

*The Benefice of St Mary the Virgin,
Higham Ferrers with St John the Baptist,
Chelveston-cum-Caldecott*

A Celebration of Love



St Valentine's Day
A CELEBRATION OF LOVE
13th February 2022

Welcome to this Online Service

All you need is love – as the famous song goes! The Christian Gospel demonstrates this prime importance of love and is, in essence, the story of love – God’s love – the length, breadth, depth and height of which we cannot even begin to comprehend. We are often amazed by how love has the power to transform us, and so today it is a wonderful conjunction and overlaying to celebrate both human love a day before Valentine’s Day with a focus on Saint Paul’s words to the Corinthian Christians.

Paul introduces the service



Hymn

**Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down,
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion,
pure unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter every trembling heart.**

**Come, almighty to deliver,
let us all thy grace receive;**

**suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above;
pray, and praise thee, without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.**

**Finish then thy new creation:
pure and spotless let us be;
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
Changed from glory into glory
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.**

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-1788)

Music: BLAENWERN William Rowlands (1860-1937)

The Greeting – Michelle & Chris

God is love, and those who live in love
live in God and God lives in them.

We meet in the name of the One who is love:
Lover, Beloved and Love.

Amen.

The Lord of love be with you

And also with you.



Prayer for the day– we pray together:

**God of wonder and joy:
grace comes from you,
and you alone are the source of life and love.
Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts
that most excellent gift of love,
that we may worship you now
with thankful hearts
and serve you always with willing minds;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Bible Reading



1 Corinthians 13 - *read by Richard White*

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I

have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind, love does not envy or boast. It is not arrogant or rude, it does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

For we know in part, and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then, face to face. Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known. So now, faith, hope, and love abide, these three. But the greatest of these is love.



Hymn – Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost

Gracious Spirit, Holy Ghost,
taught by thee, we covet most
of thy gifts at Pentecost,
holy, heavenly love.

Love is kind, and suffers long,
love is meek, and thinks no wrong,
love than death itself more strong;
therefore give us love.

Prophecy will fade away,
melting in the light of day;
love will ever with us stay;
therefore give us love.

Faith will vanish into sight;
hope be emptied in delight;
love in heaven will shine more bright;
therefore give us love.

Faith and hope and love we see
joining hand in hand agree;
but the greatest of the three,
and the best, is love.

From the overshadowing
of thy gold and silver wing
shed on us, who to thee sing,
holy, heavenly love.

Christopher Wordsworth (1807 – 1885)

Reflection – Paul

Hymn – O love that wilt not let me go

Oh love that will not let me go
I rest my weary soul in thee
I give thee back the life I owe
That in thine ocean depths its flow
May richer, fuller be

Oh light that followest all my way
I yield my flickering torch to thee
My heart restores its borrowed ray
That in thy sunshine's blaze its day
May brighter, fairer be

Oh joy that seekest me through pain
I cannot close my heart to thee
I trace the rainbow through the rain
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be

O cross that liftest up my head
I dare not ask to fly from thee
I lay in dust's life's glory dead
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be

George Matheson (1882)

Prayers - led by Lynda

Let us pray to our God, who loves us beyond all telling.

God of unquenchable and unending love,
creator and redeemer,
from whom comes every good and perfect gift,
fill us with the riches of your grace
and breathe into our lives
the strength of your holy and life- giving Spirit.

Send upon your Church
the gift of love that puts no limit
to its faith and forbearance.
Sow in our lives the joy that comes
from sharing and grows with giving.

Let peace and faithfulness abound
in your world.
Give all your people patience when
times are hard
and persistence with our hopes and dreams.

May kindness, born of a gracious heart,



be shown to others in a generous spirit.
Let goodness flower with forgiveness
and be the fruit of our shared life.

In gentleness let us be tender with each other's dreams
and healing of each other's wounds.
May we care for one another in need
and have compassion on those who suffer.

May we know you as the God of mercy and grace
who leads us through all our days in love and peace,
and calls us home to the place you have prepared for us,
your kingdom of love, joy and peace.

God of love,
we ask these prayers
for ourselves,
for those we love,
and for those we find hard to love.
May the love of your Son inspire us
and your Spirit pour peace into our hearts,
for your love's sake.

Amen.

We bring all our prayers together in the Lord's Prayer
as we pray:

**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.**

***Hymn* Love is His word**

Love is his word, love is his way,
feasting with men, fasting alone,
living and dying, rising again,
Love, only love, is his way.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his way, love is his mark,
sharing his last Passover feast,
Christ at his table, host to the twelve.
Love, only love, is his mark.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his mark, love is his sign,
bread for our strength, wine for our joy,
"This is my body, this is my blood",
Love, only love, is his sign.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his sign, love is his news,
"Do this," he said, "lest you forget
all my deep sorrow, all my dear blood."
Love, only love, is his news.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his news, love is his name,
we are his own, chosen and called,

family, brethren, cousins and kin.
Love, only love, is his name.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his name, love is his law.
Hear his command, all who are his:
"Love one another, I have loved you."
Love, only love, is his law.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Love is his law, love is his word:
love of the Lord, Father and Word,
love of the Spirit, God ever one.
Love, only love, is his word.

*Richer than gold is the love of my Lord:
better than splendour and wealth.*

Luke Connaughton / Anthony Milner

The Peace – Paul & Lynda

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.

The peace of the Lord be always with you
and also with you.

We offer each other peace.

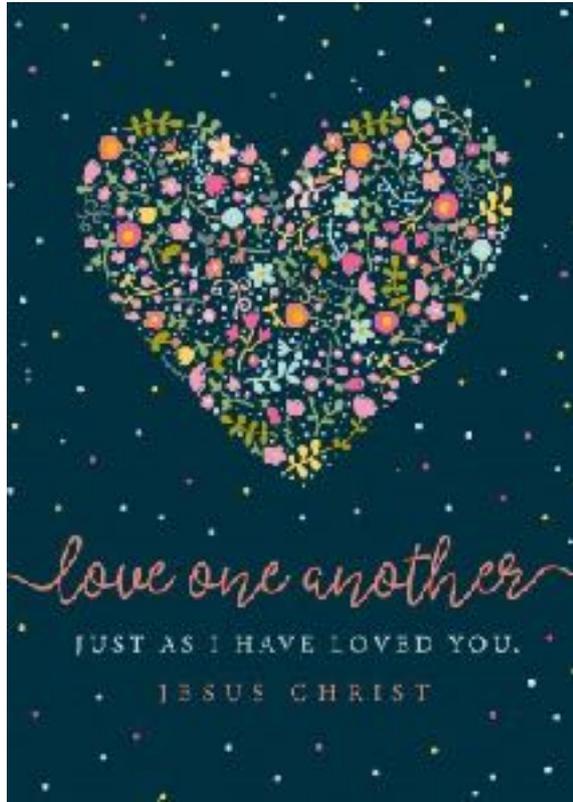


Final Prayer - Linda

Holy God,
we see your glory in the face of Jesus Christ:
may we who bear his name
reflect his life in word and deed,
that all the world may know his power to change and save
through his redeeming love.
This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord.
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Blessing - Michelle

May the Lord open your eyes
to his presence always with you,
and surround you with his love.
May he keep you safe under his wings
and lift your heart with hope.
May his radiance shine upon you
and transform your life to glory.
And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
come down upon you and remain with you
and all those you love, now and always.
Amen.



The Dismissal - Brenda

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ, Amen.

Hymn : The king of love my shepherd is

The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am his
And he is mine for ever.

Where streams of living water flow
My ransomed soul he leadeth,
And where the verdant pastures grow

With food celestial feedeth.

Perverse and foolish oft I strayed,
But yet in love he sought me,
And on his shoulder gently laid,
And home, rejoicing, brought me.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy cross before to guide me.

Thou spread'st a table in my sight;
Thy unction, grace bestoweth:
And O what transport of delight
From thy pure chalice floweth!

And so through all the length of days
Thy goodness faileth never;
Good Shepherd, may I sing thy praise
Within thy house for ever.

H. W. Baker (1868)

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