

Parish of Whitton
A Service of the Word: 13th September 2020

“The God of Surprises”

Phone: 020 3481 5240 or 020 8080 6591

Or via **ZOOM:** meeting ID – 948 3407 2630; password – 343860

Welcome, Introduction and Opening Words

Welcome in the name of Christ.

God’s grace, mercy and peace be with you
and also with you.

Loving Saviour,
you opened wide your arms on the cross
for the whole world, not just a chosen few.
May we open our hearts
to let your love flow into our lives and out into your world.

And so as God’s people, gathered together:
let us worship Him now.

The Collect for today

Merciful God,
your Son came to save us
and bore our sins on the cross:
may we trust in your mercy
and know your love,
rejoicing in the righteousness
that is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen

The Old Testament reading: Exodus 14.19-31 – Israel saved by Moses parting the waters

As the Israelites stood confronted by the waters of the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's army rapidly approaching from behind, we can imagine that they might well have spoken the words of Psalm 121.

Hymn: 'Lifting my eyes up to the hills (Psalm 121)'

Lifting my eyes up to the hills,
Where can I look for aid?
Your help comes only from the Lord
who earth and heaven made.

The Lord who guards you never sleeps,
nor will he let you fall:
no slumber drowns Israel's God,
guardian of each and all.

God is your guardian, God your shade,
protector of your right.
By day the sun shall hurt you none,
nor shall the moon by night.

The Lord shall shield you from all harm
and safely guard your soul.
Forever, as you come and go,
God's love shall keep you whole.

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The Gospel reading: Matthew 18. 21-35. The unforgiving servant

Reflection on the readings

Prayer of penitence

And so, dear Lord, here we are yet again, surprised by your continuing offer of forgiveness and asking for yet more time to repay our debt to you.

Father, we have turned to you so many times for forgiveness and yet we have sometimes withheld the forgiveness we have received from those who have offended us.

We have heard the story of your infinite mercy yet we have failed to be always merciful.

We have received your love in abundance, yet we have not always been loving to each other.

To our amazement, your mercy is still there for all of us.

So give us the renewed opportunity to forgive and to be forgiven.

For the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Prayers of intercession

Prayers of intercession followed by the Lord's Prayer.

**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.**

Closing Hymn and Prayer

Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times." [Matthew 18.21]

Hymn: 'Forgive our sins as we forgive'

'Forgive our sins as we forgive,'
you taught us, Lord, to pray,
but you alone can grant us grace
to live the words we say.

How can your pardon reach and bless
the unforgiving heart,
that broods on wrongs and will not let
old bitterness depart?

In blazing light your cross reveals
the truth we dimly knew:
what trivial debts are owed to us,
how great our debt to you!

Lord, cleanse the depths within our souls,
and bid resentment cease;
then, bound to all in bonds of love,
our lives will spread your peace.

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Lord, you are the God of surprises.
You come to us when we least expect it.
When we are hurting, you come gently to hold us.
When we are alone, you come close to give us peace.
When we go wrong and hurt you, those around us and ourselves
you speak the word of grace and forgiveness that says it's time to begin again.
So let us all go out in peace, to begin again to love and serve the Lord.
In the name of Christ. Amen.