



Chet Valley Churches



Holy Communion

All Saints

31st November 2021

Welcome



We Prepare for Worship

Grace, mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you. **And also with you.**

Rejoice, people of God, **praise the Lord!**

Let us keep the feast in honour of all God's saints,
in whose victory the angels rejoice and glorify the Son of God.

♪ Hymn 286: Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! all the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Who wert and art and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!

✠ Confession (We Say Sorry to God)

Jesus wants us to share in his holy feast with all his saints in earth and heaven. But we know that we don't deserve to because of all the bad things we have done. So we ask God to forgive us and to help us be fit to join the saints with Jesus.

Father God, we ask you to forgive us
for the things we have thought and the things we have said
and the things we have done that do not please you.

We are sorry.

Help us to be more like Jesus: ready to pray, ready to help others, ready to do your will in all things, every day. Amen.

Absolution *(The Priest Announces God's Forgiveness)*

May the God of love and power forgive us and free us from our sins, heal and strengthen us by his Spirit and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**



Gloria: A Round

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo. Gloria, gloria. Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Collect *(Prayer for the Day)*

God of holiness, your glory is proclaimed in every age: as we rejoice in the faith of your saints, inspire us to follow their example with boldness and joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Old Testament Reading: Isaiah 25:6-9

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-matured wines, of rich food filled with marrow, of well-matured wines strained clear. And he will destroy on this mountain the shroud that is cast over all peoples, the sheet that is spread over all nations; he will swallow up death for ever.

Then the Lord God will wipe away the tears from all faces, and the disgrace of his people he will take away from all the earth, for the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, so that he might save us. This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

New Testament Reading: Revelation 21:1-6a

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will

be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.'

And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.

This is the word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

♪ **Gradual Hymn: *Happy Are They, They that Love God***

**Happy are they, they that love God,
Whose hearts have Christ confest,
Who by his cross have found their life,
And 'neath his yoke their rest.**



**Glad is the praise, sweet are the songs,
When they together sing;
And strong the prayers that bow the ear
Of heaven's eternal King.**

**Christ to their homes giveth his peace,
And makes their loves his own:
But ah, what tares the evil one
Hath in his garden sown!**

**Sad were our lot, evil this earth,
Did not its sorrows prove
The path whereby the sheep may find
The fold of Jesu's love.**

**Then shall they know, they that love him,
How all their pain is good;
And death itself cannot unbind
Their happy brotherhood.**

📖 **Gospel: *John 11:32-44***

Alleluia, Alleluia. You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, called out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Alleluia.

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

Glory to you O Lord.

When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved. He said, 'Where have you laid him?' They said to him, 'Lord, come and see.' Jesus began to weep. So the Jews said, 'See how he loved him!' But some of them said, 'Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?'

Then Jesus, again greatly disturbed, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. Jesus said, 'Take away the stone.' Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, 'Lord, already there is a stench because he has been dead for four days.' Jesus said to her, 'Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?' So they took away the stone. And Jesus looked upwards and said, 'Father, I thank you for having heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I have said this for the sake of the crowd standing here, so that they may believe that you sent me.' When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come out!' The dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with strips of cloth, and his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, 'Unbind him, and let him go.'

This is the gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you O Christ.**

Sermon [Belinda Barwick]

I wonder what you think of when you hear the word 'saint'? Someone with a halo, someone set apart, someone very different from you or me? Or perhaps you are thinking of the sort of person who lives a blameless life, never says a bad-tempered thing, always gives freely of their time and money. A paragon of virtue, in fact. When we celebrate All Saints Day, who do you think about?

In medieval times they had clear indicators for who the saints were, and used these indicators in depicting them, so as to give everyone an idea of what was expected. St Benedict was often shown rolling around in a thorn bush (to stop profane thoughts), St Margaret had a defeated dragon alongside (as she pierced the devil's belly with a crucifix, having been swallowed by him) and St Bartolomeo had a knife (to recall his being flayed alive). Medieval saints had to be tough characters, and clearly the thinking was that being martyred was a good step on the way to sainthood.

As most of us will not be martyred (or certainly not in such a colourful way as our forebears), what have these saints to do with us? Is there any point in remembering them? This church is dedicated to All Saints, all of the countless host of people who have lived the sort of God-seeking, Jesus-following and Spirit-inspired lives that demands our respect. Does it also mean that we are keen to follow their lead? The advantage of the All Saints name is that we are always able

to add to their number—there is always space for more, with that catch-all name. So the question is, are you in the running?

If you had asked St Paul that question, I think he would have been surprised to consider that there was any doubt about it: he addressed his letters to the saints in a particular place—everyone who tried to follow Jesus, to the best of their ability, was a saint. If we continue to think of saints as people who are different from us, a sort of super-human, super-holy lot, then what is there to work for?

I wonder if we should not start by considering that saints might occasionally have had a bad day. They might not have been easy people to be close to. (Read between the lines of some of St Paul's pithier comments: does he sound an easy chap to brush along with?). They might have done things which they knew afterwards were wrong—like the rest of us do. They might have held views which in these days we would consider shockingly sexist, classist, or racist. They were people of their time, just as we are people of our time. They were not perfect. Only God is perfect.

In the book of Revelation the one who sat on the throne says, 'I am making all things new!' He takes the ordinary things of our lives and makes something remarkable out of them. This means that we don't have to try hard, to jump through all the hoops and get our certificates for good behaviour. The Orthodox writer Wendy Robinson writes 'God meets us where we are and not where we are not, or when we are only half there. The Rabbi Zosya said, 'At the end I shall be asked, not "Why were you not Moses?", but "Why were you not Zosya?"' Perhaps God is saying to each of us now, 'I have something special for you to do for me. Something no one else can do. I want you to be yourself here, now, and in being fully yourself to reveal something about me. No one else can do this. I am depending on you.'

The reactions to the horrible murder of Sir David Amess made me think afresh about what a saint is. If you had said to me a month ago that an MP could be considered for saintly status, I'd have scoffed. But the reflections on his life, his work and his faith that have been emerging in these past few weeks have shown something remarkable: people from all parties and all different walks of life admired him for his friendliness, his self-giving and his dedication, all exemplifying a truly Christian life. He died doing his job properly. That's pretty close to martyrdom. It doesn't mean he should be put on an impossible pedestal, but that he showed what is possible if you put your heart and soul into doing what God is calling you to.

If we look at the story of Lazarus, we read about a family who were Jesus' friends; people he knew well and who had faith in him. There is nothing here to say that they were more virtuous than their peers, or that Jesus demanded particular things from them, and yet he clearly loved them, not for their gold star behaviour,

but for their love and affection towards him. We are not expected to be anything other than ourselves, and God in Jesus draws out the best, most loving part of ourselves.

I was confirmed in this church 54 years ago, by a remarkable Christian man, Eric Cordingley, who was Bishop of Thetford from 1963 to 1976, when he died at the early age of 65. Cordingley was an army chaplain who had only been in Singapore for a few days when it fell to the Japanese, and he spent the rest of the war in Changi prison and working on the Burma railway. Reading his accounts of his time there I was struck by how matter of fact he is: just getting on with being a Chaplain in the most difficult circumstances imaginable. At the end of his time he wrote, 'I would say that as a parish priest the past three and a half years has been the most wonderful in my life, in spite of the grim and hungry times.' He had prepared more than one hundred men for confirmation, built up a huge congregation, and set up a church in an old mosque in Changi, with all sorts of classic church features—there was obviously a real need to try to recreate the familiarity of a British church. The cross on the makeshift altar was made from a Howitzer shell case, which I believe his family took back to be in Changi in recent years. In his memoir of that time he wrote, 'No priest could wish for a happier 'parish' or sphere of work... We seem somehow to have got back to fundamentals and simple wholesome worship.' He didn't set out to be saintly, but to do his job as well as he could, in those extraordinary conditions. To see what was happening around him, and to do what needed to be done. To listen to God and to follow his promptings.

Few of us will have been forced to find our strength in God in quite such difficult surroundings, but perhaps Cordingley would say that few of us would have had the privilege that he had, seeing men turning to Christ when they were really up against it, when all outward comforts had been stripped away. Our Christian lives—our saintly status, if you like to think of it that way—are to do with how we live the life we've been given, with the people and the challenges that come our way. Not fame, not a tamed dragon at our side, no martyr's crown, just the ordinary things that make up our lives. We tend to think of saintliness as being something for other people, not the people we see in church every Sunday or our neighbour that we pass in the street. But this is not what the Bible says. This is not an exclusive club, but the most inclusive club there is. Everyone can aspire to sainthood, if we listen to what God is saying to us.

When I leave this building and walk through the churchyard I see many familiar names, people who worshipped here: not perfect people, perhaps the sort who have had stiff words over misunderstandings or driven their families potty at times (like most of us) but who were essential to this community and who tried to love God and to listen to God. Ordinary people, some clearly saintly, others less so, all part of the multitude greater than we can possibly number. All saints, in fact.

♪ Hymn: *Soon and Very Soon*

Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King. Hallelujah.
No more cryin' there, we are goin' to see the King. Hallelujah.
No more dyin' there, we are goin' to see the King. Hallelujah.
Soon and very soon, we are goin' to see the King. Hallelujah.

Creed—We Say What We Believe

**We believe in God the Father,
from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit:
who strengthens us with power from on high,**

We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Rejoice, people of God, **praise the Lord!**

Prayers

When we think of St George, we picture him fearlessly facing a dragon. There are many dragons that we might face today: the coronavirus pandemic, abuse, being made redundant, breakdown of relationships... Heavenly Father, we pray that, like St George, we may face our difficulties courageously.

With all the saints in heaven and on earth, **we pray to you, O Lord.**

When we think of St Luke, we remember that he was a physician. So many people today are in need of healing. Heavenly Father, we pray for all involved in any way in health care: our doctors and nurses and other health care professionals; the cleaners, the porters and those involved on the front desk without whom our hospitals couldn't function.

With all the saints in heaven and on earth, **we pray to you, O Lord.**

When we think of St Martin, we remember the man who shared his cloak with a beggar. So many people are in need in the world at the moment. Heavenly Father, we pray that, like St Martin, we will be generous and open-hearted.

With all the saints in heaven and on earth, **we pray to you, O Lord.**

When we think of St Paul, we picture him writing letters to the early Christian communities whom he longed to visit. Heavenly Father, we pray for all the people

who are feeling isolated and lonely and who long for someone to visit them. We pray for ourselves, longing to visit family and friends.

With all the saints in heaven and on earth, **we pray to you, O Lord.**

When we think of the Gospel writers, St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke and St John, we remember that they longed to tell the story of Jesus. Heavenly Father, we pray that you will help us to share the Good News story that is within the gospel with everyone that we met.

With all the saints in heaven and on earth, **we pray to you, O Lord.**

We make these prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, your Son, our Saviour.

Amen.

The Peace

To crown all things there must be love, to bind all together and complete the whole. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. *Colossians 3:14-15*

The peace of the Lord be always with you. **And also with you.**

Offertory Hymn 486: Of the Father's Love Begotten

**Of the Father's love begotten, ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega; he the source, the ending he,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see, evermore and evermore.**

**By his word was all created; he commanded; it was done:
Heaven and earth and depth of ocean, universe of three in one,
All that grows beneath the shining
Of the light of moon and sun, evermore and evermore.**

**Blessed was that day for ever when the virgin, full of grace,
By the Holy Ghost conceiving, bore the Saviour of our race,
And the child, the world's redeemer,
First revealed his sacred face, evermore and evermore.**

**Glory be to God the Father, glory be to God the Son,
Glory to the Holy Spirit, persons three, yet Godhead one.
Glory be from all creation
While eternal ages run, evermore and evermore.**

The Eucharist

To you we come, Father of lights, with angels and saints, where heaven and earth unite. May Jesus meet us in the breaking of the bread. **Amen.**

The Lord is here. **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give thanks and praise.

You are worthy of our thanks and praise, Lord God of truth, for by the breath of your mouth you have spoken your word, and all things have come into being. You fashioned us in your image and placed us in the garden of your delight. Though we chose the path of rebellion you would not abandon your own. Again and again you drew us into your covenant of grace. You gave your people the law and taught us by your prophets to look for your reign of justice, mercy and peace. As we watch for the signs of your kingdom on earth, we echo the song of the angels in heaven, evermore praising you and saying:

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.

Lord God, you are the most holy one, enthroned in splendour and light, yet in the coming of your Son Jesus Christ you reveal the power of your love made perfect in our human weakness. **Amen. Lord, we believe.**

Embracing our humanity, Jesus showed us the way of salvation; loving us to the end, he gave himself to death for us; dying for his own, he set us free from the bonds of sin, that we might rise and reign with him in glory.

Amen. Lord, we believe.

On the night he gave up himself for us all he took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

Amen. Lord, we believe.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Amen. Lord, we believe.



Therefore we proclaim the death that he suffered on the cross, we celebrate his resurrection, his bursting from the tomb, we rejoice that he reigns at your right hand on high and we long for his coming in glory.

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

As we recall the one, perfect sacrifice of our redemption, Father, by your Holy Spirit let these gifts of your creation be to us the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; form us into the likeness of Christ and make us a perfect offering in your sight. **Amen. Come, Holy Spirit.**

Look with favour on your people and in your mercy hear the cry of our hearts. Bless the earth, heal the sick, let the oppressed go free and fill your Church with power from on high. **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Gather your people from the ends of the earth to feast with all your saints at the table in your kingdom, where the new creation is brought to perfection in Jesus Christ our Lord; by whom, and with whom, and in whom, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

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.

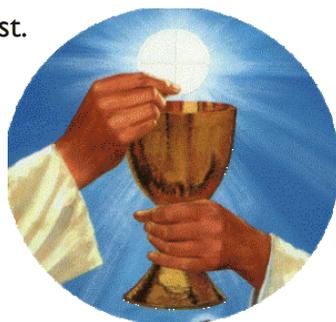
The Fraction *(Breaking of Bread)*

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

Though we are many, we are one body, because we all share in one bread.

God's holy gifts for God's holy people.

Jesus Christ is holy, Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.



The Communion

🙏 Post Communion Prayer

Lord of heaven, in this eucharist you have brought us near to an innumerable company of angels and to the spirits of the saints made

perfect: as in this food of our earthly pilgrimage we have shared their fellowship, so may we share their joy in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Final Hymn 178: For All the Saints

**For all the Saints who from their labours rest,
Who thee by faith before the world confessed.
Thy name, O Jesu, be for ever blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well fought fight;
Thou in the darkness drear their one true light. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**O blest communion! fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle, they in glory shine;
Yet all are one in thee, for all are thine. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**The golden evening brightens in the west;
Soon, soon to faithful warriors comes their rest:
Sweet is the calm of paradise the blest. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**But lo! there breaks a yet more glorious day;
The saints triumphant rise in bright array:
The King of glory passes on his way. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

**From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
Singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Alleluia! Alleluia!**

Blessing & Dismissal

May God, who kindled the fire of his love in the hearts of the saints, pour upon you the riches of his grace. **Amen.**

May he give you joy in their fellowship and a share in their praises. **Amen.**

May he strengthen you to follow them in the way of holiness and to come to the full radiance of glory. **Amen.**

And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you now and evermore. **Amen.**

Following God's Saints in holiness and truth, go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.