

The Gathering – first video

Welcome - [OLIVER]

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

When Jesus showed up at the Temple, the priests and leaders asked him for his credentials. ‘By whose authority are you doing this?’ they asked.

I could see how some might think similar things are happening in church, with registering to come to services, checking in, following sanctioned guidelines. But the truth is that everyone is here at the invitation of God—whether in person or online. By the authority of heaven, all are welcome.

Collect for Purity - [ANDY]

Let us pray.

**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.

[OLIVER] 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 - [SHAE]

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 - [OLIVER]

O God, you alone judge rightly and search the depths of the heart. Make us swift to do your will and slow to judge our neighbour, that we may walk with those who follow the way of repentance and faith and so enter your heavenly kingdom. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **Amen.**

The Ministry of the Word – second video

Reading: Philippians 2:1-13 - [TONY]

A reading from the Letter to the Philippians

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,
but emptied himself,
taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.

Therefore God also highly exalted him

and gave him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bend,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue should confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed me, not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

For the Word of God in Scripture,
For the Word of God among us,
For the Word of God within in,
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL: Matthew 21:23-32 – [OLIVER]

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mathew.
Glory to Christ our Saviour.

When Jesus entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?' Jesus said to them, 'I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?' And they argued with one another, 'If we say, "From heaven", he will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "Of human origin", we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus, 'We do not know.' And he said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

‘What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, “Son, go and work in the vineyard today.” He answered, “I will not”; but later he changed his mind and went. The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, “I go, sir”; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Truly I tell you, the tax-collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax-collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

Give thanks to the Lord for his glorious Gospel.

Praise to Christ our Lord.

Sermon [HELENA]

The chief priests and elders ask Jesus a question: ‘By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?’ It is, on the surface, not merely a legitimate question, but one we ourselves do not ask enough. In this case, however, it is a loaded question, seeking to trap Jesus into making potentially subversive or blasphemous claims.

In good rabbinic fashion, Jesus turns their query back on the priests, throwing them into confusion. Do they say John’s baptism was from heaven or merely human origin? What are the consequences of either answer? Finally, they splutter, ‘We do not know.’ The wetted finger held up into the political air has failed them: if they say from heaven, they stand convicted of ignoring the radical reordering of individual behaviour and of society that John preached. If they dismiss the preaching of the popular prophet, they fear the people will turn against them.

They have demanded of Jesus a palatable easy answer and have received a challenge to their own conduct of authority. They have

fallen into their own trap and are left with the sight of the uncomfortable nakedness of their own self-interested guile.

It has been said, cynically, that a human is a political animal who also happens to have a soul. Unfortunately, leaders too often raffle off bits of their souls for their own political and financial gain. When it works, they enjoy the limelight; when exposed for being shallow and self-serving they can turn unbelievably nasty, playing the rest of us off against each other with falsehoods that exploit our underlying fears and mistrust.

The result is a culture that rewrites the past, distorts the unpalatable present, and refuses to accept responsibility. Tear down the monuments and the injustices they enshrine magically disappear. Violence and murder are whitewashed into law and order. Human lives are weighed up against economic growth...whether they be the lives of asylum seekers, the lives of slaves whose labour built the prosperity of our cities and countries, or the lives of the working poor whose livelihoods have always been precarious.

People are continually being sacrificed on the altar of needless dichotomies by leaders who preach a rapid 'return to normal' in the face of the evidence that stares them in the face. Normal never did equate to just or moral or godly. Normal includes rack-rents, homelessness, exploitation, slavery, the heirs of immigrants slamming the gates to prevent others from enjoying the new lives they themselves have made. Normal is global eco-disaster, and wars which devastate whole peoples. Normal is a teenage white man driving 20 miles to gun down largely peaceful black protesters. Normal is a young woman coming to a new country hoping for a better life dying alone, destitute, discovered only thanks to the hungry wails of her year-old infant.

Normal needs a radical rethink, and that rethink must begin with us. Toxic normality does not spring up overnight, its roots lie generations, centuries deep. We need to require truth from

ourselves and our leaders, support those who work for the common good, and challenge injustice however high it sits.

Life, indeed, survival itself, is not a zero-sum game, regardless of what exponents of the gospel of wealth preach. It would take massive imagination, creativity, compassion, sympathy, and humility, but even in the face of ecological disaster and world-wide pandemic it is possible to provide for the essential needs of every human being.

Today's epistle gives us a good place to start, reminding us of what Christ undertook for the benefit of every living soul, then, now, and in times to come. If Christian is more than an empty word, if anyone at all, whatever their identification is a servant of God or ultimate good, let them and us listen:

'Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests but to the interests of others.' Then it will be God who is at work in us, enabling us both to will and to work for God's good pleasure...and for every member of the human family.

Intercessions [DEBBIE]

Let us pray.

God of compassion, you know our sin and our suffering. We hold before you all people and places enduring or inflicting war, poverty, and tyranny.

For everyone across the world struggling with disease, we pray your hope, strength and healing. We pray your comfort for the bereaved and ask you to bless all who work to bring relief to suffering.

We pray for the United States as elections there draw near. Grant wisdom, respect for all people, discernment and integrity for those

campaigning and those who will vote. Bless our world with your peace.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

God of communion, we lift up to you all who serve your Church across the world in ways great and small. We remember today the Province of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, its people and its leaders. We pray for our own Bishop Kevin, and in the Diocese, for St Mary's, Hamilton and St Andrew's Uddingston – with Matthew Little their priest. We ask your blessing on our Vestry and the Vestry Secretary. May all know the inspiration of your Holy Spirit in their lives.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

God of life, you call us to pursue with a passion: righteousness, faith, love and peace. Help us here in our own community to live out this calling. We pray for our city and for all who live and work here, especially for young people who have recently arrived. We pray especially for those in halls of residence where there is infection and fear, and for those who are facing unemployment. Help us to love Glasgow and its people even when we cannot enjoy the city as we would like.

Lord, in your mercy, **Hear our prayer.**

God of eternity, we pray your heavenly peace on those who have died this week, including Joyce Dippie. And we remember especially at this time Spencer French and Jane Gardner whose year's mind is today.

May they rest in peace, **and rise in glory.**

Accept these prayers, for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ,

Amen.

Communion – third video

Offertory - [OLIVER]

Like one of the sons in today's Gospel parable, there are many things I vow to do—that I'll get to 'one day'—in my head, imagining a lot of work and effort to do things that, in reality, are very simple. If making a financial gift to this Cathedral is something you've been meaning to get around to but haven't yet, see how easy it is—with many options to do online. Visit www.thecathedral.org.uk and click 'Donate to St Mary's Cathedral' to complete the steps outlined there, and if you've any questions about making a gift, get in touch.

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 - [OLIVER]

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, Father,
in every place and at all times.

All power is yours. You created the heavens and established the
earth; you sustain in being all that is.

In Christ your Son our life and yours
are brought together in a wonderful exchange.

He made his home among us that we might for ever dwell in you.

Through your Holy Spirit you call us to new birth
in a creation restored by love.

As children of your redeeming purpose
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.**

Glory and thanksgiving be to you,
most loving Father,
for the gift of your Son born in human flesh

He is the Word existing beyond time,
both source and final purpose,
bringing to wholeness all that is made.

Obedient to your will he died upon the Cross.

By your power you raised him from the dead.

He broke the bonds of evil
and set your people free to be his Body in the world

On the night when he was given up to death,
knowing that his hour had come,
having loved his own,
he loved them to the end.

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 - [OLIVER]

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]

Teach me O Lord - Stopford

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes and I shall keep it unto the end. Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall keep it with my whole heart. Make me to go in the path of thy commandments for therein is my desire. Incline my heart unto thy testimonies and not to covetousness. O turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity and quicken me in thy ways. O stablish thy word in thy servant that I may fear thee. Amen.

Post Communion Prayer - [ANDY]

Father in heaven, strengthen the unity of your Church, so that we who have been fed with holy things may fulfil your will in the world. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Blessing - [OLIVER]

Thank you to all who have contributed to make this service uplifting and moving. I hope it leaves you strengthened, as it has

me, to work for good, when, at times, it's easy to feel dismayed.
God give us courage and inspiration on our way.

The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus our Lord: And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Voluntary - [FRIKKI]

Postlude – William S Lloyd Webber

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