

A Service for Mothering Sunday

*St Martin's Voices (directed by Andrew Earis) sing the hymn
Lord of all Hopefulness (Tune: Slane)*

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 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 our sleeping, and give us, we pray,
Your peace in our hearts, Lord,
At the end of the day.

Jan Struther (1901-1953)

Greeting

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

All And also with you.

Praise God who loves us.

All Praise God who cares.

Good morning to all of you watching this, at this strange time in the life of our world. Today is Mothering Sunday, a day when traditionally all went back to their mother church, to the place where they were nurtured, loved and formed into the ways of God. Today of course we often also celebrate Mothers' day, a day to thank those who have mothered us in all the ways we can be cared for. It is usually a day of celebration, when we draw together with family and loved ones.

And so this day is a strange one for those of us, here in England, and in many parts of the world, when we are torn between our need to keep life going, to celebrate relationship and kindness, and the fear and imposed isolation that we face. A day when many of us are not able to be with those whom we love, or care for loved ones considered to be vulnerable or at risk. Maybe this means this is a good Sunday for us to call our churches and our nation to prayer and action. At difficult times, we have a choice: to focus on fear, on ourselves, on what we cannot do. Or we can turn to God and let God lead us into praying for the world, and letting prayer flow into creative action. This is what we want to do today. To remind ourselves that life carries on, there is much to celebrate in our communities. To listen to the voice of God's caring love for

us, and His encouragement to turn ourselves towards others and how we can care for those around us, in person or virtually.

In line with this, I feel I must add that this service was filmed here, at Lambeth Palace in the crypt chapel, with the absolute minimum number of staff and people necessary to carry it through. Today we are separated in space, but we are still united in worshipping together before the throne of God our Saviour. And so please do join in from home in prayer, in responses, even in singing, and let us worship together.

I am joined in this service by my colleague the Rev'd Dr Isabelle Hamley and the lessons will be read by my wife Caroline. We'll also be joined from time to time by noises off, as we live in the centre of a busy part of London.

Praising and Thanking God

So this morning we pray and place before God the life of our world and we light this candle to remind us that the love of God is like a light in our darkness.

All Blessed be God for ever.

On this mothering Sunday, when many are far from family, friends or loved ones, we light a candle for all those we cannot be physically present with.

All Blessed be God for ever.

We light a candle for all who are sick, all who are in hospital, all who struggle with pain, fear and sadness, and all who are grieving this day.

All Blessed be God for ever.

We light a candle for all who are isolated, lonely and worried at this time.

All Blessed be God for ever.

We light a candle for all those who care for others, whether as family or friends, or as doctors, nurses, carers and all the health professionals we are so deeply thankful for.

All Blessed be God for ever.

And on this Mothering Sunday,
we light this candle for all mothers who have loved and laughed and laboured as they cared for their children.

All Blessed be God for ever.

We light a candle for all mothers who have wept in sorrow and joy for their children.

All Blessed be God for ever.

We light this candle for Jesus, born of a woman and nurtured in her love, and for Mary, a reminder of your patient, waiting love.

All Blessed be God for ever.

Confession

This morning we come before God and in a moment of quiet bring before God the brokenness of the world and of our lives. So let us call to mind our sin, our failure to value the love of others and our failure to love as Christ loved us.

Silence for reflection

Your love gives us life from the moment of conception.
We fail to live as your children.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

You call us to do good.
We seek our own good.
Christ, have mercy.

All Christ have mercy.

You hear us when we cry for help.
We ignore the cries of others.
Lord, have mercy.

All Lord, have mercy.

St Martin's Voices sing Kyrie Eleison (Russian Traditional)

Kyrie Eleison,
Christie Eleison,
Kyrie Eleison.

Absolution

May the Father of all mercies
cleanse you from *your* sins,
and restore *you* in his image
to the praise and glory of his name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Collect

Praise God who loves us.

All Praise God who cares.

God of love,
passionate and strong,
tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us
all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

Readings

A reading from the second letter of Paul to the Corinthians, chapter one, verses three to seven.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

2 Corinthians 1.3-7

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

A Song of St Anselm

Sung by the St Martin's Voices (Chant by Thomas Allain-Chapman)

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.
Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.
Your warmth gives life to the dead,
your touch makes sinners righteous.
Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;
in your love and tenderness remake us.
In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

Anselm (1109)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, As it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever. Amen.

A reading from the Gospel according to John, Chapter 19, verses twenty-five to twenty-seven.

Standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

John 19.25-27

This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Sermon – The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby

St Martin's Voices sing Ubi Caritas (Music by Ola Gjeilo)

Where charity and love are, God is there. Christ's love has gathered us into one. Let us rejoice, and be joyful in Him. Let us fear and love the living God. And from a sincere heart let us love each other. Amen.

Apostle's Creed

Since the very beginning of the church there have been times where Christians cannot meet together for all kinds of reasons and yet they can still share faith and prayers together and one of the ways in which we do that is through the words of the creeds.

The Creeds remind us of the faith of the church universal, beyond borders and beyond time. Saying the creed reminds us that even when we are separated and dispersed, we share our faith and our prayers with Christians throughout the world and throughout the centuries. And so, let us say the Apostles creed.

Praise God who loves us.

All Praise God who cares.

Let us declare our faith in God.

**All I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.**

Prayers

Let us pray.

As children of a loving God who always listens to our cries, let us pray to our Father in heaven.

God of love and kindness,
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;
God of love,

All hear our prayer.

God of compassion,
be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation;
in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light;
God of love,

All hear our prayer.

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.
Comfort and heal them,
and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
God of love,

All hear our prayer.

We pray for those who are facing war, conflict and
displacements,
as well as the challenges of Covid-19,
and we place all your precious children into your hands.
God of love,

All Hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

As God's children, and heirs with Christ we cry in the Spirit,
'Abba', Father.

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Loving God, accept the cries of our heart as we offer you prayers;
through them transform us and all creation until you are in all
and through all.

We ask these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus.

All Amen.

St Martin's Voices sing A Prayer of St Patrick (Music by John Rutter)

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.

from St Patrick's Breastplate

The Blessing

Praise God who loves us.

All Praise God who cares.

May God, who gave birth to all creation, bless you:

may God, who became incarnate by an earthly mother, bless you:

may God, who broods as a mother over her children, bless you.

May almighty God bless you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever.

All Amen.

The Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

Thank you for joining us today. The Church of England will be providing a range of digital and print resources to enable people to continue to walk with God at this difficult time in the life of the nation and of the world. Visit churchofengland.org to keep up to date and to explore the materials available.

Just a reminder that on this day, Mothering Sunday, in this country we have called for a day of prayer and loving action. Prayer for deliverance from illness and from the virus. Loving action to serve those afflicted. And we have also suggested that you put a light in your window at 7pm in your own time zone and you pause for a moment, look at the other lights if you can see them and pray, committing yourselves afresh into the hands of God, and praying for those who are suffering.

Thank you. May God keep you and may we each love and serve and pray for one another.

St Martin's Voices sing Now thank we all our God (Tune: Nun Danket)

Now thank we all our God
with heart and hands and voices,
who wondrous things has done,
in whom his world rejoices;
who from our mothers' arms
has blessed us on our way
with countless gifts of love,
and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God
through all our life be near us,
with ever joyful hearts
and blessed peace to cheer us,
to keep us in his grace,
and guide us when perplexed,
and free us from all ills
of this world in the next.

All praise and thanks to God
the Father now be given,
the Son and Spirit blest,
who reign in highest heaven
the one eternal God,
whom heaven and earth adore;
for thus it was, is now,
and shall be evermore.

Martin Rinkart (1636), translation Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

Acknowledgements

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