

**Communion Service for 28 February 2021**  
**Created by Rev Peter Elliott**

**Call to Worship**

God has raised up the Lord Jesus Christ and he will raise up us by his own power. Don't you know that your bodies are the members of Christ. Therefore, glorify God in your body, and in your spirit. **1 Cor 6;14**

**Ye servants of God, your Master proclaim,**  
And publish abroad His wonderful Name;  
The Name all victorious of Jesus extol,  
His kingdom is glorious and rules over all.

The waves of the sea have lift up their voice,  
Sore troubled that we in Jesus rejoice;  
The floods they are roaring, but Jesus is here;  
While we are adoring, He always is near.

When devils engage, the billows arise,  
And horribly rage, and threaten the skies:  
Their fury shall never our steadfastness shock,  
The weakest believer is built on a rock.

God ruleth on high, almighty to save,  
And still He is nigh, His presence we have;  
The great congregation His triumph shall sing,  
Ascribing salvation to Jesus, our King.

"Salvation to God, who sits on the throne!"  
Let all cry aloud and honour the Son;  
The praises of Jesus the angels proclaim,  
Fall down on their faces and worship the Lamb.

Then let us adore and give Him His right,  
All glory and power, all wisdom and might;  
All honour and blessing with angels above,  
And thanks never ceasing and infinite love

**Prayer**

God of love, revealed through the life of Jesus, we come to worship you, giving thanks for your presence with us. Your spirit has been active among us, allowing us to glimpse, afresh, your amazing love for us. We praise your name in awe and worship, because you are always for us, even if everyone and everything seems to be against us. Draw us close to you as we gather together, always at home with you. Speak your words of truth into our hearts and inspire us with the message we receive from you. As we celebrate our communion with you, today, reveal your love to us, through Jesus, so that we, in turn, can be love for people. Amen.

**Lord's Prayer**

**READING Mark 8;31-38**

*He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. 'Get behind me, Satan!' he said. 'You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.' Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: 'Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny*

*themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels.'*

**ADDRESS "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his own soul?" Mark 8;37.**

Sometime back a young man put his soul up for auction on eBay. Adam Burdle sold his soul for £400 before the listing was removed and he was suspended. "Please realize I make no guarantees as to the condition of my soul," he wrote, "as of now it is in near mint condition." Well, the lady who bought it is going to have to wait a long while to collect – if ever – but it does assume what our text assumes that we don't live in a world that is simply material. It's quite a while now since Madonna sang a song of praise to "Material Girl" You remember the chorus – it goes, "We are living in a material world, and I'm a material girl." Madonna often remarks that this is the one song she most regrets recording. "Material Girl" became her nick-name – and it stuck – and she had to work very hard to get folk to stop thinking of her in that light – material girl. Not long after Jesus taught about getting the whole world and forfeiting one's soul, there lived a man named Nero. Who was exorbitantly wealthy. The ceiling of his banqueting hall was fitted with sprinklers that showered his visitors with perfume. He taxed the people unmercifully to fund his lifestyle, but it couldn't satisfy his soul. In spite of having the world at his feet he took his own life. It happens. People seek after wealth, they seek fame, they seek sexual pleasure, they seek mindfulness – nothing wrong with any of that unless it becomes our GOD. They seek every means of escape, but if they do not seek God, if they live only in a material world, they never attain satisfaction - just like Mick Jagger and the Rolling Stones sang "I just can't get no satisfaction – but I try and I try and I try – but I can't get no satisfaction." The Emperor Charlemagne lived from 742 to 814 AD He conquered most of Western Europe, including France, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, parts of Italy, Germany, Austria and Spain. Everywhere Charlemagne's troops went, they spread education and Christianity. Bit like the pax Romana – the Roman Empire in Paul's time. Charlemagne's rule stabilized much of Europe, making him one of the most powerful rulers in history. Yet in spite of all his power, he arranged at his death to have his body displayed with his hand resting on our verse for today. "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world...". Charlemagne knew that this is more than a material world – and we are more than material beings. That's the second thing the text implies. We are MORE than material beings. As the eminent philosopher Teilhard de Chardin put it so memorably - "We are not human beings having a spiritual experience, we are spiritual beings having a human experience." In other words, we have a soul. Have you heard the story of James Kidd? He was a bit of a loner, living on the edge of deprivation. On Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> 1946 he sat down and wrote his will. Four years later he

just disappeared. Eventually the authorities discovered his will and found that he'd left \$200,000 for 'research for some scientific proof of a soul which leaves the body at death.' Well, many have tried to find that spot in the body which they could identify as the soul. It's fruitless. We'll find the soul in the same place as we'll find love, hope, peace, joy – and a host of other positive emotions. You can't capture any of these emotions in a test tube, but we know they exist. Just because we cannot see love, we know it's there. We know it exists. We've seen love in action. And just because we cannot find a physical location for the soul within our body – doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Some scholars would prefer to say we ARE a soul – our soul is who we really are. The particle-physicist Dr Wernher von Braun once spoke these comforting words - "Science tells us that nothing in nature, not even the tiniest particle, can disappear without trace – nature does not know extinction. All it knows is transformation." Now if God applies this fundamental principle to the most minute and insignificant parts of His universe, doesn't it make sense to assume that he applies it also to the masterpiece of his creation – the human soul? And everything science has taught me – mathematics, cosmology, geology – it's all so beautiful – but it taught me and continues to teach me and to strengthen my belief in the continuity of our spiritual existence. "Nothing disappears without a trace." This is more than a material world. We are more than simply material creatures. We have a soul, a soul that by the grace of God, even survives the grave - And Jesus says to us - 'So you'd better take care of it.'

**I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,**  
Or to defend His cause;  
Maintain the honour of His Word,  
The glory of His cross.

Jesus my God! I know His Name,  
His Name is all my trust;  
Nor will He put my soul to shame,  
Nor let my hope be lost.

Firm as His throne His promise stands,  
And He can well secure  
What I've committed to His hands  
Till the decisive hour.

Then will He own my worthless name  
Before His Father's face,  
And in the new Jerusalem  
Appoint my soul a place.

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercessions.**

Generous God, thank you that we have felt you moving among us, in surprising and reassuring ways. We feel your companionship and nurture, and give you thanks for the strength it gives us to face what lies ahead. Thank you for the love has been shared in our caring for one another. Lord Jesus, in the prayers we have prayed for people, this week, you have been gracious to hear us. You bring to our hearts people who need our prayerful and practical support. We thank you for the strength we gain and the pleasure of being a support to people in this way. We pray for people who are

suffering from lack of contact, surround them with your assurance that they are loved by you. Speak into their lives. We pray for people who are working hard to support people in a myriad of ways, especially people whose work is not in the public eye. Bless them for their work and keep them safe to continue. Be with so many people who are mourning at this time. Surround them with your love as they grieve and adjust their lives. We pray for your world and the way we treat each other which brings out our selfish nature and lust for power. Bring peace and stability to each nation. Be with people who are denied their rights. You stand beside them and for them in their struggles. Give your love, to bathe us in new possibilities for all people. Amen

### **Communion Celebration**

#### **And can it be that I should gain**

An interest in the Saviour's blood?  
Died He for me, who caused His pain—  
For me, who Him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
*Amazing love! How can it be,  
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?*

'Tis mystery all: the immortal dies:  
Who can explore His strange design?  
In vain the firstborn seraph tries  
To sound the depths of love divine.  
'Tis mercy all! Let earth adore,  
Let angel minds inquire no more.

He left His Father's throne above—  
So free, so infinite His grace—  
Emptied Himself of all but love,  
And bled for Adam's helpless race:  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,  
For, O my God, it found out me!

Long my imprisoned spirit lay,  
Fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—  
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
My chains fell off, my heart was free,  
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

No condemnation now I dread;  
Jesus, and all in Him, is mine;  
Alive in Him, my living Head,  
And clothed in righteousness divine,  
Bold I approach the eternal throne,  
and claim the crown, through Christ my own.

#### **Blessing**

May the Lord bless you and keep you; may the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; may the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace. Amen