



The Abbey Church of the Holy Cross Pershore

Sunday 14th December 2025

Light in our Darkness

Welcome and Introduction

We come in this Service to God

In our need, and bringing with us the needs of the world.

We come to you, for you come to us in Jesus

And you know by experience what human life is like.

We come with our faith and with our doubts;

We come with our hopes and with our fears.

We come as we are, because you invite us to come

And you have promised never to turn us away

Hymn

Sussex Carol

On Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring,
on Christmas night all Christians sing
to hear the news the angels bring,
news of great joy, news of great mirth,
news of our merciful King's birth.

Then why should we on earth be so sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
then why should we on earth be so sad,
since our Redeemer made us glad,
when from our sins he set us free,
for all to gain our liberty?

When sin departs before his grace,
then life and health come in its place,
when sin departs before his grace,
then life and health come in its place,
angels and earth with joy may sing,
all for to see the newborn King

all out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
all out of darkness we have light,
which made the angels sing this night:
'Glory to God and peace to men,
now and for evermore. Amen'

(Traditional English carol
arranged Ralph Vaughan Williams)

Prayer of Penitence:

Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'Anyone who comes to me I will never turn away.'
In the presence of God, let us confess our sins.

Silence

Lord Jesus, you came to reconcile us to God and to one another,

Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division,

Christ have mercy **Christ have mercy**

Lord Jesus, you offer us a new beginning,

Lord have mercy **Lord have mercy**

Silence

God is love, through Jesus our sins are forgiven. Let us live in the power of the Spirit.

Amen

Collect

Heavenly Father, you anointed your Son Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit and with power to bring to us all the blessings of your Kingdom. Anoint your Church with the same Holy Spirit, that we who share in his suffering and victory may bear witness to the gospel of salvation; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, world without end. **Amen**

Readings from Scripture

First Reading – Psalm 146:3-end

Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help. When their breath departs they return to the earth; on that very day their plans perish.

Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.

The Lord sets the prisoners free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. The Lord watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

The Lord will reign forever, your God, O Zion, for all generations. Praise the Lord!

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Second Reading – John 8:12-15

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one

For the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn

(Mary's Child)

1. Born in the night,
Mary's child,
a long way from your home;
coming in need,
Mary's child,
born in a borrowed room.

2. Clear shining light,
Mary's child,
your face lights up our way;
light of the world,
Mary's child,
Dawn on our darkened day.

3.Truth of our life,
Mary's child,
you tell us God is good;
prove it is true,
Mary's child,
go to your cross of wood.

4.Hope of the world,
Mary's child,
you're coming soon to reign;
King of the earth,
Mary's child,
walk in our streets again.

(Geoffrey Ainger b.1925)

Reflection

Litany

Lord Jesus, hear our prayers, laden with the sufferings of all humankind, laden with the suffering of whole societies. Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer all sin in all of its manifestations: individual sin and the 'sin of the world'. Let there be revealed to the world the infinite power of merciful and healing love. May it transform consciences and hearts, bringing them wholeness. In your mercy reveal for all the light of hope. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Our Father in Heaven

Remind us constantly that you are parent to all your children, whoever of wherever they are or come from

Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come,

Establishing peace and justice, and hope and life for all peoples

Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread.

Disturb us into awareness of the needs of others

Forgive us our sins

Our pride and our prejudices

As we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation,

Especially keep our hearts and minds open to see the good in others.

Deliver us from evil, for the kingdom

Just and true

The power

Gentle and fair

And the glory

Shot through with the colours of love

Are yours for ever and ever **Amen**

Loving God, we hold in your healing presence and peace those for whom we have been asked to pray privately and whose prayers have been placed on this table during this service:

Lord, you know the needs of each one of us, our strengths and our weaknesses, our hopes and disappointments. We commend to your loving care those for whom we have been asked to pray. Guard them as the apple of your eye, hide them under the shadow of your wings, show them your merciful love – in health or in sickness, in life or in death. We ask this in the name of Jesus.

God of love **Hear our prayers, Amen.**

We invite everyone to come forward to light a candle

After we have returned to our seats we sing:

Hymn

(Jacques Berthier 1923-1994)

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.
Wait for the Lord, keep watch, take heart!

(Repeat three more times)

We say together:

The Almighty God, who is a strong tower for all who put their trust in him, whom all things in heaven and earth and under the earth obey, be now and evermore our defence. May we believe and trust that the only name under heaven given for health and salvation is the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen

Thanksgiving

Together:

**For loving the world and knowing our names, thank you, God
For your strength that fills us and your love that heals us, thank you, God
For your presence here with us now and for your hand
that leads us into tomorrow, thank you, God
Come bless us, hold us, wrestle with us, warm us in your embrace,
for we are your people and you are our justice and joy. Amen**

Hymn

(Regent Square – Henry Smart)

God of grace and God of glory,
on thy people pour thy power;
now fulfil thy Church's story;
bring her bud to glorious flower.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
for the facing of this hour.

Lo, the hosts of evil round us
scorn thy Christ, assail his ways;
from the fears that long have bound us
free our hearts to faith and praise.
Grant us wisdom grant us courage
for the living of these days.

Cure thy children's warring madness,
bend our pride to thy control;
shame our wanton, selfish gladness,
rich in goods and poor in soul.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we miss thy kingdom's goal.

Set our feet on lofty places,
gird our lives that they may be
armoured with all Christlike graces
as we set your people free.
Grant us wisdom, grant us courage,
lest we fail the world or thee.

(Harry Emerson Fosdick 1878-1969)

The Blessing

May the blessing of God surround us
May angels and friends share our journey
May we be wise and strong and creative
May we celebrate life and hope
May God's image grow within us, gently, powerfully, tenderly
May we be cradled in warmth and healing
May we be held in God's wisdom and love
May the gospel of life sustain us all the days of our journey home.

Let us go in the light and peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

*Our next healing service is on Sunday 11th January 2025
at 5pm in Pershore Abbey*