

Welcome

Welcome once again to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church, whether you're here in the church, watching live at home, watching the later recording or following the script.

Again, the reminder for those in church – no standing or singing (apart from under your breath). Thank you for following the COVID 19 rules and layout as you arrived and please follow the one way system & the steward's directions as you leave. Thanks to them for preparing and operating all these procedures; please continue to give them your support

Today we gather round the table for the Lord's Supper – communion – and witness to the tie that binds us like no other – the body of Christ. It is, of course, a broken body – pandemic restrictions make this all too obvious – but we proclaim the glorious paradox – bread is broken, wine is poured out, and in brokenness and suffering there is wholeness and healing.

And today is All Saints Day – whether or no you marked Halloween yesterday! – we gather surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses.

'Alleluia! Raise the gospel'

Tyndale Virtual singers

Call to worship

The good news is raised in all the earth; for the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who are persecuted;

They gather as they have always gathered – we gather, we look to Christ, and we worship

BPW 59 ['O for a Thousand Tongues'](#)

St Michael's Singers

Opening Prayer

Lord God, today we say our alleluias with fierce determination as we contemplate your life – your justice, peace, wholeness, love – the life you have seeded throughout the universe; the life you have brought to us in Christ, the life that has been lived by generations of believing, serving, suffering, followers of Christ – who have been meek in the world and poor-of-heart and have made peace in a violent world – we say alleluia; alleluia that's been said in a thousand tongues down all the ages – alleluia, Lord, we worship you.

For today it falls to us to believe – help us in our unbelief; today it falls to us to serve; forgive us when we have only served our own interests; today it falls to us to suffer, in a suffering world – hold us as you have always held your people – today it falls to us to follow – lead us, we pray, as you have always led your people, in the way of Christ –

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

'For all the saints'

'O Waly Waly'. Mike Garnier

Readings

[Revelation 7.9-17](#)

[Matthew 5.1-12](#)

Sermon

Lord, we give you this time. May what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard & understood be touched by your spirit, and may what is decided lead us on towards your Kingdom. Amen.

I never imagined that the final stages of my ministry would coincide with a pandemic – like this one. I never imagined that the day would come when I couldn't visit, when I would have to spend time on Zoom calls (!); when I would have to produce scripted sermons that people might actually *read* –

I never imagined any of this. But then I don't suppose any of us imagined that one day we would have to stop shaking hands, start wearing facemasks and all the rest. I know this is difficult for all of us and I know that for some it's much more difficult; maybe your livelihood has been taken away, or your hard-won business is hanging on by a thread, or you've been ill like never before, or you've lost a loved one and couldn't say a proper good bye.

I know, too, that we should make the best of things, and that this period has had its joys – a country walks; more time spent in the garden; or in conversation – many more things to be thankful for..

But, for a minute, let me talk about some of what's been lost – coming to church on Sunday and playing my guitar and listening to the organ or the piano – that's been lost - having conversations (short and long) with different people and shaking hands – that's been lost.

Drinking coffee, chatting, making new acquaintances and supporting some of the vulnerable people who come here during the week – that's been lost. Welcoming people to all manner of events on Wednesday evenings – that's been lost. So much of what makes a Christian community has been lost

Hopefully, please God, some of it can come back, but you don't need to be an epidemiologist to recognise that the post-pandemic world can never be exactly the same as the pre-pandemic world..

So much has been lost. It's the right mood, I think, for All Saints day. Today the Church remembers and looks forward, conscious of the 'great crowd of witnesses' that have gone before and that did, in their day, more or less what we do today and conscious that others will come along: that in a hundred, or a thousand years time (if the Lord tarries...!) others will be doing much the same things still.

And we who gather here today are part of this great continuity; we say often that we are part of the body of Christ on earth – and recognise that as we meet, so they meet in India, China, the US or Argentina or somewhere..

But as well as that we ought, especially on this day, to recognise that as we meet, so they met in Tyndale in 1520, in Broadmead in 1820, in a suburb of Paris in 1720, in Wittenburg in Germany in 1520 (a few years after Martin Luther started the so-called Reformation) –

and recognise that they'll meet (who knows, possibly still in 2120(!); maybe in 2220); who knows how, what buildings they'll use, or what on-line resources will look like, or if some new means of communication will have been developed by then and maybe they'll meet in some form of Baptist church or maybe in some other kind..

Anyway, today, we must contemplate such things from a position of loss. I wonder if that's not how we might approach today's two readings from the NT

I wonder if, when Jesus preached his famous sermon on the mount, with the beatitudes, and spoke words of comfort he didn't speak to people in their loss.

Certainly it was a time of loss for Israel – the glory days were long gone. In Jesus' time they no longer had what once they had and hoped that someone would come to lift them again. The nation was under the thumb of Rome when once it had been strong; the temple services were carried on under Rome's watchful eye and overrun with commercial interests –

Were the meek those who had lost their self-esteem? Were the poor in spirit those who saw little hope in this life? Those who mourned must have lost loved ones, surely; Those who hungered and thirsted for righteousness, those who were merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, those who were persecuted for righteousness' sake -

Were they not all acutely conscious, in their hard-scrabble existence, under the watchful eyes of Roman patrols, of all that they had lost?

We have lost much. You could say that God's people in all the world down all the ages have been hounded and persecuted and counted amongst the meekest and lowliest of the world; they have always been acutely conscious of what they have lost

To them all, words of comfort – blessings – inheriting the earth, the kingdom of heaven, they will be filled, they will receive mercy, they will see God.

Not *now we have lost much*.. but – the great paradox again – *now we are blessed*

John's vision in Revelation is addressed to those who have lost much as well – can't begin to imagine what those early groups of Christian believers went through –

Thrown out of their homes and their homes destroyed; torn from their loved ones and their loved ones killed; targeted in their bodies and their bodies beaten and stripped and tortured – 'twas ever thus for Christians down all the ages –

In John's Patmos, in Paul's Rome; in early Broadmead's Bristol, in today's North Korea – recent reports of what' happening g to Christians in North Korea makes for grisly reading indeed

We have lost much, but, thankfully, we have not lost what many who have followed Christ have lost down all the ages – their homes, their loved ones, their lives..

To them all – words of hope - *After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ They cried out in a loud voice, saying, 'Salvation belongs to our God who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb!'*

And do you know what's the main thing about that hope? It's eternal. It spoke to those first believers and it spoke to generations of believers round the world – and it speaks to *us* and it will speak...in 2120, 2220, 2320 – who knows?

The gospel always speaks to those who have lost. There aren't many people in today's world who haven't lost much. Maybe the people of God are those who have acknowledged it and turned to God..

For the gospel is the good news of God who has lost much – who has *given much* (his own son) for us all

And to all, this All Saints Day, who have lost, and have turned to God – (table) – comfort and hope...

Offering

Lord, we who have lost much still have much (and have much to give) of ourselves in these and all our gifts; so we give, grateful for what we have and glad, too, for the signs of what you have given – in bread and wine. So we stand with all those who have gone before & all those who will come after – a great array – and we look to the transformation of the

things of earth into the things of heaven

The Grace is said:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

'Bread for the world'

Bernadette Farrell

Communion

The table of the Lord is spread, it is for those who will come and see in broken bread and poured out wine – not mere symbols, but the very substance of his life shed for us on the Cross and raised again the third day. Here we gather in a barren world; here we acknowledge the bitter truths of brokenness and pain; and here also we join the rebellion of faith – broken flesh for wholeness, poured out blood for healing. The invitation is for all those who are seeking Christ and believe themselves called to follow his costly way to come and share the feast.

Confession

Lord our God, we make our confession. We have preferred the easy way to the way of suffering love.

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We have not readily confessed our sins to ourselves, let alone one another.

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We have kept our Christian fellowship within the limits of our comfort zones.

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

We have lost sight of the grand vision of your saints in all the earth, of the Church triumphant, of the life everlasting

Father forgive us

And lead us in Jesus' way

And we wait on your promise, your challenge and your saving call in Christ: His words ring in our ears: *you are not far from the Kingdom of God - thanks be to God, Amen.*

Institution

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you; the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, take, eat, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me. In the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this whenever you drink it in memory of me – for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Thanksgiving –

We offer bread and give our thanks, for the bread that sustains us from the good of the earth and the bread that inspires us from the storehouse of heaven.

We offer wine and give our thanks, for the drink that sustains us from the fruit of the earth and the new wine that flows to us from the life of heaven –

Responses

Leader Here is bread

All The staff of life

Leader Here is wine

All The fruit of the vine

Leader How shall we eat?

All Surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses

Leader How shall we drink?

All Looking to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith

Leader For ourselves and all those who hunger and thirst

All We eat and drink in the hope of God's Kingdom.

Bread

Jesus took bread and after he had given thanks he broke it.....and said 'take, eat, this is my body which is for you'

We have broken bread in a broken world and in the eating together have entered into the mystery of the body of Christ
– by which we are made whole...thanks be to God, Amen.

Wine

This cup is the new covenant in the blood of Christ; let us all drink of it...

We have poured out wine in a suffering world and in the drinking together have entered into the mystery of the blood of Christ, by which we are healed..thanks be to God, Amen

Prayer after communion

Strengthen for service, Lord, the hands that have touched holy things:

May ears that have heard your word be deaf to clamour and dispute, and listen, with all the saints, for every whisper of peace and reconciliation in the world

May tongues that have sung your praise be free from deceit and speak, with all the saints, only the truth in love

May eyes that have witnessed the drama of salvation in broken bread and poured out wine shine with the light of hope and look, with all the saints, for signs of your Kingdom

May bodies that have been fed with your body be refreshed by your Spirit's work and rise, with all the saints, to the work of reconciliation

So may lives that have been filled with your life be ready to rest, not in their own righteousness, but in yours; and wait, with all the saints, for the coming of your Kingdom, Amen.

'Strengthen for service Lord'

Sarah Dodds

Blessing

So may the blessing of God almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always, Amen.

Thanks to Rachel M, Sarah D and to the Tyndale Singers, to Mike Garnier and to David and Pauline Roberts for the readings and to Nick and Tina for getting the script in in the post. Thanks again to Ian and Bruce for the technical work and thanks to today's stewards and 'preparers' - and thanks to you all for being here this morning.

A 'together though apart' time follows at 11.30 am