Holy Communion
for the Second Sunday before Advent



The Stour Valley Benefice

Cavendish, Clare, Hundon, Poslingford, Stoke-by-Clare & Wixoe

- A short introduction to the Season –

The period between All Saints and Advent is often referred to as Remembrance-tide and it is a time when we explore the theme of memory, both corporate and individual, and confront issues of war and peace, loss and forgetting.

It is a time when we are reminded that redemption is a work of God's grace; it is God who redeems us in Christ and there is nothing to be done beyond what Christ has done. But we still wait for the final consummation of God's new creation in Christ; those who are Christ's, whether or not they have passed through death, are joined in prayer that God's kingdom will be revealed finally and in all its fullness. We also sense that it is a fearful thing to come before the unutterable goodness and holiness of God, even for those who are redeemed in Christ that it is searing as well as life-giving to experience God's mercy.

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'.

Hymn – We have a gospel to proclaim

1 We have a gospel to proclaim,
good news for all throughout the earth;
the gospel of a saviour's name:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

2 Tell of his birth at Bethlehem
not in a royal house or hall
but in a stable dark and dim,
the word made flesh, a light for all.

3 Tell of his death at Calvary,
hated by those he came to save,
in lonely suffering on the cross;
for all he loved his life he gave.

4 Tell of that glorious Easter morn:
empty the tomb, for he was free.
He broke the power of death and hell
that we might share his victory.

5 Tell of his reign at God's right hand,
by all creation glorified.
He sends his spirit on his church
to live for him, the lamb who died.

6 Now we rejoice to name him King:
Jesus is Lord of all the earth.
This gospel-message we proclaim:
we sing his glory, tell his worth.

Edward J Burns (b. 1938) © Edward J Burns

The Gathering

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

All: **Amen.**

The Greeting

Minister: 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

Minister: 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.

Minister: Let us confess to God the sins and shortcomings of the world; its pride, its selfishness, its greed; its evil distortions and hatreds. Let us confess our share in what is wrong, and our failure to seek and establish that peace which God wills for his children.

All: Most merciful God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we confess that we have sinned in thought, word and deed. We have not loved you with our whole heart. We have not loved our neighbours as ourselves. In your mercy forgive

what we have been, help us to amend what we are, and direct what we shall be; that we may do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with you, our God. Amen.

The Kyrie Elesion

Minister: Lord, have mercy.
All: Lord, have mercy.
Minister: Christ, have mercy.
All: Christ, have mercy.

Minister: Lord, have mercy.
All: Lord, have mercy.

Absolution

Minister: 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.

Gloria in Excelsis

All: 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 sin 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

Minister: Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son was revealed to destroy the works of the devil and to make us the children of God and heirs of eternal life: grant that we, having this hope, may purify ourselves even as he is pure; that when he shall appear in power and great glory we may be made like him in his eternal and glorious kingdom; where he is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

All: Amen.

Old Testament Reading *(Zephaniah 1:7,12–18)*

Be silent before the Lord GOD! For the day of the LORD is at hand; the LORD has prepared a sacrifice, he has consecrated his guests. At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps, and I will punish the people who rest complacently on their dregs, those who say in their hearts, 'The LORD will not do good, nor will he do harm.' Their wealth shall be plundered, and their houses laid waste. Though they build houses, they shall not inhabit them; though they plant vineyards, they shall not drink wine from them.

The great day of the LORD is near, near and hastening fast; the sound of the day of the LORD is bitter, the warrior cries aloud there. That day will be a day of wrath, a day of distress and anguish, a day of ruin and devastation, a day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of trumpet blast and battle cry against the fortified cities and against the lofty battlements.

I will bring such distress upon people that they shall walk like the blind; because they have sinned against the LORD, their blood shall be poured out like dust, and their flesh like dung. Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath; in the fire of

his passion the whole earth shall be consumed; for a full, a terrible end he will make of all the inhabitants of the earth.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord
All: Thanks be to God.

New Testament Reading *(1 Thessalonians 5:1–11)*

Now concerning the times and the seasons, brothers and sisters, you do not need to have anything written to you. For you yourselves know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. When they say, 'There is peace and security', then sudden destruction will come upon them, as labour pains come upon a pregnant woman, and there will be no escape! But you, beloved, are not in darkness, for that day to surprise you like a thief; for you are all children of light and children of the day; we are not of the night or of darkness. So then, let us not fall asleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober; for those who sleep sleep at night, and those who are drunk get drunk at night. But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has destined us not for wrath but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, so that whether we are awake or asleep we may live with him. Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.

Minister: This is the word of the Lord
All: Thanks be to God.

Gospel Reading *(Matthew 25:14-30 NRSV)*

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

'For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. In the same way, the

one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents." His master said to him, "Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours." But his master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Minister: 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

Minister: Let us pray that the gifts of God may be rightly used.

Bless the Church with generosity and care for all. Give grace to your people so to use all that has been entrusted to them that they may bring new hope to many and show forth the glory of God.

Bring to a world where dealing is often hard and competitive the spirit of compassion, so that those who

gain much may share more generously. Give wisdom to the rich to know that all wealth is the gift of God.

Help us to value more gratefully the gift we have been given, to develop and to use them for the good of others. Guide with wisdom those who are responsible for the finances of this community.

Have mercy on the poor who have nothing they can develop to ease their burden, and guide them to ways where they may find relief. Raise us from despair those who know they have not fulfilled what they might have done, and open to them again the way they have lost.

We pray for those who have completed their task in this world and have entered into the joy of their Master. May they rest in the peace promised to his faithful servants.

We pray as the servants of Christ from whom all good things come.

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

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

The Peace

Minister: May the God of peace sanctify you: may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before him at the coming of our Lord Jesus with his saints. *(1 Thessalonians 5:23,3:13)*

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

Preparation of the Altar

The Eucharistic Prayer

Minister: The Lord is here.
All: His spirit is with us.

Minister: Lift up your hearts.
All: We lift them to the Lord.

Minister: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All: it is right to give thanks and praise.

Minister: It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should always sing of your glory, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. For you are the hope of the nations, the builder of the city that is to come. Your love made visible in Jesus Christ brings home the lost, restores the sinner, and give dignity to the despised. In his face your light shines out, flooding lives with goodness and truth, gathering into one in your kingdom a divided and broken humanity. Therefore, with all who can give voice in your creation we glorify your name, 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 in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Minister: 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.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All: **Christ has died:**
Christ is risen:
Christ will come again.

Minister: 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

Minister: As our Saviour has taught us so we pray.

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

Minister: 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

Minister: 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.

The Minister receives communion on behalf of all those in our community who are unable to be present.

Prayer after Communion

Minister: Gracious Lord, in this holy sacrament you give substance to our hope: bring us at the last to that fullness of life for which we long; through Jesus Christ our Saviour. 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

Minister: Christ our King make you faithful and strong to do his will, that you may reign with him in glory: and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

Minister: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
All: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Hymn – Rise and hear! The Lord is speaking

1 Rise and hear! The Lord is speaking,
as the gospel words unfold;
we, in all our age-long seeking,
find no firmer truth to hold.

2 Word of goodness, truth and beauty,
heard by simple folk and wise,
word of freedom, word of duty,
word of life beyond our eyes.

3 Word of God's forgiveness granted
to the wild or guilty soul,
word of love that works undaunted,
changes, heals, and makes us whole.

4 Speak to us, O Lord, believing,
as we hear, the sower sows;
may our hearts, your word receiving,
be the good ground where it grows.

H.C.A. Gaunt (1902-1983) © Oxford University Press

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PARISHGIVINGSCHEME

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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