Dear Lord, we know that nothing can separate us from your love. In all that the coming week brings, help us to hold on to that hope..... which opens our eyes to the reality of your world and yet we are encouraged;

That hope..... which leads us without fear into the future;

That hope....., which is your gift in Jesus Christ our Lord, our Saviour and friend.

LORD, YOU ARE OUR HOPE.....WE PUT OUR TRUST IN YOU.

Song

Blessed Be Your Name  
In the land that is plentiful  
Where Your streams of abundance flow  
Blessed be Your name

Blessed Be Your name  
When I'm found in the desert place  
Though I walk through the wilderness  
Blessed Be Your name

Every blessing You pour out, I'll  
Turn back to praise  
When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your glorious name

Blessed be Your name  
When the sun's shining down on me  
When the world's 'all as it should be'  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed be Your name

On the road marked with suffering  
Though there's pain in the offering  
Blessed be Your name  
Every blessing You pour out I'll  
Turn back to praise

When the darkness closes in, Lord  
Still I will say

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your name  
Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be Your glorious name,

God you give and take away  
Oh you give and take away  
My heart will choose to say  
Lord, blessed be Your name

### Sending

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this virtual act of worship. A lot of time and energy goes into producing these and we are very grateful.

### Blessing

May the God of hope fill us with joy and peace.  
May we trust in him, so that we overflow with hope  
In and through the power of the Holy Spirit.

May we go now in peace,  
knowing that we have been born again,  
not of perishable seed, but of imperishable,  
through the living and enduring word of God.

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all and all those whom we love and pray for,  
this day and for ever more. **Amen.**