

The Gathering

Welcome - [KELVIN]

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

Welcome to this online service which comes from St Mary's Cathedral in Glasgow. My name is Kelvin Holdsworth and I am the Provost here.

I always think this is a bit of an odd Sunday. We're still celebrating the 50 glorious days of Easter. We've heard of Jesus coming and greeting the disciples in locked rooms, on beaches and on the road. But now he really has gone. Something happens next week at Pentecost that will carry us beyond Eastertide. But today, we wait and we worship in an in-between time – rejoicing that Christ is risen from the grave. And full of anticipation for what lies ahead.

Collect for Purity - [ANGELA]

**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.**

Gloria - [MORVEN]

Glory to God in the highest,
and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly King,
almighty God and Father,
we worship you, we give you thanks,
we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world:
have mercy on us;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:
receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

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 toward 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, holy and mighty God for ever and ever. **Amen**

The Ministry of the Word

GOSPEL: John 15:9-17 – [BILLY]

Alleluia, alleluia! Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

Glory to Christ our Saviour.

Jesus said, 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. They do not

belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.'

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord. Alleluia!

Sermon [OLIVER]

One of the things I missed while worship took place solely online was the 'incidental music' that accompanies live liturgy. By that, I mean the organ improvisations that connect one part of a service to another. These often occur around the reading of the Gospel, during the censing of the altar and after Communion. Here, the organist responds, in music, to what's happening and leads us, the worshippers, to prepare for what's next. Contrary to what some might think, it isn't 'filler', nor is it used to cover silence. This music is part of the essence of worship in a place like this—a special kind of prayer.

Improvisation is at the heart of an organist's craft. Indeed, most conservatoires require students of organ performance to study it. Organists learn to take a tune or a theme and explore it by varying harmony, rhythm, and even the melody itself. Improvisation expresses something new, using familiar foundations. It's a way of working through an idea and reimagining it, offering interpretation and insight.

Of course, organists are a special breed—some may even say a bit weird ... but in a good way. In 2008, researchers from Johns Hopkins University looked at brain scans of improvising musicians. What they found was that when playing, the areas of the brain associated with inhibition and conscious monitoring showed decreased activity. In contrast, the regions that play a key role in self-expression and creativity showed more engagement.¹ When musicians like organists improvise, they learn to let go of hang-ups

¹ https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/news/media/releases/this_is_your_brain_on_jazz_researchers_use_mri_to_study_spontaneity_creativity

and unleash their imaginations. Perhaps they have something to teach us.

Today's Gospel sounds like an improv. It's Jesus in an imaginative prayer, delivered extemporaneously, unrehearsed. Ideas are unfolding, revealed in time—a bit like a stream of consciousness. In this prayer, Jesus is creative, expressive and evocative. He speaks from the heart. Here is an example of how to pray in the style of J.S. Bach, Marcel Dupré, Miles Davis and Jimi Hendrix. Jesus is reordering the notes of an ancient song into a new one, uncovering meaning, breaking boundaries, in a free association that constructs a one-of-a-kind of prayer.

We might recognise the form of Jesus' prayer in this Gospel as sound-boarding or thinking out loud. We do this sometimes as a way of testing out new ideas. It can be helpful to talk stuff out with a friend. Even though that friend may not provide feedback, sometimes working through something verbally—articulating it in different ways—helps us gain clarity or process and sift through information.

One of the questions people exploring faith often ask is about how to pray. The disciples asked Jesus about this, too. Sometimes Jesus used words; sometimes, he didn't. Sometimes Jesus said prayers in public, and other times Jesus withdrew from the crowds. Sometimes Jesus quoted passages of Scripture, and sometimes, like in today's Gospel, he presented something new altogether.

One of the things we learn from Scripture (and we've heard in the Gospels read at mass for several weeks running) is how God loves us as individuals. And last week, Kelvin reminded us when he preached that Jesus calls us his friends. Thus, it makes sense that when we pray, we should use part of our identity as a friend (with whom we sometimes sound-board) and as an individual (with our feelings and emotions) to connect with God.

Now, I'm not favouring one form of prayer over another. In my own prayer life, precomposed prayers make up probably 80% of all the ones I utter. Just as musicians need to practice scales and learn to play Mozart, those who pray will likely want to draw on the rich

repertoire of the ages. However, people of faith may wish to venture into the spontaneous, ad-libbed versions of spiritual songs, too.

Today's Gospel sets out a role for self-expression in prayer. It demonstrates an improvisation in the Spirit—the same Spirit working within all human beings. So next time we wonder how to take something to God in prayer, maybe we should take a leaf out of Jesus' playbook, lose our inhibitions and just start riffing. Perhaps we'll understand what's going on, what God is doing and how we feel in a new way.

Intercessions [ROBERT]

Holy God, we bring you our prayers for the world in which we live, for your church, for ourselves and our neighbours.

We pray for the people of Palestine and Israel, and for all caught up in the horrors of war. We pray for all who seek to bring about a just peace, may they be 'protected from the evil one'.

We pray for the church of Christ: for The Anglican Church of Korea; within our diocese for Bishop Kevin and the church of St Augustine's, Dumbarton. May all your people be sanctified to the Truth.

We pray for our cities and towns, and their structures of work and service; may they enjoy economic life that is sustainable and just, expressions of your glory in the world.

We pray for the people of St Mary's, for all who build community; for the LGBT network and for the welcomers. May we be a people of that joy, complete in Christ.

We pray for family and friends, holding in our hearts in your presence those who are struggling ... and holding in our hearts in your presence those with whom we share joy ... May we be united in the truth of Jesus' words, 'All mine are yours and yours are mine.'

We pray for all who are grieving, their lives shaken by the loss of loved ones; we pray that they may know the presence of God. We pray for those we mourn, and in our year's mind today, Jessie Langton.

May they Rest in Peace **and Rise in Glory.**

Holy God, as we reflect on Christ ascended, we pray that we may know your courage and strength in what we must say and do.

Amen.

Communion

Offertory - [KELVIN]

I'm standing recording this in a church full of empty chairs. And yet, every time we record one of these services of online worship, I am aware that all these empty chairs represent people who are watching, near and far – though people are not present with me in church, we are all present together around the table.

One of the ways of making a connection between worshipping at home and the worship of the church in this place is to make an offering. There's details of how to do so on the website thecathedral.org.uk. If you can make an offering to support the ministry of God in this place then please do so. And thank you.

And thank you.

Let us present our offerings to the Lord.

**Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory,
the splendour, and the majesty; for everything in
heaven and on earth is yours.**

All things come from you, and of your own we give you.

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, Author of all being.

Your power sustains, your love restores, our broken world.

You are unceasingly at work,

from chaos bringing order

and filling emptiness with life.

Christ, raised from the dead,

proclaims the dawn of hope.

He lives in us that we may walk in light.

Your Spirit is fire in us,

your breath is power

to purge our sin

and warm our hearts to love.

As children of your redeeming purpose,

freed by him who burst from the tomb

and opened the gate of life,

we offer you our praise,

with angels and archangels

and the whole company of heaven,

singing the hymn of your unending glory

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.

Praise and thanksgiving be to you,

Lord of all,

for by the Cross eternal life is ours

and death is swallowed up in victory.

In the first light of Easter glory broke from the tomb
and changed the women's sorrow into joy.
From the Garden the mystery dawned
that he whom they had loved and lost
is with us now in every place for ever.

Making himself known in the breaking of the bread,
speaking peace to the fearful disciples,
welcoming weary fishermen on the shore,
he renewed the promise of his presence
and of new birth in the Spirit
who sets the seal of freedom on all your beloved children.

Before he was given up to suffering and death,
recalling the night of Israel's release,
the night in which slaves walked free,
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 the Spirit's 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 - [CHRISTINE]

If you would love me
keep my commandments
then shall my Father
send down from heaven
one who reveals the truth you obey.
*Jesus ascended keeps to his promise.
God the spirit comes to stay.*

This is the seed
and source of creation.
None can receive him
unless they know me.

Thus he is yours who follow my way.
Jesus ascended keeps to his promise.
God the spirit comes to stay.

Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give you.
Don't let your hearts be
troubled or weary.
Help is at hand whenever you pray.
Jesus ascended keeps to his promise.
God the spirit comes to stay.

Post Communion Prayer - [ANGELA]

Glory to God, whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation, in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever.

Amen.

Blessing - [KELVIN]

My thanks go to everyone who has made this service happen this week. It has been good to worship together.

If you are finding a way into this congregation, either online or in person then please fill in the welcome card on the website – thecathedral.org.uk

Jesus said that we all belong to him and in belonging to him, we belong to God.

May Christ, who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future, fill you with new life; 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]

Acclamations (Suite Medievale) - Jean Langlais

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.