Dear Friends,

Please find enclosed the script for the communion service on Sunday 7th March led by Andy Platt.

Thanks and God Bless,

Richard

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**Introduction**

We live in a time of extraordinary change and uncertainty. The church needs to go back to basics to understand what being church really means. What are the fundamental elements of being church – what does the church need as a minimum, to be able to survive and thrive as it moves forward.

**A gathering prayer**

Holy God, as we meet together today,

we ask that you renew our love for you.

Open our eyes to see fresh things,

open our ears to hear with more clarity,

open our minds to recognise new ideas –

that we may be willing to grow and change

and to become more like your Son,

Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN

Hymn For I’m building a people of power (CMP 151) [For I'm Building a People of Power (Ingrid DuMosch) [with lyrics for congregations] - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-pDO2hLLWLw)

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| For I'm building a people of power  and I'm making a people of praise  that will move through  this land by My Spirit  and will glorify  My precious name. | Build Your church Lord  make us strong, Lord,  Join our hearts Lord  through Your Son  make us one, Lord,  in Your body  In the kingdom of Your Son. |
| Dave Richards ©1977 Thankyou Music ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811 | |

**Children’s address**

Imagine you are in a Spaceship. As you travel through deep space, you come across a strange star system. You fly close to a planet that might be able to support life. It is close enough, but not too close to its star. It has an iron core so has magnetic poles generating a magnetic field to protect it from radiation. As you are taking your readings, something hits your spaceship. BANG

1/ What was that?

2/ The engines aren’t working – how are we supposed to “boldly go” if the engines aren’t working

1/ Oh stop with the split infinitives!

3/ We are going to crash into the planet (Lean to your left)

ALL/ Ahhhhhhhhhh! (Lean to your right)

You crash land on a strange alien planet.

ALL/ (Lean forward) – Owwwww! (Crash Positions)

You have all survived but what now are your priorities:

4/ We are on an alien planet – how are we going to survive here?

3/ Well Captain Kirk always looks for a pretty girl

2/ That is so wrong on so many levels!

1/ I think we need to find shelter, to protect us

2/ Well, I think we need to make sure we can breathe the air – make sure it has a supportable atmosphere

3/ We definitely need to find something to drink, our water supplies are low

4/ and what about food? (All look worried – and end)

These are the priorities for survival, atmosphere to breathe, shelter to keep us safe from the elements, food and drink. In the same way we Christians need four things to survive – a place to worship, where we are protected from the elements and safe to meet together as a church. We need the breath of God, His Spirit to guide us and inspire us. And as for food and drink – as a church we celebrate communion together – the bread and wine – which represent the life of Christ and His teachings and His promise of salvation for all believers. These are the four things we need for spiritual survival

Let us say together 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.

Bible Reading John 2.13-22

Hymn My Jesus, My Saviour (CMP 1003) [My Jesus My Saviour - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGmZcTCXjmM)

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| My Jesus, My Saviour,  Lord, there is none like You.  All of my days, I want to praise  the wonders of Your mighty love.  My comfort, my shelter,  tower of refuge and strength,  let every breath, all that I am,  never cease to worship You. | *Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing,*  *power and majesty, praise to the King!*  *Mountains bow down and the seas will roar,*  *at the sound of your name!*  *I sing for joy at the work of your hands,*  *forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.*  *Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.* |
| Darlene Zschech Hillsong Publishing/Kingsway Music ccli 169737 Streaming licence 595811 | |

Talk1 – The temple of God

Jesus overturning the tables in the Temple is a shocking act but seems nothing compared to what he says next. The Temple was believed to be a space where heaven touched earth. And this Holy place has been turned into a market, selling animals for sacrifice, changing money. The priests taking their percentage. This is no longer a holy place – it has become a “den of thieves”. Instead of the divine it is now a reflection of the worst of human nature. Jesus is outraged that His Father’s house has descended to this level and takes action. But Jesus taking action is only a temporary fix. Human nature will take over again and this place of the divine will again be corrupted. And then Jesus really upsets the priests by speaking of destroying the temple and rebuilding it in three days. However, Jesus isn’t speaking about the physical Temple, but his own body. Jesus signals that his death and resurrection makes the whole world into the Temple of God. People will no longer be dependent on a priesthood to allow them access to God’s presence. Through Jesus’s sacrifice and resurrection all people everywhere can have a relationship with God. No longer will corrupt priests be able to make a quick buck from believers. Now that hasn’t stopped some Christian priests from trying. One of the reasons the protestant church split, was because of corrupt priests selling favours to people, basically selling forgiveness to people who had led evil lives.

So what does that mean for the church today – what relevance do our buildings have? Literally that. They are buildings where Christians can meet to worship God. They provide a point where Christians can meet, where they can shelter – a place suitable for acts of worship. Often the Christian church becomes obsessed with the church buildings, spending a fortune on their care and maintenance. This is not a bad thing, but shouldn’t distract believers from their main purpose – of worshiping the living Christ. Many new church buildings are better suited to this purpose – built with audio visual facilities, with meeting rooms, good heating, rooves that don’t leak.

BUT – the building itself is not important. Yes we need a place of shelter, a place to meet. During the pandemic we haven’t been able to meet in our buildings and this has been painful for many of us. We have missed the fellowship of meeting together, the structure of going to a planned act of worship at a given time and with no opportunity to fast forward or pause services. Hopefully soon, we can meet in person again.

But more importantly the church is the body of Christ. Jesus is the church. He is the point where our world meets God. It is in Jesus that we are sheltered. It is in Jesus we are protected. It is in Jesus that we find our home.

Hymn Oh Jesus I have Promised (CMP 640) [O Jesus I Have Promised - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JnBpzAua3kA)

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| 1.. O Jesus, I have promised  to serve Thee to the end;  be Thou for ever near me,  my Master and my friend.  I shall not fear the battle  if Thou art by my side,  nor wander from the pathway  if Thou wilt be my guide. | 2.. O let me feel Thee near me;  the world is ever near;  I see the sights that dazzle,  the tempting sounds I hear;  my foes are ever near me,  around me and within,  but, Jesus, draw Thou nearer,  and shield my soul from sin. |
| 3.. O let me hear Thee speaking  in accents clear and still,  above the storms of passion,  the murmurs of self-will;  O speak to reassure me,  to hasten or control;  O speak, and make me listen,  Thou guardian of my soul. | 4.. O Jesus, Thou hast promised,  to all who follow Thee,  that where Thou art in glory  there shall Thy servant be;  and, Jesus, I have promised  to serve Thee to the end;  O give me grace to follow  my Master and my friend. |
| 5.. O let me see Thy footmarks,  and in the plant mine own;  my hope to follow duly  is in Thy strength alone;  O guide me, call me, draw me,  uphold me to the end;  and then in heaven receive me,  my Saviour and my friend! | John Ernest Bode  Ccli 169737  Streaming licence 595811 |

**Fairtrade Fred Sketch**

Announcer Hello, viewers – at least we hope there are some – welcome to “Patently Obvious” The programme that gives people the opportunity to explain their ideas of how to make this a better world. Today, as we come to the end of Fairtrade fortnight we have FFF Fred.

Fred Hello.

Announcer What do the three F’s stand for? What is your full name?

Fred Fabulously Fantastic Fairtrade Fred

Announcer Well…Fred….perhaps you can tell us about your idea to make this a better world.

Fred You, the viewer can still buy Fairtrade goods through Lent to Easter and beyond. Just contact Barbara about Easter cards and eggs and for a catalogue to see the range of products available.

Announcer How does that make the world a better place?

Fred The farmers in the developing world are financially exploited and they suffer from the effects of climate change. Fair traders like Traidcraft ensure they get a fair price for their goods so that they can afford to feed and educate their families. They help them cope with climate change. And that’s another successful mission by Fabulously Fantastic Fairtrade Fred.

Bible Reading: Corinthians 1.18-25 - Christ Crucified Is God’s Power and Wisdom

Talk 2 – The Church Led by the Spirit

The world versus Christ’s Church

Listening to the reading from Corinthians, the gap between what we believe and what the world believes is clear. Why would we worship someone who was executed on the cross? In the reading it refers to Isiah (29:14) – “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate”. We do not worship a might conqueror who created an empire through might. We worship a person who was executed. The Greeks look for wisdom, the Jews demand signs. We follow the preaching of the risen Christ – no matter how foolish it seems. As it says in the reading Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God, which non-believers will see as foolish. It won’t be the first time or the last time I have been called a fool, but being a fool for Christ is something to be proud of.

But if Jesus is the power and wisdom of God personified, then what do we have now. As Jesus said in John 14:16-17, “I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth.”

I know it’s a bit early, but the church celebrates its birthday at Pentecost – when the Spirit came. It is the coming of the Holy Spirit that gives life and strength to the church. It is the Holy Spirit that is able to allow the Church to undertake God’s will. We talked about the church needing somewhere to meet, but it is only by the spirit that the people in the building become the real church. The spirit is the air we breathe – it is the air of spiritual life. As the air we breathe is the basis of life, the need for oxygen, then the Spirit is the oxygen of our spiritual lives. It guides, it supports, it directs us.

Hymn – Breathe on me breath of God (CMP 67) [Breathe on Me, Breath of God - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5keJHZdWYM)

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| 1.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  fill me with life anew,  that I may love what Thou dost love,  and do what Thou wouldst do. | 2.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  until my heart is pure,  until with Thee I will one will,  to do and to endure. |
| 3.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  till I am wholly Thine,  until this earthly part of me  glows with Thy fire divine. | 4.. Breathe on me, breath of God,  so shall I never die,  but live with Thee the perfect life  of Thine eternity. |
| Edwin Hatch ccli 169737 Streaming licence 595811 | |

**A prayer of confession and an Assurance of forgiveness**

Lord God, our ancestors turned the Temple into a marketplace; where are the marketplaces in our lives, O Lord?

We confess that we have focussed on our physical buildings, not the church embodied in Jesus Christ.

We confess that we have focussed on what we want to do, rather than what the Spirit of God is telling us to do.

We confess that we have been driven by greed, rather than the bread of life, offered by Jesus.

We confess that we have been focussed on earthly achievements, rather than the wine of the new covenant.

Forgive us, and help us to the importance of our spiritual lives rather than just the physical needs of our bodies. **Amen**

Communion

So as Christ’s church we meet as the body of Jesus. We have the Holy Spirit, who gives us spiritual life. Then what is missing? Well as our astronauts might put it – we need something to eat and drink. Food and drink are needed to keep our bodies healthy. But it is the communion that keeps our souls healthy. And it is a commandment of Jesus – that every time we eat we should remember him.

As we gather together – either physically or electronically, we remember that Jesus was born of Mary; he lived our common life on earth: he suffered and died for us; on the third day God raised him from the dead; and he is always present with us through the Holy Spirit. In his presence and in the company of all the church of God we celebrate the Supper of the Lord.

John, in Revelation 3:20, says: “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.”

We are reminded by Paul in his letter to the Corinthian Church what we do here in remembrance of Jesus (1 Corinthians 11:23-26)

“For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ In the same way he took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.’ For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

So we eat the bread to remember Christ, his life, his deeds, his words – we remember, so we, His church, can carry on his work, until He comes.

We drink to remember His covenant – that all who believe in Him shall not die, but have eternal life.

Let us pray…

We give thanks to you, O God, that from the earth you cause the grain to come for the making of bread and that you cause the vine to yield fruit. We praise you for Christ, the bread of life and true vine, whose body was given for us, and whose blood was poured out for us. You are our spiritual food and drink.

By your Holy Spirit sanctify us and these gifts of bread and wine, that the bread which we break may be the communion of the body of Christ, and the cup which we bless may be the communion of the blood of Christ.

As we share the sufferings of Christ, so give us grace to know the power of his resurrection, that we may be made one and evermore abide in him, to your praise and glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

As we heard from the Bible reading when Jesus was with his disciples at the table he took bread *(lift the bread)* and when he had given thanks he broke it *(break the bread saying…)* and said, “this is my body that is for you.” *(place the bread back on the plate)*

Let us take, eat, remember and give thanks. *(we break a piece of bread, eat the bread, pause and give thanks)*

As we heard in the Bible reading, after supper, Jesus took the cup *(lift the cup)* and said, “Do this, as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.” *(we lift the cup, sip from it, pause and give thanks)*

Let us pray:

Loving God, you gave of yourself in the form of Jesus. We thank you for the bread and wine of communion. Symbols of the body and blood of Jesus shed for us and for the whole of humanity.  
We thank you that as we have taken the bread and wine we have taken into ourselves the transforming presence of Jesus.

May we be transformed by being part of your church, by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit and by the breaking and eating of bread and the pouring and drinking of wine. Amen.

**A Prayer of Intercession**

Dear Lord – we pray for your world, we pray for our country, we pray for our community

We pray for shelter for the homeless, a roof above their heads

We pray for the environment, for clean air to breathe

We pray for food for the hungry across our world of plenty

We pray for clean water, not full of diseases

And we pray that once these physical needs are dealt with, people everywhere will see you more clearly and come to follow the living Christ – God’s presence in His creation.

Amen

Hymn: We are marching CMP (954) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nB3SrTaEpOo>

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| 1.. We are marching in the light of God,  we are marching in the light of God,  we are marching in the light of God,  we are marching in the light of God, (the light of God)  *We are marching (marching, we are marching Oh) we are marching in the light of God (the light of God)!*  *We are marching (marching, we are marching Oh)*  *we are marching in the light of God.* | 2.. We are living in the love of God, we are living in the love of God, we are living in the love of God, we are living in the love of God.  (the love of God)  *We are living, living (we are living Oh)*  *we are living in the love of God.*  *(the love of God) We are living, living (we are living Oh)*  *we are living in the love of God.* |
| *3..* We are moving in the power of God, we are moving in the power of God, we are moving in the power of God,  we are moving in the power of God.  (the power of God)  *We are moving, moving (we are moving Oh)*  *We are moving in the power of God.*  *We are moving, moving (we are moving Oh)*  *We are moving in the power of God.* | Andrew Nyberg, The Iona Community  ©1990 WGRG & Andrew Maries  Ccli 169737  Streaming licence 595811 |

**A sending out prayer**

We came together to worship God.

We have read God’s Word.

We have prayed and sung songs.

Now we go into God’s world:

to be God’s people wherever we are called to go.

Let us go in Christ’s name.

Amen

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.