PARISH OF ESHER
Christ Church, Esher with St George's, West End

A Service for All Souls

'The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.'

Deuteronomy 33.27

Welcome to our annual service for All Souls.

The service offers an opportunity to remember those whom we love but see no longer. As we treasure their memories and give thanks for all they have meant to us, we also entrust them to God, the One in whom the bond of love is never broken.

Silence is kept before the service begins.

Choir Introit

Within our darkest night (Taizé chant)

Welcome

In the name of Christ, who died and was raised by the glory of the Father, we welcome you; grace, mercy and peace be with you all.

We meet this day to remember our loved ones who have passed through the valley of the shadow of death; to renew our faith and trust in God, to comfort those who are grieving, and to receive help and strength as we continue together along the journey of life.

Words of welcome or introduction may be said.

Hymn

Abide with me

No. 10 in the Ancient & Modern hymnbook

Reading

Wisdom of Solomon 3.1-9

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be a disaster, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of others they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt-offering he accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever. Those who trust in him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with him in love, because grace and mercy are upon his holy ones, and he watches over his elect.

Sung Psalmody

Psalm 23, sung to the setting of Brother James's Air by Gordon Jacob (1895-1984)

Reading

Revelation 21.1-6a

I, John, saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.' And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' Then he said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.'

Choir Motet

Give rest, O Christ

From the Russian Orthodox Funeral Rite, translated by W J Birkbeck

The Address

Anthem

Cantique de Jean Racine

Canticle of Jean Racine, Op. 11 (1865), by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Act of Remembrance

Let us pray.

Father of all, by whose mercy and grace your children remain in everlasting light and peace; we remember with thanksgiving those whom we love but see no longer; including …

The names of those to be remembered are read aloud and then a short silence is kept.

The lights will be dimmed. You are invited to light your candle to commemorate those we remember today (perhaps as their name is read out). Please place the candle on the ledge of the pew in front of you, where it can remain lit until the end of the service. You are then most welcome to take the votive candle and glass holder home with you.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord:
and let light perpetual shine upon them.

Anthem

In Paradisum

In Paradisum from Requiem in D minor, Op. 48, by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Prayers

O God our Maker,
we give you thanks for the gift of our earthly life
and the blessings you gave to those we remember today.
Thank you for the time we shared with them
and the love we received from them.
Sustain us with the faith and the trust
that where they have gone we will follow,
to that home you have prepared for all of us
where there is no season and no separation
and love can find completeness.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of all consolation,
you pursue us with untiring love
and dispel the shadow of death
with the bright dawn of life.
Look in mercy on those who mourn.
Lead them gently in their grief.
Give them patient faith in times of darkness,
strength to meet the times to come
and courage to leave their loved ones in your care,
confident in your promise of eternal life and peace.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of compassion,
you are tender towards your children
and your mercy is over all your works.
Heal any memories of hurt and failure,
and give us the wisdom and grace to use aright
the time that is left to us here on earth,
to turn to Christ and follow in his steps,
in the way that leads to everlasting life.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

We join our prayers together in the words of the 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 for ever.
Amen.

Hymn

Be still, my soul

No. 594 in the Ancient & Modern hymnbook

The Blessing

May God be a bright flame before you,
a guiding star to lighten your darkness.
May God smooth the way for you
and when it is hard to see, lead you with outstretched arm.
May God shield you and surround you,
hold your sorrows, wipe your tears,
and when you are ready, lift your faces
and walk with you into the light of a new day.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you, now and always.
Amen.

Closing Music

Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana

Pierto Mascagni (1863-1945)

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