

Easter 5 Stewardship Sunday Order of Service

Introduction – Holy Trinity Vicarage drive

Alleluia. Christ is risen.

He is risen indeed. Alleluia.

We thank God for the gift of His Church during these days and ask His blessing upon us.

Here are the stones of the building of Holy Trinity Church next to me.

Today's first reading (1 Peter) also reminds us of the idea of living stones.

We greet one another as living stones across our households.

Prayers of Penitence

We are a temple of God's indwelling Holy Spirit,
yet we have grieved him.

The temple of our bodies does not belong to us,
but was bought at the price of Christ's precious blood.

So we come, in sorrow yet with confidence,
to ask forgiveness of our Father in heaven.

Zeal for your house has eaten me up
and the taunts of those who taunt you have fallen upon me.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of ungodliness.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

The Lord will defend your going out and your coming in
from this time forward for evermore.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May God our Father forgive you your sins,
and bring you to the fellowship of his table
with his saints for ever.

Amen.

Thank you, Lord, for our church buildings, but now we worship in our homes;
the people are the Church and that is the stewardship focus.

We go inside.

Music

Amazing grace tune/San Damiano crucifix

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me.

I once was lost, but now I'm found;
was blind, but now I see.

Thought

Has music spoken to us in lockdown?

I know there are musical gifts across our three churches.

The Cross shows us the depth of God's love.

Everything is grace, is free gift, we are not our own.

Do we hear the Lord saying to us, "rebuild my church"; renewal, life and service ahead of us?

Collect

Almighty God,

who through your only-begotten Son Jesus Christ

have overcome death and opened to us the gate of everlasting life:

grant that, as by your grace going before us

you put into our minds good desires,

so by your continual help

we may bring them to good effect;

through Jesus Christ our risen Lord,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

First Reading

1 Peter 2.2-10

Thought

"Pure spiritual milk nourishing us for salvation";

I think we are growing in lockdown.

"Chosen and precious living stones";

When we return to the physical house, we might be healthy and holy spiritual houses.

"Chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, God's own people";

What an identity, but it's for others;

"Proclaim light out of darkness".

Offertory

Collection Plate:

I am sure we notice it in church!

But we're singing and it's often presented without much ado.

It is the offering of our whole lives; time, talents, and including our material resources, our money; all offered with the bread and wine, sacrificed and transformed.

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 do we give you.**

Prayers

We pray that Christ may be seen in the life of the Church.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

in your mercy, hear us.

You have called us into the family of those who are the children of God.

May our love for our brothers and sisters be strengthened by your grace.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

in your mercy, hear us.

You have called us to be a temple where the Holy Spirit can dwell.

Give us clean hands and pure hearts, so that our lives will reflect your holiness.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

in your mercy, hear us.

You have called us to be a light to the world, so that those in darkness come to you.

May our lives shine as a witness to the saving grace you have given for all.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

in your mercy, hear us.

You have called us to be members of your body,

so that when one suffers, all suffer together.

We ask for your comfort and healing power to bring hope to those in distress.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

in your mercy, hear us.

You have called us to be the Bride, where you, Lord, are the Bridegroom.

Prepare us for the wedding feast, where we will be united with you for ever.

Jesus, Lord of the Church,

hear our prayer, and make us one in heart and mind to serve you with joy for ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading

John 14.1-14

Thought

“In my Father’s house there are many dwelling-places”;

Our horizons are narrowed, but God’s kingdom expands our vision; how big the Church can be.

“Jesus’ works; greater works; I will do whatever you ask”;

Horizons also expanded in what might be possible as the family of the Church; if we ask, dream, offer ourselves, step out in faith, be open to grace.

Music

I cannot tell tune (Londonderry Air)/children’s art

I cannot tell how he will win the nations,

how he will claim his earthly heritage,

how satisfy the needs and aspirations

of east and west, of sinner and of sage.

But this I know, all flesh shall see his glory,

and he shall reap the harvest he has sown,

and some glad day his sun shall shine in splendour

when he the Saviour, Saviour of the world, is known.

Thought

Art during lockdown?

Do send in art or photos to us for the “Inspiration and Comfort” section of Merton Priory Team website.

Here our vision expanded into the future of what God will do in Jesus.

Now we can be preparing for a harvest;

post-lockdown, it may be an exhibition of creative offerings.

Conclusion – Holy Trinity Vicarage garden

Gardening during lockdown?

Blessings in lockdown;

gardens windows onto the wider world, nature, birds, creation, sounds of world, God;

all of this, the place where the Church’s work belongs.

Stewardship about more than buildings, but the activities and life of the Church:

Eco-Church?

Work with the homeless (Nightshelter, YMCA and Faith in Action)?

Engagement new secondary school next to St John’s?

Ministry in our town centres (Street Pastors, working with other churches and organisations)?

Thank you for the time, talents and money you give.

Let us allow our vision to be expanded in harmony with God’s vision

to see where our stewardship of these resources might take us.

Rejoicing in God's new creation,
as our Saviour 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.
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.**

Blessing

May Christ,
who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future,
fill you with his 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.

Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.
Thanks be to God. Alleluia, alleluia.