

# Swaythling Parish

## Sunday 7 February 2021

Second Sunday before Lent

### Welcome

*Below is a service sheet for you to use at home. You can also find our Sunday morning reflection on YouTube channel, available at 10am on Sunday, (and afterwards). Please search for "Swaythling Parish" on YouTube to find and view it.*

*If we can support you in any way at the present time, or you would just like to chat, do please get in touch:*  
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### Introduction from Rev Peter Dockree

Welcome to our service today, however you are joining us. This Sunday is the second Sunday before lent, and Bruce will reflect later on the transforming power of Christ, speaking right into this time we find ourselves in right now.

### Greeting

Grace mercy and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you

**And also with you.**

The Lord be with you

**And also with you**

### Prayer of Confession

*(During this prayer you may wish to symbolically use a candle and a small piece of paper and burn the paper on the candle flame).*

Later we will hear reference to Jesus as light of the world, a light that shines in the darkness, a darkness that does not overcome it. We all have darkness and light within us. Sometimes it is the darkest places of which we feel least able to share with God and yet we follow a God who darkness does not overcome. So bring to mind all those things that hold you in darkness, the mistakes, the people you have let down, the jealous or unkind thoughts, the things we call sin. Let us bring those things before the Lord of light, and see them be consumed by the power of love.

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy**

Christ have mercy

**Christ have mercy**

Lord have mercy

**Lord have mercy.**

May the God of love  
Bring us back to himself,  
Forgive us our sins,  
and assure us of his eternal love  
in Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### The Collect

Almighty God,  
give us reverence for all creation  
and respect for every person,

that we may mirror your likeness  
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### Hymn: Brother, Sister, let me serve you

1. Brother, sister, let me serve you;  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant, too.
2. We are pilgrims on a journey,  
Fellow travellers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.
3. I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.
4. I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow,  
till we've seen this journey through.
5. When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.
6. Brother, sister, let me serve you;  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant, too.

R Gillard (b. 1953) © 1977 Scripture in Song

## Readings

### Proverbs 8: 1, 22-31

*A description of Wisdom, one of the attributes of God's nature.*

Does not wisdom call,  
and does not understanding raise her voice?

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,  
the first of his acts of long ago.

Ages ago I was set up,  
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.  
When there were no depths I was brought forth,  
when there were no springs abounding with water.

Before the mountains had been shaped,  
before the hills, I was brought forth—  
when he had not yet made earth and fields,  
or the world's first bits of soil.  
When he established the heavens, I was there,  
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,  
when he made firm the skies above,  
when he established the fountains of the deep,  
when he assigned to the sea its limit,  
so that the waters might not transgress his command,  
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,  
then I was beside him, like a master worker;  
and I was daily his delight,  
rejoicing before him always,  
rejoicing in his inhabited world  
and delighting in the human race.

### Colossians 1: 15-20

*Christ is the embodiment of all that God is.*

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible,

whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

### John 1: 1-14

*Jesus is God's Word for us.*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to

become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

## A Reflection by Rev Canon Bruce Hartnell

Travel agents, not surprisingly, want to remind us of flights to sun-blessed shores we perhaps took in the past and might take again with their help. This year, next year, sometime – if possible! Most years, the gloomy early months are brightened by brochures with promises of brilliant sun, sand and Sangria. Whether we ever did take them up on their tempting promises or not, it seems a depressing fact that our borders are closed in almost every direction for the weeks ahead.

Paul, in this morning's sensational letter to Christians in Colossae, is engaged on an advertising campaign of a similar boldness. He is appealing to the Colossians' experience of being whisked from one deeply depressing reality to another country – even, another world which enjoys a radically different climate. It is an appeal he has no hesitation in making. 'God rescued us from dead-end alleys and dark dungeons,' as Eugene Peterson puts it in his

modern version of Paul's Greek. 'He's set us up in the kingdom of the Son he loves so much, the Son who got us out of the pit we were in.' So it is as if we and they (those Christian people so long back) are picked up from one kingdom, say the United Kingdom, and transferred to a kingdom so different that we feel we have been re-born, placed in a new creation entirely.

Only the One who is over all powers and dominions can transfer subjects from one kingdom to another. Only the One God who is God can do the work that only God can do. Therefore, the man Jesus, so recently dead and buried when Paul was writing and then raised and glorified, must have been part of the creating Will and Purpose from the very start.

This is not just theoretically true. In practice, Jesus reveals to us everything that is true about the character of God, meeting us in the flesh and inviting us to enter a new experience of intimacy with God as his beloved children. That surely is the compulsive drawing power of St John's opening chapter.

So along with people in Colossae and Ephesus then and with Indian and Vietnamese Christians today, we find the same thing when we receive Holy Communion. Then we too accept the work of Christ and experience its transforming power. And having been air-lifted into this new environment, we benefit from the type of prayers that Paul offers: prayers spilling over into thanksgiving, thanks for steady faith in Christ and for lines of purpose in lives that

never grow slack, kept taut by hope. Prayer for the strength to stick it out over the long haul – not the grim strength of gritting your teeth but the glory-strength that God gives.

As 21st century people ask with a confident grin, "What's not to like?"

Or in rather more traditional language: 'Amen, may it be so.'

*A moment to reflect*

### Prayers

*Let us pray for our world, our community and those in need around us. You may wish to light some candles as you pray. Sarah Dockree leads the prayers on our video...*

There's been plenty of rain this week....Lord, sometimes it feels like it's raining all the time at the moment. Even when the physical rain stops, we can feel deluged, as if life is one continual downpour or stuck in a steady, gloomy drizzle. We pray for all those who feel like this, who need the sunshine so much. Whether through loneliness, ill health, fear, financial insecurity or anything else we pray that you would lift them up, that we would all know how precious we are in your sight, your incomprehensible love for us and that you hold us in your hand, not matter how we are feeling or coping.



As we have listened to the wind blow strongly at times this week we thank you for your unchanging



love and steadfast comfort. We thank you for your Spirit - we pray for it to blow like a mighty wind through the many many situations and places we hear about, close to home and further away, where change is needed and healing sought. Lord, transform the hearts of leaders the world over to stand for justice and truth as they administer the power given to them with humility and grace. Lord bring healing to nations divided by war or civil unrest, bring compassion where little is shown.

Maybe we have received something in the post this week which has brought us joy or connected us with a loved one, or maybe we have looked longingly at the mat each day in vain – We pray for all those who feel alone, whether or not they are surrounded by people. Draw near to them Lord and bring friends alongside them. Lord, thank you for all the ways we are able to stay connected, especially at this time when it is so hard to see anyone in person. Help us Lord to connect with those around us, prompt us to get in touch with the people who need it most on any given day. Help us to be tuned to your voice as we seek to create and maintain community and relationships during this time.



As we find ourselves bombarded with so much news it can be hard to take it in, we ask you for your wisdom in how to pray Lord. Our world can seem so big and its problems overwhelming. Lord we pray especially that we wouldn't become fatigued or indifferent to what we see, hear and read about your world – instead we ask you would compel us to get on our knees and cry out to you for your mercy in our broken world.



Many of us will have heard someone tell us this week they've had their Covid vaccine – Lord we thank you for all the wisdom and knowledge that has brought us to this point and for all those involved in every aspect of managing this pandemic, from frontline staff in hospitals to those behind the scenes keeping them clean, for those standing for hours administering vaccines to those printing the letters offering appointments. We thank you for the hope that things are indeed getting better and pray for patience and forbearance until the time when they do.



Some of us will have battled this week with google classroom, comforted children missing school or fought to meet deadlines and tasks for work or school. Lord we pray for all those involved in ensuring our children continue to be able to take part in learning from their homes, many of them juggling teaching in person as well. We pray for the children in school, that you would encourage them and keep them safe. We pray for those at home missing routine and friends – that you would comfort them and that they would know you are with them. We pray for those working from home, away from friends and support.



Have you created something this week? From knitting to cooking, from gardening to woodwork, we thank you Lord for the wonder of creation and the peace and comfort it can bring us. We thank you for YOUR creation and its reminder that you are in control, that the seasons continue, and the rhythms of the year remain unchanged. We bring all these prayers and the many more that



on each of our hearts, to you this morning. Thank you for hearing us. Equip us and strengthen us to be part of the answer to our prayers as well.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

### Hymn: New every morning

- 1 New every morning is the love  
our wakening and uprising prove;  
through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
restored to life and power and thought.
- 2 New mercies, each returning day,  
hover around us while we pray;  
new perils past, new sins forgiven,  
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.
- 3 If on our daily course our mind  
be set to hallow all we find,  
new treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.
- 4 Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,  
As more of heaven in each we see;  
Some softening gleam of love and prayer  
Shall dawn on every cross and care.
- 5 The trivial round, the common task,  
will furnish all we need to ask,  
room to deny ourselves, a road  
to bring us daily nearer God.
- 6 Only, O Lord, in thy dear love  
fit us for perfect rest above;  
and help us, this and every day,  
to live more nearly as we pray.

John Keble (1792-1866)

### Closing Blessing

Thank you to everyone for worshiping with us today.

### St Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ within me,  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ at my right,  
Christ at my left,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks  
of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who  
speaks to me,  
Christ in the eye of everyone that sees me,  
Christ in the ear of everyone that hears me.

In the midst of moving goal posts, changing  
timeframes and uncertainty, may we  
know God's abiding presence with us,  
and may the blessing of God almighty,  
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit  
be among us and remain with us always.

**Amen**

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