

The Gathering

Welcome [KELVIN]

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Welcome to St Mary's Cathedral in the West End of Glasgow. I'm Kelvin Holdsworth – the Provost here. And in the name of God and in the name of the community that belongs to this place, I bid you welcome.

In the end, the Christian faith is all about love. As we draw nearer and nearer to Jerusalem, where we'll end up in Holy Week, we find out more and more about that love.

Today we remember that God loved the world so much that God got involved – for God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.

Eternal life begins right now. And we worship that same God together, right here.

Collect for Purity [LUCY]

**Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Confession

[OLIVER] God is love and we are God's children.
There is no room for fear in love.
We love because God loved us first.

Let us confess our sins in penitence and faith.

Silence

God our Father, we confess to you and to our fellow members in the Body of Christ that we have sinned in thought, word and deed, and in what we have failed to do. We are truly sorry. Forgive us our sins, and deliver us from the power of evil, for the sake of your Son who died for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[KELVIN] God, who is both power and love, forgive you and free you from your sins, heal and strengthen you by the Holy Spirit, and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Kyrie [MORVEN]

*Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison*

Collect [KELVIN]

O God, rich in mercy, you so loved the world that when we were dead in our sins, you sent your only Son for our deliverance. Lifted up from the earth, he is light and life; exalted upon the cross, he is truth and salvation. Raise us up with Christ and make us rich in good works, that we may walk as children of light towards the paschal feast of heaven. We ask this through Christ, our deliverance and hope, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

Amen.

The Ministry of the Word

GOSPEL: John 3:14-21 [MONICA]

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Those who believe in him are not condemned; but those who do not believe are condemned already, because they have not believed in the name of the only Son of God. And this is the judgement, that the light has come into the world, and people loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to the light, so that their deeds may not be exposed. But those who do what is true come to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that their deeds have been done in God.’

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

ORGAN [FRIKKI]

Es ist das Heil

Sermon [OLIVER]

The other day, I was speaking with some students at the Cathedral about music. We were sharing some of the songs (or types of songs) we'd been listening to to combat the pandemic blues. Music has helped a lot of people in lockdown. It's served to raise our spirits, to transport us to another place, to take away some of the discomforts.

A lot of songs explicitly set out to lift people up. Jackie Wilson's number one R&B hit of 1967, 'Higher And Higher' (or maybe you prefer Rita Coolidge's comparatively downtempo version), describes an elevation that quenches desire. Westlife's 'You raise me up' tells how someone (or something) can build us up. And a song with more key changes than you shake a stick at, Beyoncé's 'Love on Top', has her (and the listener) 'smiling from ear to ear' as we take in the sights from the best vantage point there is: the top.

Anyone who's ever listened to music knows the basic cardinal directions. Lyricists have written at length about being down, feeling downcast, on a downer, and being let down. These are the places of the doldrums—despair and anguish. Conversely, when you're up, you're happy, you've left your cares behind, you can stand up and face the world. Up there (somewhere) is a place of ecstasy, bliss, no more pain—a place artists have made look something like this.

But in today's gospel, what is raised up—what is elevated—looks like this ... Indiana Jones's worst nightmare.

I can't imagine why anybody would want to lift up a snake. In fact, most people would probably want to stay as far away as possible. Besides, snakes don't belong in the air. They're meant for slithering on surfaces on the ground. What is this business of hoisting serpents?

The snake Jesus is talking about comes from a story in the Book of Numbers. Having escaped from captivity in Egypt, the children of Israel were beginning to lose hope in the desert. Venomous snakes were attacking people, and many were dying. So, God told Moses to make a serpent out of bronze and put it on a pole. Then, whenever a serpent bit someone, that person would look at the serpent of bronze and live. The cure for a snakebite was a likeness of the very thing troubling them. There, in the middle of what the Israelites called godforsaken country, being able to see that which had poisoned them would bring healing.

We might have expected salvation for the Israelites to be the elimination of snakes—that they'd be lifted out of the snake pit, leaving danger behind. At the very least, we might imagine a symbol of restoration would look a little less fearsome, a little more festive. Likewise, we might have expected that when the Son of Man (the redemption of humankind) was lifted up, it would be in great splendour, throwing off the shackles of this world, raised in glory above the undesirables. 'So long, everybody!'

Instead, Jesus was lifted, bearing all the marks of suffering. On a hill, a beaten and battered body hung on a tree. And this pole has become the symbol of our faith—what some reckon a strange thing to venerate. The pain, distress and injuries of the cross are permanently displayed—sculpted and fixed. Humankind's scapegoating, the injustice, the denial, the cowardice, everything that led to Jesus' crucifixion raised up. His wounds are not healed, nor covered up, nor have they scarred over. They are fresh and open—perhaps like ours.

What God has raised up for us to see isn't a whitewash. Here hangs Christ. He has not ascended above our pain; it isn't left behind as a distant memory. God has taken it on for everyone to witness. This victory does not cover-up or misrepresent our predicament. Deeds are revealed and brought to light—no denial nor illusion. This is not somebody else's problem or the past crimes of our forebearers. It is the mess we're in, the offences we continue to commit, exposed—a moment of sorrow but also of truth and joy. God's broken and bruised body is raised up, put on a pole for all to see what it really is: love.

Intercessions [TAYLOR]

With all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord, saying, 'Lord, have mercy.'

For the peace of the world, for the welfare of the Holy Church of God, and for the unity of all peoples, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our Bishop, Kevin, and for all the clergy and people, for St Bride's, Kelvinside and St Andrew's, Milngavie, and for the Anglican Church of Chile, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For our government, for the leaders of the nations, and for all in authority, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this City of Glasgow, for Interfaith Glasgow and the City Council Forum of Faiths, for every city and community, and for those who live in them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the good earth which God has given us, and for the wisdom and will to conserve it, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the elderly and infirm, for the widowed and orphans, and for the sick and the suffering, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the poor and the oppressed, for the unemployed and the destitute, for prisoners and captives, and for all who remember and care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For all who have died in the hope of the resurrection, for Joyce Freemantle, Frank Ewing Senior, and Ann MacFarlane, for Amy Wygamt whose year's mind falls at this time, and those who died in the Clydebank Blitz 80 years ago this weekend, and for all the departed, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For deliverance from all danger, violence, oppression, and degradation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

In the communion of Mary and of all the saints, let us commend ourselves, and one another, and all our life, to Christ our God.

To you, O Lord our God.

Communion

Offertory [KELVIN]

God's love towards us prompts love and generosity from us.

If you would like to make an offering today to support St Mary's then please go to thecathedral.org.uk and click on the Donate to St Mary's Cathedral link for more information.

You can do it in just a few clicks and every gift supports this place as we look towards re-opening the building.

Thank you for making your offering.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
through your goodness we have this bread to offer,
which earth has given and human hands have made:
it will become for us the bread of life.

Blessed be God for ever.

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation;
through your goodness we have this wine to offer,
fruit of the vine and work of human hands;
it will become the cup of our salvation.

Blessed be God for ever.

Eucharistic Prayer [KELVIN]

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Worship and praise belong to you,

maker of light and darkness.

Your wisdom draws beauty from chaos,

brings a harvest out of sorrow

and leads the exiles home.

In Christ your Son enemies are reconciled,

debts forgiven

and strangers made welcome

Your Spirit frees us to live as beloved children

in our Father's house.

We who by Christ's power follow the way of the Cross,

sharing the joy of his obedience,

now offer you our praise,

with angels and archangels and the whole company of heaven

singing the hymn of your unending glory:

SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS [MORVEN]

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.

Glory and thanksgiving be to you,

most loving Father,

for Christ in whom the world is reconciled.

Lifted on the Cross,

his suffering and forgiveness
spanned the gulf our sins had made.
Through that dark struggle
death was swallowed up in victory,
that life and light might reign.

Before he was given up to suffering and death,
recalling the night of Israel's release,
the night in which the sons of Egypt died,
your Chosen One, himself the First-Born,
freely offered his life.

At supper with his disciples
he took bread and offered you thanks.
He broke the bread,
and gave it to them, saying:
"Take, eat.

This is my Body: it is broken for you."

After supper, he took the cup,
he offered you thanks,
and gave it to them saying:

"Drink this, all of you.

This is my Blood of the new covenant;
it is poured out for you, and for all,
that sins may be forgiven.

Do this in remembrance of me."

**We now obey your Son's command.
We recall his blessed passion and death,
his glorious resurrection and ascension;
and we look for the coming of his Kingdom.
Made one with him, we offer you these gifts
and with them ourselves,
a single, holy, living sacrifice.**

Hear us, most merciful Father,
and send your Holy Spirit upon us
and upon this bread and this wine,
that, overshadowed by his life-giving power,

they may be the Body and Blood of your Son,
and we may be kindled with the fire of your love
and renewed for the service of your Kingdom.

**Help us, who are baptised into the fellowship of Christ's Body
to live and work to your praise and glory;
may we grow together in unity and love
until at last, in your new creation,
we enter into our heritage
in the company of the Virgin Mary,
the apostles, and prophets,
and of all our brothers and sisters living and departed.**

Through Jesus Christ our Lord,
with whom, and in whom,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory be to you,
Lord of all ages,
world without end.

Amen.

Breaking of the Bread

The living bread is broken for the life of the world.
Lord, unite us in this sign.

Lord's Prayer [OLIVER]

As our Saviour has taught us,
so we pray:

**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.**

**Do not bring us
to the time of trial
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever.
Amen.**

Communion [KELVIN]

God is with us wherever we are.

As we gaze in adoration we feed on God in our hearts and minds
that we may in turn feed the world.

O God, even as this broken bread was scattered over the hills, and
was gathered together and became one, so let Your Church be
gathered together from the ends of the earth into your kingdom; for
yours is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ for ever.
Amen.

Music at Communion [SHAE]

Love is the touch of intangible joy;
love is the force that no fear can destroy;
love is the goodness we gladly applaud:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Love is the lilt in a lingering voice;
love is the hope that can make us rejoice;
love is the cure for the frightened and flawed:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Love is the light in the tunnel of pain;
love is the will to be whole once again;
love is the trust of a friend on the road:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Love is the Maker, and Spirit, and Son;
love is the kingdom their will has begun;

love is the pathway the saints all have trod:
God is where love is, for love is of God.

Alison M. Robertson

Post Communion Prayer - [LUCY]

Giver of life, you enlighten all who come into the world. Fill our hearts with the splendour of your grace, that we may perfectly love you and worthily praise your holy name; through Jesus Christ the Lord.

Amen.

Blessing - [KELVIN]

My thanks go to everyone who has made this service happen this week.

Remember as this service comes to a close and we each face the week ahead that God's love is especially for those who need it most. Remember that as I pronounce the blessing.

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Voluntary [STEVEN]

Dialogue sur les grands Jeux [Ave Maris Stella, iv] - N de Grigny

A hymn and materials for Young Church are available on the online worship page at www.thecathedral.org.uk/worship.

There is an online coffee hour on Sunday at 1 pm. Details in the weekly congregational email. Sign up for emails at www.thecathedral.org.uk.

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