

**Holy Communion  
for the 2nd Sunday of Lent**



***The Stour Valley Benefice***

*The Parishes of Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford,  
Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe*

## **- A short introduction to the Season -**

The characteristic feel of Lent is one of self-examination, penitence, self-denial, study, almsgiving, in preparation for Easter. It lasts for forty days and forty nights reminding us of Jesus' time spent in the wilderness, being tested by Satan.

It was also the traditional time when candidates for baptism were instructed, and those penitents prepared themselves, through fasting and penance, to be readmitted to communion. The whole Christian community were also invited to join them.

Ashes are an ancient sign of penitence; and so, it has become traditional to begin Lent on 'Ash Wednesday' by being marked in ash with the sign of the cross.

This season of penitence is demonstrated in our use of the simplest vestments, and many churches are kept bare of flowers and other decorations. The predominant colour of this season is Purple or Violet.

# Growing in God

## **Spiritual Communion**

The term 'Spiritual Communion' has been used historically to describe the means of grace by which a person, prevented for some serious reason from sharing in a celebration of the Eucharist, nonetheless shares in the communion of Jesus Christ.

In joining with Revd Mark today as he celebrates the Eucharist from his own home, you too are able to join with him in communion. The Book of Common Prayer instructs us that if we offer ourselves in penitence and faith, giving thanks for the redemption won by Christ crucified, we may truly 'eat and drink the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ', although we cannot receive the sacrament physically in ourselves.

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members. In making our communion spiritually, we are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

## Welcome and Introduction

### Hymn – Father, hear the prayer we offer

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1      Father, hear the prayer we offer:  
not for ease that prayer shall be,  
but for strength that we may ever  
live our lives courageously.
- 2      Not for ever in green pastures  
do we ask our way to be;  
but the steep and rugged pathway  
may we tread rejoicingly.
- 3      Not for ever by still waters  
would we idly rest and stay;  
but would smite the living fountains  
from the rocks along our way.
- 4      Be our strength in hours of weakness,  
in our wanderings be our guide;  
through endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be thou at our side.

*Love Maria Willis (nee Whitcomb) (1824-1908)*  
*Samuel Longfellow (1819-1892)*

## The Gathering

Priest:            In the name of the Father,  
                      and of the Son,  
                      and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:                Amen.**

## The Greeting

Priest:            The Lord be with you.

**All:                and also with you.**

## Prayer of Preparation

**All:**           **Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from who no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

## Prayers of Penitence

Priest:           Our Lord Jesus Christ said: The first commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.'

The second is this: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'  
There is no other commandment greater than these.  
On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

**All:**           **Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Priest:           Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil.  
Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times we have fallen from temptation into sin.

## Kyrie Confessions

Priest:           Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness and cleans me from my sin: Lord, have mercy.

**All:**           **Lord, have mercy.**

Priest:           Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me: Christ, have mercy.

**All:**           **Christ, have mercy.**

Priest: Cast me not away from your presence and take not your holy spirit from me: Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

## **Absolution**

Priest: Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

(Note: During Lent the Gloria is not said)

## **The Collect**

Priest: Almighty God, you show to those who are in error the light of your truth, that they may return to the way of righteousness: grant to all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may reject those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

**All: Amen.**

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

### **Old Testament Reading - Genesis 2:1-4a**

Now the LORD said to Abram, 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.'

So Abram went, as the LORD had told him; and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran.

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **New Testament Reading - Romans 4.1–5,13–17**

What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.' Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. But to one who without works trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as righteousness.

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, 'I have made you the father of many nations') - in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

Priest: This is the word of the Lord

**All: Thanks be to God.**

### **Gospel Reading – John 3:1-17**

Reader: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.

**All: Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you

do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Reader: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**All: Praise to you, O Christ.**

## **The Creed**

**All: We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,**

**begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us and for our salvation he came down from  
heaven, was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the  
Virgin Mary and was made man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.  
On the third day he rose again in accordance with  
the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is  
seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory to judge the living and  
the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.  
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of  
life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped  
and glorified, who has spoken through the  
prophets.  
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic  
Church.  
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins.  
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the  
life of the world to come. Amen.**

## **Prayers of Intercession**

In the power of the Spirit, let us pray to God.

Renew your Church by the working of the Holy Spirit. In quiet and humble rebirth may your people find new strength as your body in the world and show the way of salvation to all who seek.

God who loved the world even to sending the Son to be its Saviour, come among us for the healing of conflict between nations and races. Draw those who hold power and influence into the presence of Christ, to know his love and to make it their own in all their dealings.



Lift up our eyes to see the grace of God in all around us. Lift up our hearts to be his messengers to our families and friends and in our community. Help us to find in what is familiar the new birth of his love.

Have mercy on those who have lost their way and no longer seek to know God and to do his will. May the life-governing Spirit bring healing to the sick, and strength to those who minister to them.

May the souls of those who have died be gloriously born again to the eternal life where love is complete and the night of seeking turns to the perfect day. May we too in our time be born again in glory.

We pray in the name of Christ, lifted up in pain and in triumph for our sake.

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

## **The Liturgy of the Sacrament**

### **The Peace**

Priest: Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with god through our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us access to his grace. *(Romans:5:1,2)*

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

### **Preparation of the Altar**

Priest: God of our journey, as we walk with you on your path of obedience, sustain us on our way and lead us to your glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen.**

## The Eucharistic Prayer

Priest: The Lord be with you

**All: and also with you.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

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

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All: it is right to give thanks and praise.**

Priest: It is indeed right and good, to give you thanks and praise, almighty God and everlasting Father, through Jesus Christ your Son.

For in these forty days you lead us into the desert of repentance that through a pilgrimage of prayer and discipline we may grow in grace and learn to be your people once again.

Through fasting, prayer and acts of service you bring us back to your generous heart.

Through study of your holy word you open our eyes to your presence in the world and free our hands to welcome others into the radiant splendour of your love.

As we prepare to celebrate the Easter feast with joyful hearts and minds we bless you for your mercy and join with saints and angels for ever praising you and singing:

**All: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna in the highest.**

Priest: Accept our praises, heavenly Father, through your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, and as we follow his example

and obey his command, grant that by the power of your Holy Spirit these gifts of bread and wine may be to us his body and his blood; who, in the same night that he was betrayed, took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, after supper he took the cup and gave you thanks; he gave it to them, saying: Drink this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

Therefore, heavenly Father, we remember his offering of himself made once for all upon the cross; we proclaim his mighty resurrection and glorious ascension; we look for the coming of your kingdom, and with this bread and this cup we make the memorial of Christ your Son our Lord.

**All:** Great is the mystery of faith:  
**Christ has died:**  
**Christ is risen:**  
**Christ will come again.**

**Priest:** Accept through him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise, and as we eat and drink these holy gifts in the presence of your divine majesty, renew us by your Spirit, inspire us with your love and unite us in the body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Through him, and with him, and in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, with all who stand before you in earth and heaven, we worship you, Father almighty, in songs of everlasting praise:

**All:** **Blessing and honour and glory and power be yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

## **The Lord's Prayer**

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.**

## **Breaking of the Bread**

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 Agnus Dei**

**All: Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,  
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,  
grant us peace.**

## **Giving of Communion**

Priest: Draw near with faith. Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which he gave for you, and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,

and feed on him in your hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

**All:**           **We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in your manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord whose nature is always to have mercy. Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.**

### **Prayer after Communion**

Priest:       Almighty God, you see that we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves: keep us both outwardly in our bodies, and inwardly in our souls; that we may be defended from all adversities which may happen to the body, and from all evil thoughts which may assault and hurt the soul; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**All:**           **Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your praise and glory. Amen.**

### **The Dismissal**

Priest:       Christ give you grace to grow in holiness, to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always.

**All: Amen.**

Priest: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**All: In the name of Christ. Amen.**

## **Hymn – Be thou my guardian and my guide**

*sung by St Martin's Voices*

- 1 Be thou my guardian and my guide,  
and hear me when I call;  
let not my slippery footsteps slide,  
and hold me lest I fall.
- 2 The world, the flesh, and Satan dwell  
around the path I tread;  
O save me from the snares of hell,  
thou quickener of the dead.
- 3 And if I tempted am to sin,  
and outward things are strong,  
do thou, O Lord, keep watch within,  
and save my soul from wrong.
- 4 Still let me ever watch and pray,  
and feel that I am frail;  
that if the tempter cross my way,  
yet he may not prevail.

*Isaac Williams (1802-1865)*

For more information about our Benefice, including details of upcoming special services, events and activities for all the family, please visit:

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Although not all of us are able to meet in church for services, it is important to remember that the work of the Church continues, as do many of the ongoing costs in maintaining our historic buildings as well as supporting the ministry in this benefice and the wider church.

Remember that if you are able, please Gift Aid your donation as it means that we can claim an extra 25p for every £1 you donate from the Government at no extra cost to you – resulting in your £20 donation now being worth £25!

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