

**The Stratfield Mortimer Benefice
of**

**St Saviour
Mortimer West End**

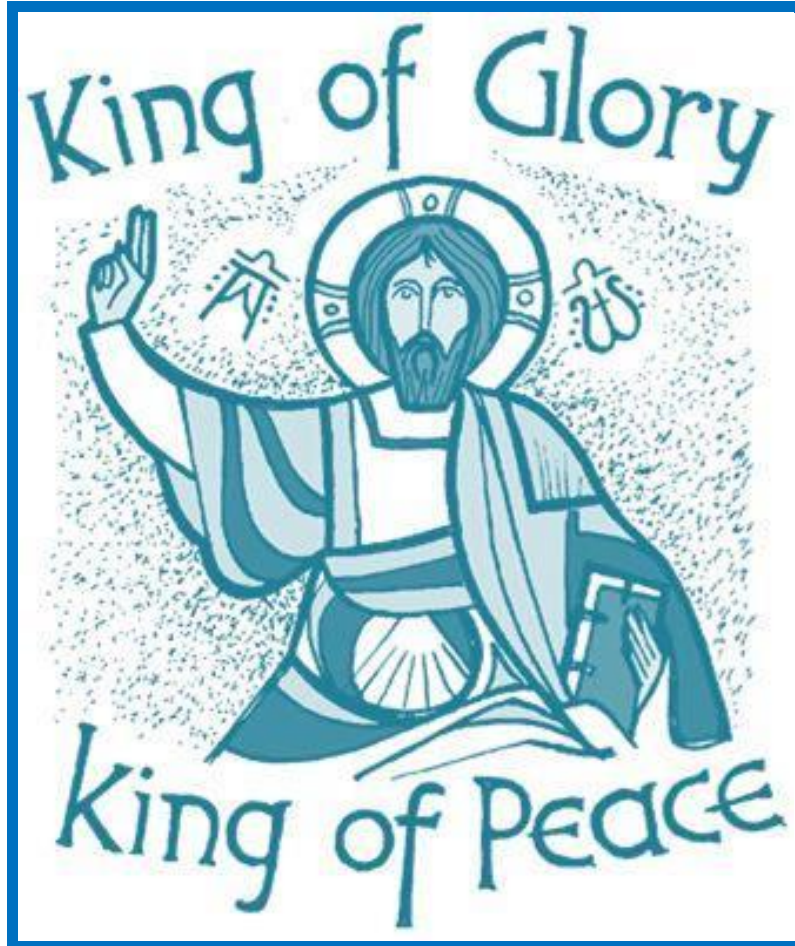
**St Mary and St John
Stratfield Mortimer**

**St John the Baptist
Padworth**

St Mary's Church of England School

St John's Church of England School

Diocese of Oxford



The Parish Sunday Eucharist
for the solemnity of
Christ the King

26th November 2023 at 10 a.m. at St John's church, Mortimer

and online at Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6931233940>

The celebration of 'Christ the King' has ancient origins, but it was only 'formalised' in 1925 and, perhaps, that was in part intended to send a message to the totalitarian movements emerging at that time - led by the likes of Mussolini, Hitler and Stalin - that Christians would always give their first allegiance to the 'rule' of Christ and to his way of respect for the common good, of justice, and of solidarity with the poor and marginalised. The celebration proclaims that Christians will always honour Christ first by heeding his teaching and example and by finding in his spirit the encouragement we need to live his way. His crown is made of thorns. His throne is the Cross of sacrifice. His rule of law is the Sermon on the Mount. And his mandate is 'Love God...' and 'Love others as I have loved you.' His servant leadership is characterised by selflessness, by compassion, by the spirit of forgiveness and unconditional love. And he is a 'king' whose mission is to free people from servitude to fear and subjugation to pride that we may all live together in peace and be this world's good stewards. And, as Christ assured the thief on the cross next to him, he assures us of our 'inheritance' which is, at the last, to share life together in that fullness of joy which we call heaven.

Happy feast of Christ the King.

God bless,
Paul

The Parish Eucharist for Sunday 26th November 2023

The Solemnity of Christ the King

The last Sunday of the year of St Matthew's Gospel

A warm welcome to the Parish Sunday Eucharist.

An induction loop is provided. To use, please turn your hearing aid to T.

Gluten free wafers are available for those who need them. Please inform one of the vergers who will pass the information on to the clergy.

Online: If you are not able to come to St John's you are warmly invited to share in the Parish's Sunday Eucharist online. And may God bless and renew us as we join together to worship. Thank you.

THIS 'HOLY MEMORIAL' is known by various names: 1) 'The Eucharist' - which means 'Thanksgiving' - because Jesus offered himself in love; 2) 'The Lord's Supper' - or 'Breaking of the Bread' - because we celebrate it as a shared meal; 3) 'Holy Communion,' - because we become one with Christ by receiving him; and 4) 'Holy Mass' - holy sending - because it gives us a mission: to go in peace to serve the Lord.

The 'objectives' of the Eucharist: The community gathers for the public celebration of the Eucharist in order to worship God; ask his forgiveness for sins; thank him for blessings received; listen to his voice in the Scriptures; present the needs of the world and our own needs too; offer our lives to him and his loving service; gain spiritual nourishment and recharge our weakened spiritual batteries by sharing life with him in Holy Communion. The simple structure of the Eucharistic celebration is organized around achieving these goals.

THE GATHERING SONG

**Christ is the King! O friends rejoice;
brothers and sisters with one voice
tell all world know he is your choice.**

Alleluia.

**Let love's unconquerable might
your scattered companies unite
in service to the Lord of light.**

Alleluia.

**So shall God's will on earth be done,
new lamps be lit, new tasks begun,
and the whole world at last be one.**

Alleluia.

THE GATHERING

Priest + In the name of God - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

All Amen.

THE GREETING - Words of Welcome and Introduction.

The greeting proclaims the presence of the Lord with us.

The Penitential Rite, the Gloria and the Opening Prayer follow. The purpose of these preliminary rites is to help the people, gathered for the celebration of the Eucharist, to join with each other as a worshipping community, and to prepare to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist - the Great Thanksgiving.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All And also with you.

The priest may introduce the Eucharist.

THE PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

The Invitation to Confession - we call to mind our sins that we may repent of them / turn from them and ask forgiveness of God and each other.

Priest My brothers and sisters, as we prepare to celebrate the mystery of God's love,
 revealed to us in Word and Sacrament, let us call to mind our sins.

A pause for quiet reflection follows.

All **I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters,
 that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words,
 in what I have done and in what I have failed to do.**

The Absolution

+ Almighty God, have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All Amen.

THE GLORIA

Gloria, gloria, in excelsis Deo.

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 sins 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.

THE COLLECT

Priest Let us pray.

Together we spend a few moments in silence, realising, and giving thanks, that we are in the presence of God our Father to whom we make our prayers. The prayer 'collects' our thoughts.

Heavenly Father, help us to hear the call of Christ the King
and to follow in his good and loving service,
whose kingdom has no end;
for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, one glory.

All Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

The Liturgy of the Word consists of readings from the scriptures; a sermon/homily, which expounds the readings; the Profession of Faith, which is the Creed of God's people; and the Prayer of the Faithful or General Intercessions in which the people of God intercede for all humankind and all creation.

In the Liturgy of the Word God speaks to us of redemption and salvation and nourishes us with his 'word.' We are not only listening to past history. The God who speaks to Israel and to the early Church speaks to us today through the power of the Holy Spirit working within us as we listen to him and as he reveals the pattern for our lives. 'The word of God is something alive and active: it cuts like any double edged sword but more finely...it can judge the secret emotions and thoughts' (The Letter to the Hebrews 4:12).

Either two or three READINGS FROM SCRIPTURE follow, the last of which is the Gospel.

THE FIRST READING – EPHESIANS 1: 15 - 23. – To be read by Gill McInnes.

Reader A reading from the Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians.

St Paul's Prayer

I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may perceive what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power. God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. And he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

At the end of the reading:

Reader This is the word of the Lord.

All Thanks be to God.

Now we prepare to hear the Gospel (the Good News) and acknowledge that we are his people and called to be part of his mission to the world inasmuch as we share his message and his life with faith, hope and love.

THE GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Cantor Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

All Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

cf Mark 11: 9.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

THE GOSPEL READING – ST MATTHEW’S GOSPEL 25: 31 - 46.

All The Lord be with you.
And also with you .

All Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples: ‘When the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.” Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?” And the king will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.” Then he will say to those at his left hand, “You who are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels, for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.” Then they also will answer, “Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison and did not take care of you?” Then he will answer them, “Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.” And these will go away into eternal punishment but the righteous into eternal life.’

At the end of the Gospel:

All This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

THE SERMON

We are a Eucharistic community - united around word and sacrament. Through the readings God has spoken to his people of his redeeming love and of the nourishment which his Spirit gives. The sermon reflects on our readings and relates them to our Eucharistic celebration and to our ordinary daily life.

After the sermon there may be a short period of silent reflection.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH - THE CREED

We make the profession of faith in response to the word of God written in the Gospels and spoken in the sermon. We testify that God is our Father who gives us new life through his Son and who calls us together in the power of his Spirit to be a Eucharistic people, a ‘thanksgiving people’, a living community of his abiding self-giving love.

All **We believe and trust in God the Father who made the world.**
We believe and trust in his Son, Jesus Christ, who redeemed the world.
We believe and trust in the Holy Spirit who gives life to the people of God. Amen

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL OR GENERAL INTERCESSION

We are invited to pray for all people and for all creation and for the needs of the Church’s mission in bringing Christ’s Gospel to the world. Through baptism we have been made one with Christ, our great high priest, and we share in his prayer before the Father for the needs of the Church’s mission to the world and for of people. Our prayer flows from our listening to the Gospel and sermon by which we have been made more aware of our Christian commitment.

This Prayer of the Faithful, or General Intercession, is announced and consists of a series of intercessions; we pray for the universal Church and its mission and for our bishop and for our benefice - our parishes and our two Church schools; for the world, for our Queen and country, for our local communities, families and friends; for the sick and suffering and for all in pain; and we remember those who have died. And in communion with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist and all the Saints of God we entrust one another and all people and all creation to God’s saving love.

Priest My brothers and sisters, in the power of the Spirit, and in union with Jesus Christ,
let us pray to our heavenly Father.

The deacon or minister continues:

Heavenly Father, strengthen your Church in the service of Christ that Christians everywhere may witness to his grace and compassion. Bless Justin our Archbishop, Steven our Bishop, Olivia our area Bishop, and our parishes and schools of St Mary’s and St John’s that we may be equipped for the mission before us...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless Charles our King and give grace to our Government, to our Parliament, to our District and Village Councils, and to all in authority that they may govern with justice and wisdom and seek always the common good...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, bless us, and our families and friends, and all our relationships that we may serve Christ in one another and love others as he loves us...

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we pray to you for all who are suffering today... May the love of Christ bring them comfort and may the hope of the resurrection bring them peace

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, we commend to you all who have died recently... Bring us, at the last, to be with them in love's eternal joy.

Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

Heavenly Father, in communion with Mary, John the Evangelist, John the Baptist and all the saints, we commend all humankind and all creation to your unfailing love.

Priest Merciful Father,
All Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

At the Last Supper Christ 'took some bread and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying "This is my body which will be given for you; do this in remembrance of me". He did the same with the cup...' (Luke 22:19-20). The Church, joyfully obedient to the Lord's command, celebrates the Eucharist taking care that our 'liturgy' corresponds to the words and actions of Christ: 1) Taking bread and wine - we take our own gifts to the Altar, such as our time and talents and our money for the poor and for ministry. 2) Giving thanks (the meaning of the word Eucharist) - in the Eucharistic Prayer the priest, in the name of us all, says the great hymn of our thanksgiving to God for the whole work of salvation, in which the offerings become the Body and Blood of Christ. 3) The breaking of the one bread is a sign of the unity of the faithful - a sign of the unity which comes through sharing in Christ. 4) And in Holy Communion we receive Christ. In this way, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, the Church tries to carry out what the Lord asked his disciples to do in remembrance of him.

THE PEACE

We acknowledge and give thanks for our unity with one another in Jesus Christ our Lord, which his death and resurrection have brought to us. He is the peace between us. The sign of peace echoes Christ's own resurrection greeting to his disciples. Before we share in the same bread we express our love for one another in Christ and pray for peace and unity (cf Luke 1.78,79).

Priest 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.

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

THE OFFERTORY HYMN

**The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me lie in pastures green.
He leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.**

*And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.*

**He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil,
and my cup, it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.**

**And though I walk the darkest path,
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.**

THE PRESENTATION AND PREPARATION OF THE GIFTS

The peoples' gifts of bread and wine are brought to the altar. The offerings of money is made and promised to support the wider ministry and work of the Church. Taking the Gifts: We give thanks to God for the gifts in the following words.

BREAD

Priest Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. It will become for us the bread of life.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

WINE

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine and work of human hands. It will become for us the cup of salvation.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

OUR TIME, TALENTS AND TREASURE/MONEY

Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have the gifts of our time, talents and money to offer. May our offerings of our gifts be a sincere sign of our gratitude and our dedication to your service.

All **Blessed be God for ever.**

The priest prays quietly: Lord God, we ask you to receive us and be pleased with the sacrifice we offer you with humble, contrite and thankful hearts.

The priest washes hands as an act of cleanliness and as an expression of the desire for inward purification, praying quietly: Lord, wash away my iniquity; cleanse me from my sin.

PRAYER OVER THE GIFTS

Priest Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the Almighty Father.

All **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good, and the good of all his Church.**

Priest Amen.

Priest Lord, the sacrificial love of your Son, our Servant King, brings reconciliation to relationships and healing to hearts and lives. May it bring unity and peace to our world.

All **Amen.**

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Eucharistic Prayer is the centre and high point of the whole Christian celebration. This great prayer of praise and thanksgiving proclaims the wonderful works of God and through it we join ourselves with Christ in praise and thanksgiving to God the Father and in offering ourselves to him in union with Christ's self-offering on the cross. We express our share in the prayer, which is said on behalf of all the people, by listening inwardly and joining in the acclamations (joyful shouts or songs) and the Sanctus (the Holy, Holy, Holy which concludes the preface), the memorial acclamation and the great 'Amen' which concludes our Eucharistic Prayer.

Priest The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

In the Preface we praise God for his mighty acts:

Heavenly Father, it is our joy always and everywhere to give you thanks and to sing of the glory of your goodness.

And now we give thanks because you have anointed your Son Jesus Christ as priest and King. Crowned with thorns, he offered his life upon the cross that he might draw people everywhere into the kingdom of love.

And so, with all the company of heaven we proclaim the glory of your goodness and join in their unending hymn of praise:

All **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.**

We pray to the Father for the sending down of the Holy Spirit and recall the Lord's Supper.

Priest We thank you, loving Father, because when we turned away
 you sent to us your Son Jesus Christ our Lord.
 He gave his life for us upon the cross. He shows us now the way to live.
 Send your Holy Spirit that these gifts of bread and wine
 may be for us Christ's body and his blood.
 On the night before he died, when darkness had fallen, Jesus took bread. He gave thanks,
 broke it, and shared it with his disciples, saying:
 ‘This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me.’
 After they had eaten he took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and shared it with his disciples,
 saying:
 ‘This is my blood, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins.
 Do this to remember me.’
 So, Father, with this bread and this cup we celebrate his love, his death, his risen life.
 As you feed us with these gifts, send your Holy Spirit upon us and change us more and more
 to be like Jesus our Saviour.
 Help us, Father, to love one another, as we look forward to that day when suffering is ended
 and all creation is gathered in your loving arms.
 And now with Mary, St John the Evangelist, St John the Baptist, and all your saints,
 we give you glory, through Jesus Christ and in the strength of your Holy Spirit,
 today and for ever.

All **Amen.**

HOLY COMMUNION

The communion rite lays strong emphasis on peace, unity and our prayer for forgiveness. We come together to the Lord's table in accordance with the Lord's command, 'Take, eat... take, drink', as a community bound together by the love of God manifest in Christ. We can all be confident in Christ's mercy as we respond to his call to come to his table. Our communal recitation of the Lord's Prayer - the prayer he taught us - prepares us for Holy Communion with our Lord.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

We bless God and pray for our world, our communities and our lives to be shaped by God's will; we pray for daily needs to be met, for forgiveness for wrongdoings, strength to resist temptation and protection from danger.

Priest Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us.

All **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.**

THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD

The priest takes the host and breaks it over the cup, praying quietly: 'May this mingling of the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.' 'Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread' (1 Corinthians 10:17)

Christ's gesture of breaking bread with his disciples at the Last Supper gave the Eucharist the name of the 'breaking of bread'. This gesture signifies that we who share one bread and one cup are made one. The breaking of the Eucharistic bread becomes a sign of unity and charity as the one bread is distributed to the family of God's people.

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

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

The priest prepares quietly for Holy Communion. We may all join quietly in this prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, by the will of the Father and the work of the Holy Spirit your death brought life to the world. By your holy body and blood free me from all my sins and from every evil. Keep me faithful to your teaching, and never let me be parted from you. Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Priest Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. *cf. John 1: 29*
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

All **Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The sign of communion is more complete when given under both 'kinds' since then the 'sign' of the eucharistic meal appears more clearly. However, we live in exceptional times when, if you think right, communion may be received in one 'kind.'

The priest takes the host, raises it a little and shows it saying: The Body of Christ. And the same with the cup saying: The Blood of Christ. When receiving Holy Communion the response and assent to Christ is:

+ Amen.

DURING HOLY COMMUNION *The Choir may sing these hymns or other anthems or songs.*

Because the Lord is my shepherd – Christopher Walker

**From heaven you came, helpless babe,
entered our world, your glory veiled;
not to be served, but to serve,
and give your life that we may live.**

*This is our God, the Servant King,
he calls us now to follow him,
to bring our lives as a daily offering
of worship to the Servant King.*

**There in the garden of tears,
my heavy load he chose to bear;
his heart with sorrow was torn,
'Yet not my will but yours,' he said.**

**Come, see his hands and his feet,
the scars that speak of sacrifice,
hands that flung stars into space
to cruel nails surrendered.**

**So let us learn how to serve,
and in our lives enthrone him;
each other's needs to prefer,
for it is Christ we're serving.**

PRAYER AFTER HOLY COMMUNION

Priest Let us pray.

The priest invites us all to pray that the Holy Eucharist will have its effect in transforming our lives and bring us all to God's kingdom. We pray together silently for a while before the Post Communion prayer.

Priest Stir up, O Lord, the wills of your faithful people;
that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works,
may by you be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All **Amen.**

THE NOTICES FOR THE COMMUNITY ARE GIVEN.

THE CONCLUDING RITE

Priest The Lord be with you.

All **And also with you.**

THE BLESSING

Priest May God the Father, who has given to his Son Jesus Christ our Lord
 the name above every name,
 give you heart and strength to make known his goodness.

All **Amen.**

 May God the Son, who is our great high priest passed into the heavens,
 give you courage to live in his way of grace and truth.

All **Amen.**

 May God the Holy Spirit, who pours out his abundant gifts upon his Church,
 give you joy in the service of Christ our King.

All **Amen.**

 + And the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
 be among you and remain with you for ever.

All **Amen.**

 Let us go in the peace of Christ.

All **Thanks be to God.**

THE SENDING OUT or RECESSIONAL HYMN

**Rejoice! The Lord is King,
 your Lord and King adore;
 mortals, give thanks and sing,
 and triumph evermore:**

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice.*

**Jesus the Saviour reigns,
 the God of truth and love;
 when he had purged our stains,
 he took his seat above:**

*Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
rejoice, again I say, rejoice.*

Please donate regularly to support the Church's mission and work. *The church here needs your help in order to serve our villages, our diocese, our nation and our world in the future. Our doors were closed due to Covid 19 and with no regular Government or Church of England funding the parish lost significant income. Please see the website to see how to give efficiently. Thank you.*

