

St Mark's and Putnoe Heights Church

Service for the Commemoration of the Faithful Departed

Sunday 11 November 2007
3.00pm

Preacher

The Reverend Martin Hounsfeld
Superintendent Methodist Minister,
Bedford North Methodist Circuit

I am the resurrection and the life, saith the Lord: he that believeth in me,
though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in
me shall never die

John Chapter 11 Verse 25

Welcome

Verse from Scripture

Jesus said, Come unto me all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest *Matthew Chapter 11:28*

Opening Prayer

Almighty God and Father, it is our certain faith that your Son, who died on the cross, was raised from the dead, the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep. Grant that through this mystery our brothers and sisters, who have gone to their rest in Christ, may share in the joy of his resurrection. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn

Immortal, invisible, God only wise,
in light inaccessible hid from our eyes,
most blessèd, most glorious, the Ancient of Days,
almighty, victorious, thy great name we praise.

Unresting, unhasting, and silent as light,
nor wanting, nor wasting, thou rulest in might;
thy justice like mountains high soaring above
thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love.

To all life thou givest, to both great and small;
in all life thou livest, the true life of all;
we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree,
and wither and perish; but naught changeth thee.

Great Father of glory, pure Father of light,
thine angels adore thee, all veiling their sight;
all laud we would render: O help us to see
'tis only the splendour of light hideth thee.

Prayers of Penitence

You bring good news to the poor. You proclaim freedom to the prisoner, sight for the blind and release for those who are oppressed. Free your people

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

You bring pardon and peace to the sinner. You renew life beyond death with unending mercy, by your Spirit make us one people.

Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

You care for the living and promise a share in your inheritance to all who put their trust in you. Work blessing in the midst of trouble for all who put their trust in you. Lord in your mercy **Hear our prayer**

Father of mercies and God of all consolation, you pursue us with untiring love and dispel the shadow of death with the bright dawn of life.

Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, by dying has destroyed our death, and by rising, restored our life. Enable us therefore to press on toward him, so that, after our earthly course is run, he may reunite us with those we love, when every tear will be wiped away.

We ask this through Christ our Lord Amen

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.

Bible Reading

Romans Chapter 8:31

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

R: This is the Word of the Lord All: **Thanks be to God**

Reading

I never wanted to be born.

The older I grew, the fonder I became
of my mother's womb and its warmth and its safety.

I feared the unknown: the next world,
about which I knew nothing, but imagined the worst.

Yet, as I grew older, I sensed in my soul
that the womb was not my home forever.

Though I did not know when, I felt sure that one day
I would disappear through a door, which had yet to be opened,
and confront the unknown, of which I was afraid.

And then, it happened. In blood, tears and pain, it happened.
I was cut off from the familiar; I left my life behind
and discovered not darkness but light, not hostility but love,
not eternal separation, but hands that wanted to hold me.

I never wanted to be born. I don't want to die.

The older I grow, the fonder I become
of this world and its warmth and its safety.

I fear the unknown: the next world,
about which I know nothing, but imagine the worst.

Yet, as I grow older, I sense in my soul
that this world was not my home forever.

Though I do not know when, I feel sure that one day
I will disappear through a door, which has yet to be opened.

Perhaps having come so safely through the first door,
I should not fear so hopelessly the second.

John Bell (Iona Community)

Sermon

The Reverend Martin Hounsfeld

Service of Light

Minister:

We remember before God those whom we love and light a candle to symbolise the light of Christ which eternally shines and brings hope.

Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.'

You O Lord are my lamp
With you O Lord is the well of life
Jesus Christ is the light of the world

You turn our darkness into light
In your light shall we see light
A light no darkness can quench

Hymn

O 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.

O 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.

O 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 life's glory dead,
and from the ground there blossoms red
life that shall endless be.

Prayers

In peace let us pray to the Lord.....

Jesus, Bread from Heaven, you satisfy the hungry with good things: grant us a share with all the faithful departed in the banquet of your kingdom.

Hear us, risen Lord, **our resurrection and our life**

Jesus, the Light of the World, you gave the man born blind the gift of sight and opened the eyes of his faith: bring those in darkness to to your eternal light and glory.

Hear us risen Lord, **our resurrection and our life**

Jesus, Son of the Living God, you summoned your friend Lazarus from death to life: raise us at the last to full and eternal life with you.

Hear us, risen Lord, **our resurrection and our life**

Jesus, Crucified Saviour, in your dying you entrusted to each other, Mary your mother, and John your beloved disciple: sustain and comfort all who mourn.

Hear us risen Lord, **our resurrection and our life**

Jesus, our Way and Truth and Life, you drew your disciple Thomas from doubt to faith: reveal the resurrection faith to the doubting and the lost.

Hear us risen Lord, **our resurrection and our life**

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.

May God in his infinite love and mercy bring the whole Church, living and departed in the Lord Jesus, to a joyful resurrection and the fulfilment of his eternal kingdom. **Amen**

Hymn

(Tune: Kingsfold)

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Come unto me and rest;
Lay down, thou weary one, lay down
Thy head upon my breast':
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary and worn and sad;
I found in him a resting-place,
And he has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'Behold, I freely give
The living water; thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live':
I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched,
My soul revived,
And now I live in him.
I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's light;
Look unto me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy days be bright':
I looked to Jesus and I found
In him my star, my sun;
And in that light of life I'll walk
Till travelling days are done.

Blessing

Christ makes saints of sinners, he has transformed those we remember today, in him all creation will be liberated and restored from bondage and decay to the glorious freedom of the children of God.

May he raise and strengthen you this day, and may the blessing of God Almighty Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you and those you love, this day and evermore. **AMEN.**

During our service there will be an opportunity to light a candle, why do we do this ?

Lighting a candle is a prayer:

When we have gone it stays alight, kindling in the hearts and minds of others the prayers we have already offered for them

Lighting a candle is a parable:

burning itself out it gives light to others.

Christ gave himself for others.

He calls us to give ourselves.

Lighting a candle is a symbol:

of love and hope, of light and warmth.

Our world needs them all.

