



S^t HELEN'S CHURCH
ABINGDON-ON-THAMES

PATRONAL FESTIVAL SUNG EUCHARIST

Holy Cross

13th September 2026

10.30 am

~

Order of Service

All stand as the procession enters the South Aisle and sing:

INTROIT HYMN 499

*Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

Come, let us follow where our Captain trod,
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God:

Led on their way by this triumphant sign,
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine:

The procession stops before the window of St Helen. The President welcomes the people.

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

All **and also with you.**

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.

All **By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

We preach Christ crucified,
the power of God and the wisdom of God.

All **By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.**

God forbid that I should glory,
save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

All **We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you.**

By your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

COLLECT FOR ST HELEN

Let us pray.

Almighty God, whose servant Helen was inspired by her faith to bless the church with abundant gifts and erected a house of prayer and worship to commemorate the saving death of your Son on the hard wood of the cross: grant us the same grace to turn places of inhumanity and devastation into signs of your glory and of forgiving love; for Christ's sake.

All **Amen.**

As choir and clergy process to their places; all continue to sing:

From farthest regions let them homage bring,
and on his cross adore their Saviour King:

*Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.*

Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease
beneath the shadow of its healing peace:

For thy blest cross which doth for all atone
creation's praises rise before thy throne:

Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim
till all the world adore his sacred name.

CONFESSION & ABSOLUTION

Christ himself carried up our sins in his body to the tree,
so that, free from sins,
we might live for righteousness;
by his wounds we have been healed.
Let us confess our sins.

All **Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.**

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.
All **Amen.**

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Let us pray

Almighty God, who in the passion of your blessed Son made an
instrument of painful death to be for us the means of life and
peace: grant us so to glory in the cross of Christ that we may
gladly suffer for his sake; who is alive and reigns with you, in the
unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
All: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING: Numbers 21: 4-9

For the gift of the Word.
All **Thanks be to God.**

Refrain: We adore you Jesus Christ and we bless your holy name. Truly, your cross and passion bring us life and healing.

Adoramus te Christe

We a-dore you Je - sus Christ and we bless your ho - ly name.

Tru-ly, your cross and pas - sion bring us life and hea - ling.

Tru-ly your cross and pas - sion bring us life and hea - ling.

Praise the Lord, you that fear him; O seed of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him, O seed of Israel. For he has not despised nor abhorred the suffering of the poor; neither has he hidden his face from them; but when they cried to him he heard them. **Refrain**

From you comes my praise in the great congregation; I will perform my vows in the presence of those that fear you. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord shall praise him; their hearts shall live for ever. **Refrain**

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him. For the kingdom is the Lord's and he rules over the nations. **Refrain**

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be for ever. Amen. **Refrain**

THE EPISTLE: Philippians 2: 6-11

Hymn 127: When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the cross of Christ my God;
all the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

See from his head, his hands, his feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled down;
did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown!

His dying crimson, like a robe,
spreads o'er his body on the tree:
then am I dead to all the globe,
and all the globe is dead to me.

Were the whole realm of nature mine
that were a present far too small;
love so amazing, so divine
demands my soul, my life, my all.

THE GOSPEL

The choir or a cantor sings the 'alleluias' then all sing:

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

We adore you, O Christ, and we bless you,
because by your holy cross you have redeemed the world.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to
John (3: 13-17).

All **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the end the reader says:

This is the Gospel of Christ.

All **Praise to you, O Christ.**

THE SERMON

THE CREED

All **We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.

THE INTERCESSIONS

The response to 'By the Saviour's cross and passion' is
All Lord, save us and help us.

And at the end:

**All Holy God, holy and strong,
holy and immortal,
have mercy on us.**

THE PEACE

Christ is our peace.
He has reconciled us to God in one body by the cross.
We meet in his name and share his peace.
The peace of the Lord be always with you
All and also with you.
Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

All may exchange a sign of peace.

Hymn 122: The royal banners forward go [tr. J.M. Neale 1818-1866]

The royal banners forward go,
the cross shines forth in mystic glow;
where he in flesh, our flesh who made,
our sentence bore, our ransom paid.

There whilst he hung, his sacred side
by soldier's spear was opened wide,
to cleanse us in the precious flood
of water mingled with his blood.

Fulfilled is now what David told
in true prophetic song of old,
how God the nations' King should be
for God is reigning from the tree.

O tree of glory, tree most fair,
ordained those holy limbs to bear,
how bright in purple robe I stood,
the purple of a Saviour's blood!

Upon its arms, like balance true,
he weighed the price for sinners due,
the price who none but he could pay,
and spoiled the spoiler of his prey.

To thee, eternal Three in One,
let homage meet by all be done:
as by the cross thou dost restore,
so rule and guide us evermore. Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you

All **and also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right and good,
our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today we celebrate with songs of praise
the cross, the victory-sign of Christ.
Once through the fruit of the forbidden tree we fell,
now through this tree our Saviour cancels all our sin.
An instrument of shameful death
has become for Christ a throne of glory.
The power of the life-giving cross
reveals the judgement that has come upon the world
and the triumph of Christ crucified.

And so, with choirs of angels
and with all the heavenly host,
we proclaim your glory
and join their unending hymn of praise:

All **Holy, holy, holy Lord God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father, through Jesus Christ, our Lord; and as we obey his command, send your Holy Spirit, that broken bread and wine outpoured may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friend
and, taking bread, he praised you.
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many
for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it,
in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did;
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice
made once for all upon the cross.
Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All **Christ has died:**
 Christ is risen:
 Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes and justice and mercy
will be seen in all the earth.
Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Helen and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours,
O loving Father, for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE COMMUNION

**All 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.**

The President breaks the consecrated bread, saying

We break this bread
to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

The Agnus Dei is sung or led by the choir

Lamb of God, you take
away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take
away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take
away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.

(or)

Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.

Jesus, redeemer of the
world, grant us peace.

Jesus is the Lamb of God
who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called to his supper.

**All Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

The choir sings the anthem: Crux fidelis/The dream of the rood. Music by Peter Foster. Latin text by Venantius Fortunatus, 6th century; English text 8th century Anglo-Saxon, adapted and abridged.

I will speak of the sweetest dream,
that came to me at middest night.
It seemed I saw a most wondrous
tree,
lifted aloft, wound round with light,
the brightest of beams. Gems stood
fair at its foot; and five were
at the cross beam. No cross of a
criminal;
holy spirits beheld it, with the whole
glorious creation.
Stained with sin, and stricken with
shame,
I saw the tree of glory shining out
joyfully,
clothed in gold. Gemstones covered
the maker's tree like a mailcoat.

Yet through the gold, I saw the
agony
once suffered there;
bleeding from its right side,
drenched in sorrow.
I saw that glorious beacon
change its covering and its colours.
Sometimes stained with blood;
sometimes gilded and gleaming.
I gazed in sorrow at the healer's
tree
till I heard it begin to speak;
words from the best of woods.

'It was long ago, but I remember
 when I was hewn down at the holt's
 end,
 ripped from my roots. Strong
 enemies seized me,
 made me a mockery, compelled me
 to carry their criminals.
 and set me on a hill.
 Then the Lord of mankind hastened
 with courage to climb me. ;
 strong and steadfast, the hero
 climbed the gallows.

I trembled when the man embraced
 me;
 I dared not bow, or fall.
 I was raised up a Rood; I held up the
 King,
 the Lord of heaven, and I dared not
 stoop.
 They pierced me. You see the
 wounds upon me.
 I was wet with blood from the man's
 side.
 On that hill the Lord of hosts was
 stretched into agony.
 Christ was on the Rood.

<i>Original Latin</i>	<i>14th century English translation</i>
<i>Crux fidelis inter omnes arbor una nobilis. nulla silva talem profert fronde, flore, germine. dulce lignum, dulce clavos dulce pondus sustinet</i>	<i>Steddfast cros inmong all other, Thou art a tree mickle of price; in brawnche and flowr swilke another I ne wot non in wood no ris. Swete be the nalis, and swete be the tree and sweter be the burden that hangis upon thee.</i>

After Communion all stand and sing:

Hymn: Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones

Ye watchers and ye holy ones,
bright Seraphs, Cherubim, and Thrones,
raise the glad strain, Alleluia.
Cry out, Dominions, Princedoms, Powers
Virtues, Archangels, Angels' choirs,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

O brighter than the Cherubim,
more glorious than the Seraphim,
lead their praises, Alleluia.
Thou bearer of the eternal Word,
most gracious, magnify the Lord.
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Respond, ye souls in endless rest,
ye Patriarchs and Prophets blest,
Alleluia, alleluia.
Ye holy Twelve, ye Martyrs strong,
all Saints triumphant raise the song
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

O friend, in gladness let us sing,
supernal anthems echoing,
Alleluia, alleluia.
To God the Father, God the Son,
and God the Spirit, Three in One,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The President prays:

Faithful God, whose Son bore our sins in his body on the tree
and gave us this sacrament to show forth his death
until he comes:

give us grace to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,
for he is our salvation, our life and our hope,
who reigns as Lord, now and for ever.

All **Amen.**

**Father of all, we give you thanks and praise,
that when we were still far off
you met us in your Son and brought us home.
Dying and living, he declared your love,
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.
May we who share Christ's body live his risen life;
we who drink his cup bring life to others;
we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,
so we and all your children shall be free,
and the whole earth live to praise your name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

THE DISMISSAL

The President gives the Blessing.

Christ crucified draw you to himself,
to find in him a sure ground for faith,
a firm support for hope, and the assurance of sins forgiven;
And the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the
Holy Spirit, be among you, and remain with you always.

All **Amen.**

Please sit for the notices.

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Organ Postlude