

*Church of St Chad*  
*Hopwas*



*Morning Prayer*  
*21<sup>st</sup> March 2021*  
*(Passiontide begins)*



*Following Christ in the footsteps  
of St Chad*

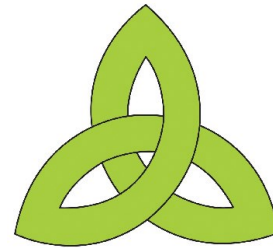
# Welcome

## **HYMN** New Every Morning

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In the name of the Father,  
and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen.**



## **THE GREETING**

The Lord be with you  
**and also with you.**

## **PRAYER OF PREPARATION**

**Almighty God,  
to whom all hearts are open,  
all desires known,  
and from whom  
no secrets are hidden:  
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
that we may perfectly love you,  
and worthily magnify  
your holy name;  
through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.**



## PRAYERS OF PENITENCE

### Summary of the Law

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

"The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.

The second is this: Love your neighbour as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets".

**Amen. Lord, have mercy**

## INVITATION TO CONFESSION

Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. Let us confess our sins remembering before God the times when we have fallen from temptation into sin.

*Silence*

Wash me thoroughly from my wickedness  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**

Make in me a clean heart, O God,  
and renew a right spirit within me.  
Christ, have mercy.

**Christ, have mercy.**

Cast me not away from your presence  
and take not your holy spirit from me.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.**



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.  
**Amen**



### **COLLECT**

Gracious Father,  
you gave up your Son  
out of love for the world:  
lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion,  
that we may know eternal peace  
through the shedding of  
our Saviour's blood,  
Jesus Christ our Lord.  
**Amen**



## **FIRST READING**

Isaiah 43:16-21

Thus says the LORD, who makes a way in the sea,  
a path in the mighty waters, who brings out chariot  
and horse, army and warrior;  
they lie down, they cannot rise,  
they are extinguished, quenched like a wick:

Do not remember the former things,  
or consider the things of old.

I am about to do a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.

The wild animals will honour me,  
the jackals and the ostriches;  
for I give water in the wilderness,  
rivers in the desert,

to give drink to my chosen people,  
the people whom I formed for myself  
so that they might declare my praise.

**This is the word of the Lord**

Thanks be to God

## **HYMN**

I am a new creation

**Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to JOHN (12:1-8)**

Glory to you O Lord

Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him.

Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 'Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?' (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief; he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.)

Jesus said, 'Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me.'

**This is the gospel of the Lord**

Praise to you O Christ

**SERMON**

## **SERMON**

Today's bible readings invite us (you and me) to embrace God's future, whilst at the same time honouring the past. Through Isaiah, God speaks to a people whose experience and history is defined by God. But the words from God are startling. They are deeply challenging and shatter our sensibilities. God says this:

*Do not remember the former things  
or consider the things of old  
I am about to do a new thing.*

They are asked by God to set aside former things, to set aside tradition. They are presented with a new future beyond anything that they may have imagined. The One who delivered Israel from slavery will deliver them again. God is taking the initiative. God is presenting new possibilities to a people who saw no way forward.

*Behold I do a new thing* is an important message for churches to hear. God is saying through Isaiah; Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. God is saying; Forget the old normal. I am about to do a new thing.

Throughout this pandemic we have had to change the way we do things. We have had to change just to stay alive. Who would ever have thought that little old St Chad's in Hopwas, would be on Facebook and would have its own website would have its services on line. Come on you're kidding me right, St Chad's Hopwas ? It will never happen!

But Covid has changed everything, to the extent that when talking about getting through this Pandemic, people don't talk about getting back to normal. They talk about the "New Normal" and whatever that might be.

"I am about to do a new thing" says God through Isaiah  
I am about to do a new thing



Even before this Pandemic broke out, many churches were struggling with money issues, with shrinking numbers, with aging congregations. It's very tempting to stop right where we are. To just continue as long as we can, with little hope for long term survival. But even if we wanted to, here at St Chad's, we will not be allowed to do so

Lichfield Diocese is launching what it calls its *Shaping for Mission* strategy. It involves all 28 deaneries in the Diocese and will be co-ordinated at Deanery level. And I suspect decided on by Bishops. Although ostensibly the focus is on Discipleship, Vocation and Evangelism, the cynic in me says this is all about money and will be based on the new Archbishop of York's idea (Stephen Cottrell - when he was Bishop of Chelmsford) that "*if you can't afford it, then you can't have it*"

With the likelihood that it will be at least another 18 months before a new Vicar of the Parish of Tamworth is appointed where does that leave us here at St Chad's?

What is abundantly clear though, is that if we do not know where we are going - we will end up in a place where we do not want to be, or no place at all. Even small struggling churches can be vital especially in engaging and encouraging others to be involved with the friendship of God. But it means that we too have to be open to *God's new thing*. But, new ways of doing church and faith need to be balanced by honouring tradition, and discovering the order that enlivens and inspires.

Our future will not depend on our own initiatives but our response to God's initiative. And by offering ourselves and opening ourselves in belief and humility to God's provocative possibilities for the future.

***Do not remember the former things or consider the  
things of old. I am about to do a new thing  
Amen***

## HYMN Be Thou my vision

*We say together in faith*

**Holy, holy, holy  
is the Lord God almighty,  
who was, and is, and is to come.**

We believe in God the Father,  
who created all things:  
**for by his will they were created  
and have their being.**

We believe in God the Son,  
who was slain:  
**for with his blood,  
he purchased us for God,  
from every tribe and language,  
from every people and nation.**

We believe in God the Holy Spirit:  
**the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come!'  
Even so come, Lord Jesus!  
Amen.**

## PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

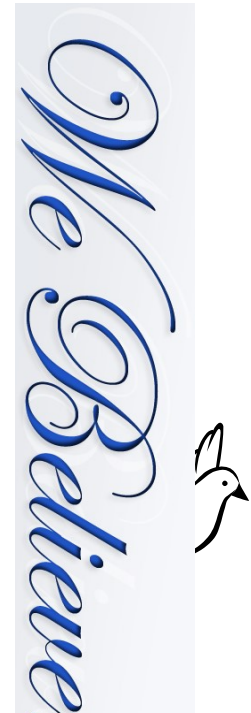
*This response is used throughout these prayers*

*Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer.***

*And at the end*

Merciful Father,  
**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ.  
Amen.**

## CREED



## PRAYERS FOR OTHERS

Lord, when things change we worry, we hate being out of our comfort zone, we like things to stay as they are, yet you said, to Isaiah, *I am about to do a new thing*. This means that if we listen to you, we will have to change. Help us to listen and to understand and with your guidance, walk in your ways, with dignity and truth.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

Lord we ask you to bless and guide *Elizabeth our Queen*; and pour your blessing on Prince Philip as he leaves hospital to continue his recuperation. Give wisdom to all in authority and direct our nation in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

✠ We give thanks for the continuing success of the vaccine rollout in the UK and for all those who contribute to its success. Help us to continue to be vigilant and aware of how fragile this recovery may be. We give thanks that teachers and pupils have returned to their learning environments. Protect them and all the staff, and help them to curb any resurgence of this virus.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray for the people of Myanmar as they struggle against an extremely violent and despotic dictatorship and the countless people that have been killed in the protests.

We pray for all oppressed people, and in the light of the Sarah Everard murder, we pray for a new environment for all women, that they will feel safe, respected, valued and genuinely be able to express who they are in every walk of life and feel included, safe, and valued.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray for our Bishops, Michael and Clive, our Archdeacon Sue and our Rural Dean Gary and for the life of all of our churches especially here at St Chad's. We pray for our Church Wardens Sue and Keith, for Roger our Verger and all who are involved and committed to the life and work of this church here in Hopwas.

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit, give them courage and hope in their troubles; and bring them the joy of your salvation. We pray for the vulnerable and suffering among us as we remember them by name.

**Beryl and Roger, Audrey, Jack, Melanie Lees  
Lesley Fox, Jim, Barbara and Edwin Bott, Norma,  
Catherine and Eric, Dave Atkinson,  
Ann Thurgood, Michael Dalton, and Finn Collyer.**

Lord, in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

We pray that the dying may know your comfort and peace and we remember those who have died recently including the family of George Cross whose funeral is on 26<sup>th</sup> March.

We pray for those whose anniversary of loss occurs at this time and for those whose loss is ever before them

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our Prayer**

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and the whole creation to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father  
**accept these prayers  
for the sake of your Son,  
our Saviour Jesus Christ  
Amen**

### **LORDS 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



**HYMN** One more step along the world I go

### **THE GRACE** *(Shared with each other)*

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
be with you all this day and forever more.  
Amen

## **BLESSING**

Christ give you grace to grow in holiness,  
to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him;

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

**Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

**In the name of Christ.**

**Amen.**

If you are able to access our church website  
you can find us on:

[www.stchadhopwas.co.uk](http://www.stchadhopwas.co.uk)

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## **Chad's Church Opening Times for March**

24 <sup>th</sup>	Wednesday	10am-4pm	Personal Prayer
28 <sup>th</sup>	Palm Sunday	10.30am	Morning Worship

**NB: Please note that ALL Covid protocols remain in place, including the wearing of face coverings. Unfortunately Hymn singing is still not allowed**

*On Friday evenings at 7.30pm  
we have a virtual "Coffee Evening" on Zoom*

*If you are able, and would like to take part  
Please contact:  
Keith Dawson (01827) 289406*

