

Order of Service: Trinity 4

Dial-a-service: 01904 899433

If you are not able to access the Sunday service via the internet, then it is now possible to dial in and to listen to the service at any time during the week. It's the cost of a local call and very simple to do. Put the kettle on, find a comfy chair, and dial **01904 899433**. There might be a bit of a pause as it uploads (15-20 seconds), so don't worry.

Welcome

Welcome to our service this morning, brought to you by the churches of the benefice of Rural East York. We know that there are quite a few people who tune in from outside our own group of parishes, and you are especially welcome. Indeed, it would be lovely to hear from you, so do please get in touch and let us know where you are and how things are going for you. My email address is in the information below this video.

We are particularly excited that, for the first time, this service is also available via a phone-in facility, so if you are listening to this at home on your telephone, then a big welcome to you. Hopefully this phone number is also shown below, in case anyone wishes to pass it on to someone who would appreciate it. And finally, thank you to all of you who have made a financial contribution to the work of the church via our Golden Giving link. If any of you feel moved to do similarly, then there is also a link for that in the information below.

This service comes to you on the 5th July, which is the 4th Sunday after Trinity. Today is the day that we welcome Mark Poole to these parishes as our new curate, which is very exciting. Mark should have been ordained deacon this morning in York Minster, but, because of the current circumstances, this has been delayed, but hopefully only until September. Instead, later today, Mark will be licensed as a Lay Worker, but otherwise will join us just the same. So a big welcome to Mark and his wife Emma. You will see Mark shortly as he introduces himself, and he will also be leading our prayers of intercession.

Hymn

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 day 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 trav'ling days are done.

Bible reading - Matthew 11.16-19, 25-end

‘But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the market-places and calling to one another,

“We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;
we wailed, and you did not mourn.”

For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, “He has a demon”; the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, “Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax-collectors and sinners!” Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds.’

At that time Jesus said, ‘I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

‘Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.’

Talk

Hello. My name is Mark Poole and I am absolutely delighted to be commencing my ministry here with you today, in the benefice of Rural East York, serving as your curate. This is not exactly the beginning or the introduction that I had imagined, but this way I can reach out to you all here from my study in Heslington. I will be officially licensed by the bishop this afternoon at 4 o'clock via Zoom and I'm really looking forward to that.

Emma and I are settling in here at Heslington, and it's great that we have our daughter Hannah with us and also her fiancé George, who has been with us since the beginning of lockdown.

As well as enjoying the beautiful surroundings of Heslington and the York University campus, I've enjoyed a bike ride around the benefice. So I cycled from here to Osbaldwick and onto Murton and then through the villages of Stockton-on-the-Forest, Warthill, Holtby and Dunnington. And what a beautiful journey it was on such a lovely sunny morning. And I couldn't get over just how flat everywhere is. Until of course, finally, as I was leaving Holtby there were a couple of hills: just enough to get me out of breath. And I don't know about you, but I think that a good cycle ride needs a few ups and down.

And that resonates with life's journey and life's experiences. And Nick has asked me to share a few little bits about my life journey and my faith journey to date.

And like so many people, it has had its ups and downs and its highs and lows. I became a Christian at the age of fifteen under the wonderful and dedicated guidance of some youth group and youth fellowship leaders from my church in Burnley in Lancashire. I also have to say that my Granny, whom I loved dearly, a farmer's wife, was especially important in nurturing and nourishing my faith in those early days. And pretty much at the same time as I became a Christian, I really did sense a calling to ordained ministry. But being 15, I was really scared and ran away, hid away from it until now, of course.

I met Emma, my wife, at teacher training college in Oxford, and one year after graduating we relocated to Malton, which is Emma's home town. We continued our teaching careers here in North Yorkshire. I started teaching at Sowerby Primary School near Thirsk in 1995. During that time our son James was born. I became deputy head teacher at Skelton Primary School in York, and then shortly after, in 1997, I became the head teacher of Forest of Galtres Anglican Methodist primary school, and that was when our daughter Hannah was born. These were very happy times together.

In 2001 I became an advisor/inspector for North Yorkshire schools. However, a couple of years later, in 2003, I was diagnosed with cancer. And understandably this was a low and difficult time in our lives. But that was 17 years ago, and I'm delighted to share with you that I am completely healed from that and I returned to head teaching and took on two more challenging schools in North Yorkshire.

But after many years of hard work and stress with such difficult jobs, in 2011 I found that all that work took its toll on my mental health and emotional well-being. After a short period in hospital, I took early retirement from teaching. Following then, I'm pleased to say has been such an enriching time of God's healing and blessing in my life. My calling to ordained ministry as a priest returned, and needed further testing and discerning, and here I am now.

Also during that time, I was part-time working as a waiter and chef in a tea room, and also serving as a

nursing assistant at Scarborough hospital, caring for the elderly on an acute medical unit. Then, latterly as a speech and language therapy assistant at Scarborough hospital.

These have been very formative and important experiences in my preparation for ordained ministry.

I'm looking forward very much to sharing with you, more about my life journey as I seek to connect with you and to listen and to learn from you, about you and your communities, as we work and serve together over these coming weeks and months.

Returning to that cycle journey, as I cycled through our four villages, I prayed for each church and for the communities living there and prayed God's blessing on the connections that we will make and the work that we will share together. I was reminded constantly on that cycle journey of that ancient hymn: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the king of creation.

In particular, it was the line from verse two: 'Ponder anew, what the Almighty can do'. And this fills me with energy, excitement and hope for all that God has in store for us as we work and serve together to extend his kingdom here in this part of his world.

I'm really looking forward to it, and looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Homily

In today's gospel reading, Jesus speaks of how big things are revealed to small children, rather than the "wise and intelligent", which is something of a relief to me personally! And in many ways we need to recognise that we are learners, beginners, in the work of being fully human, and in serving those around us. We are always learning the ways of love and obedience and faithfulness.

Wide-eyed awe and wonder, a capacity and willingness to learn and grow, a purity of heart, and the knowledge that we are not the finished product, are the gifts of infancy. A child knows that they are "growing up"!

Wide-eyed awe and wonder, a capacity and willingness to learn and grow, a purity of heart, and the knowledge that we are not the finished product are also fantastic gifts in a curate – so, Mark, welcome amongst us.

But these are also gifts for anyone whose great desire is to be a faithful disciple of Christ – you and me both. We are "works in progress", capable of awe and worship, able to grow into the humans we are created to be, whatever age we happen to be. Today we welcome Mark, as we welcome anyone in Christian leadership, not to stand over us, but to walk alongside us, to join us in mutual service, and to share our struggles and joys, our laughter and tears. Together we rehearse the welcome of the kingdom in our welcome of one another!

So, welcome, Mark and Emma. We hope you have a blessed time amongst us, and we look forward to you being a blessing to us. Thanks be to God.

Intercessions

For our prayers today I hope you are able to hold a jigsaw piece or two. The prayers will focus on the theme of connections and will be divided into four parts, where each part will be prayed from one of our four churches, connecting us together and with God.

Let us pray.

Look at the parts of your jigsaw piece that reach outwards.

Let us give thanks for people who have been reaching out, helping others, helping us and connecting with us in many ways during lockdown. For family, friends, and neighbours. For key workers in shops making sure we have food. For teachers. For front line workers in hospitals, care homes, doctor's surgeries, and chemists. For our church family. For all who have shown kindness, generosity, encouragement, and

love. Lord we give thanks for these connections, blessings from you. And we pray for your protection and blessing on all these people.

Thank you, Father God, that you always reach out to us, especially when times are hard and invite us to remain connected in your everlasting, unconditional love, grace and peace. By your Spirit, help us to reach out and connect with others this week, seeking out those who need to be touched by your love.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Look at the parts of your piece that have spaces or gaps, waiting to be filled.

Let's pray for those in our communities who have lost something or someone precious and dear. We think of all the things we have lost during lockdown, the connections with friends and loved ones we haven't been able to share and enjoy together – birthdays, eating and drinking together, sharing in each other's houses, hugs and handshakes. Lord Jesus, we praise you that you promise never to leave us, even when we feel empty, sad, grieving the connections we cannot have and the connections we have lost. You know our pain and grief and you invite us to come to you when we are weary and burdened. Holy Spirit fill us afresh that we may know your comfort and find rest for our souls.

May we receive from you so that we can show your love to those who feel unconnected. In the power of the Holy Spirit give us the courage and confidence to find new ways to connect with others to share the good news of your love with those who are not yet connected to you because they do not know of the love that you have for them .

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

Hold the jigsaw piece in your hand and pray for yourself. Look at the unusual, unique shape.

Think how a single piece has a place within the jigsaw that only that piece can fill. We thank you Father that you made each one of us unique and precious in your sight, and that you made each one of us with a special purpose in mind. Thank you that you love us for just who we are. Father God, we pray that you will give us a fresh understanding of how important each of us are to you and that this day we will feel deeply and intimately re-connected to you.

We thank you for the gifts and callings you have given to each one of us in abundance. We pray that again, gently, you will show us and remind us of our gifts however small, unimportant, and helpless we feel. In and through the power of the Holy Spirit, make clear to us the way you desire us to use these precious gifts to

connect with one another and with those who are hard to connect to, becoming people of love and service as you intend us to be.

In your mercy, hear our prayer.

And finally, let's imagine the jigsaw piece or pieces in the full and bigger picture of the whole thing.

Lord Jesus Christ, in the power of the resurrection you ascended to be with your Father in heaven and we rejoice and praise you that you are the mighty King, our Saviour and Redeemer, that you reign in victory over all the world. You see the bigger picture and you are the bigger picture and we thank you and praise you. Lord Jesus thank you that in these recent times you have helped us find new ways to connect with one another, and that we have learned to treasure even more what it means to feel connected to one another.

We pray, Holy Spirit, that by your power, the seeds of new connections we make in the weeks and months ahead will bear rich fruit in the community of your Kingdom. In the bigger picture you hold us all in the palm of your hand, we are connected to you blessed Trinity, in loving communion and eternal dancing.

In you there is no darkness, only light. In you is eternal joy and peace. Fill us afresh.

We ask all these prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

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 for ever. Amen.

Hymn

Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heav'n to earth come down:
fix in us thy humble dwelling,
all thy faithful mercies crown:
Jesus, thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation,
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return, and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be:
let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
'til in heav'n we take our place,
'til we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Blessing

May the Lord God Almighty
open your ears to his call,
open your eyes to his presence,
open your hearts to his love,
and open your will to his ways.
God almighty calls you as,
a person for his purpose,
to speak of his peace,
to forgive your neighbour,
to proclaim his presence in word and deed,
and to praise him always.
God almighty calls you.
And so may the blessing of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
fill you with grace and love and peace,
today and all your days. Amen.