

## **All Souls' Service**

Jesus said: Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

**Welcome:** I am Judith Hewitt, the Reader in the Benefice of Rural East York, covering the villages of Stockton on the Forest, Warthill, Holtby and Dunnington and I welcome you to this service when we will remember those we have loved and who are no longer with us. I will be joined in this service with Nick Bird our Rector, (and Mark Poole our curate). During the service you will be invited to light a candle as we name and remember your loved one.

We come today to remember with thankfulness those we have known and loved who have died. We give thanks for all that they have meant to us. We come seeking to learn of God's love and to open our lives to the help and strength that he can give us as we continue on the journey of life without them. We pray for ourselves and all who mourn that we will be comforted.

### ***Let us pray:***

Eternal God and Father, we praise you that you have made people to share life together and to reflect your glory in the world. We thank you now for those whom we come to remember today, for all that we saw of your goodness and love in their lives and for all that they have meant to us. As we too journey towards death may we do so in the company of Jesus, who came to share our life that we might share the life of eternity. To him be glory with you and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. **Amen.**

### ***Psalms 23***

**The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not want.**

**He makes me lie down in green pastures;**

**he leads me beside still waters;**

**he restores my soul**

**He leads me in right paths**

**for his name's sake.**

**Even though I walk through the darkest valley,**

**I fear no evil;**

**for you are with me;**

**your rod and your staff—**

**they comfort me.**

**You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.  
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.**

**Bible Reading** from Romans 8 read by Rev Mark Poole

We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else?

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Address** by Rev Nick Bird

This service is for you: to remember, to grieve, to share and to pray. This service is for you, to bring your thoughts, your feelings, your emptiness or your gratitude. God waits upon it all.

Into the darkness of our loss, the scriptures speak. And even though it is hard to hear at times, to trust and believe, it speaks clearly. There is nothing that can separate us from the love of God. God's love is beyond time and space. And so, in a way, is ours.

Love is beyond our understanding, and the power of love is stronger than anything else that we know. And if those we love cannot be separated from God's love, then I am convinced that they cannot be separated from ours either. We may not be able to see it, but our love keeps us connected to those whom we can no longer see.

The church preaches this love, not through some sentimental longing, not to make people feel a bit better, not because we wish it to be so, but because we have a God who sent his son to make it so! Your love, your longing, your grief, all belong within the great love of a God who gave up his own son to death for all of us.

Love cannot take away grief – we grieve precisely because we love. As the saying goes, 'grief is love that has nowhere to go'. But God's love transforms grief in to something new – a peculiar kind of hope. It doesn't magic away the pain, but, like a candle in the darkness, hope tells us that death is not the end because we cannot be separated from God's love, and God's love is eternal.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Let us remember before God those we loved but see no more. In a moment of quiet we light our candles and remember all those who have gone before us.

**Let us pray:**

Loving God, We thank you for the lives of our loved ones who have died. We thank you for giving them to us to know and to love as companions in our pilgrimage on earth. We ask you to care for those who are missing them at this time. May we always remember your promise that, one day we will all be together in heaven. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Let us pray for all who mourn, comfort them in their sorrow.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Fill the emptiness in their hearts with the presence of your love.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Increase their faith and strengthen their hope.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Let us pray for ourselves in our pilgrimage through life; strengthen us and keep us faithful in your service.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

Fill our hearts with the hope of heaven.

**Lord, hear our prayer.**

We bring all our prayers together in the words Jesus taught us.

**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.**

**Hymn:** Lord of all hopefulness  
Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
Whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could destroy,  
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
Your bliss 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 kindliness, 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 our sleeping, and give us, we pray,  
Your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of the day.

### ***Blessing***

May the Lord bless us and watch over us,  
May Christ shine in our darkness, and continue to encourage us in our loss  
May the Lord look kindly upon us and give us peace,  
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be  
upon us and remain with us and with those we love, today and always.  
**Amen.**