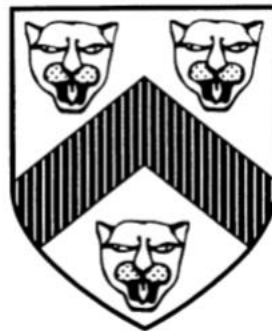




**THE  
PARISH EUCHARIST  
AND  
CIVIC SERVICE**

**In the presence of  
The Mayor of Stratford-upon-Avon  
Councillor Sam McNaught-Barrow**



**Ascension Sunday  
17th May 2026**

## **VOLUNTARY**

*Prayer on screen during Voluntary:*

Thank you, Father,  
for this ancient place of prayer:  
for the faith that has blossomed here,  
and for the worship in all seasons offered here;  
for the lives that have been touched here,  
and commitment stirred into life here.  
Bless us all who come here today,  
and speak to us with the voice of your love;  
for you are a God of renewal and steadfastness,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

## **THE GATHERING**

***Please stand as the Mayor and Civic Party enter.***

*The Vicar, the Rev. Patrick Taylor welcomes the people  
after which a moment of stillness is kept as we open our hearts  
to the presence of God here with us now*

***Please stand as the hymn begins.***

## **PROCESSIONAL HYMN**

NEH 130 (\* verses omitted)

1 Hail the day that sees him rise Alleluya!  
Glorious to his native skies; Alleluya!  
Christ, awhile to mortals given, Alleluya!  
Enters now the highest heaven! Alleluya!

2 There the glorious triumph waits; Alleluya!,  
Lift your heads, eternal gates! Alleluya!  
Christ hath vanquished death and sin; Alleluya!  
Take the King of glory in. Alleluya!

3 Lord, though parted from our sight, Alleluya!  
Far above yon azure height, Alleluya!  
Grant our hearts may thither rise, Alleluya!  
Seeking thee beyond the skies. Alleluya!

4 There we shall with thee remain, Alleluya!  
Partners of thine endless reign; Alleluya!  
There thy face unclouded see, Alleluya!  
Find our heaven of heavens in thee. Alleluya!

## THE GREETING

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

*All* **Amen.**

*President* The Lord be with you.

*All* **And also with you.**

*President* Alleluia! Christ is Risen.

*All* **He is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

***Please be seated***

*The President gives an informal introduction.*

## PRAYER OF PREPARATION

*All* **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

*Deacon* The grace of God has dawned upon the world  
with healing for all.  
Let us come to him, in sorrow for our sins,  
seeking healing and peace.

*President* Lord Jesus, you wept over the sins of your city.  
On our town: Lord, have mercy.

**All** **Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you heal the wounds of sin and division,  
jealousy and bitterness.

On us: Christ, have mercy.

**All** **Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus,  
you bring pardon and peace to those who turn to you.  
Grant us peace: Lord, have mercy.

**All** **Lord, have mercy.**

*President* The Lord enrich you with his grace,  
and nourish you with his blessing;  
the Lord defend you in trouble and keep you from all evil;  
the Lord accept your prayers,  
and absolve you + from your offences,  
for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

**All** **Amen.**

***Please stand***

## THE GLORIA

St. Helen's Service

**All** **Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.  
Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.**

**Glory to God in the highest  
and peace to his people on earth;**

**Lord God, heavenly King,  
almighty God and Father  
We worship you, we give you thanks,  
we praise you for your glory.**

**Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.  
Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,  
Lord God, lamb of God,  
you take away the sin of the world:  
have mercy on us;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father:  
receive our prayer.**

**Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.  
Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.**

**For you alone are the Holy one,  
you alone are the Lord;  
you alone are the most high, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit  
in the glory of God the Father.**

**Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.  
Glory, glory to God,  
glory to God in the highest.**

**Amen**

## **THE COLLECT for the Seventh Sunday of Easter**

*President*      O God the King of glory,

you have exalted your only Son Jesus Christ  
with great triumph to your kingdom in heaven:  
we beseech you, leave us not comfortless,  
but send your Holy Spirit to strengthen us  
and exalt us to the place  
where our Saviour Christ is gone before,  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**All**                    **Amen.**

***Please be seated***

*The President introduces the Mayor to the congregation  
and invites her to share her priorities for the coming year.*

*The Vicar addresses the Town Mayor:*

*Vicar*                    Will you, Councillor Sam McNaught-Barrow,  
having been elected to the office of Mayor  
of Stratford-upon-Avon, declare that you will  
duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of this office  
according to the best of your judgement and ability?

*Town Mayor*        I will.

*The Vicar addresses the Congregation:*

*Vicar*                    Will you, people of Stratford-upon-Avon, declare that you will  
support your Mayor as she fulfils her duties, for the common  
good of this town and its citizens?

**All**                    **We will.**

*The Vicar then introduces the Mayor's Consort  
and invites him to give the first reading.*

## **THE LITURGY OF THE WORD**

*read by the Mayor's Consort, Lewis McNaught*

Acts 1.1-11

*Consort*  
*All*

This is the Word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God.**

## **GRADUAL HYMN**

*With actions*

I am a city on a hill  
I am a light in the darkness  
Jesus living in me can change the world  
(repeat)

Let my light shine  
Let my light shine  
Let my light shine  
(repeat)

If God is for me  
Who can stand against me?  
Let my light shine  
Let my light shine  
Let my light shine  
(repeat)

We are a city on a hill  
We are a light in the darkness  
Jesus living in us can change the world  
(repeat)

Let your light shine,  
let your light shine,  
let your light shine  
Let it shine  
(repeat)

If God is for us  
Who can stand against us?  
Let your light shine,  
let your light shine,  
let your light shine  
(repeat)

## **GOSPEL READING**

*Deacon* Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
according to John.

***All (sung)* Glory to you, O Lord.**

John 17.1-11

*Deacon* This is the Gospel of the Lord.

***All (sung)* Praise to You O Christ.**

## **The Sermon**

*The Rev'd Dr. Paul Edmondson*

*Chaplain to Stratford-upon-Avon Town Council*

***Please stand with the President***

*President* Let us declare our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

***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.**

## **PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION** *led by Councillor Lindsay Macdonald*

*The following response is used after each section*

**All** Holy God,  
**Hear our prayer.**

*The prayers conclude with the following:*

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

## **THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT**

### **THE PEACE**

**President** Jesus said:  
'Love one another.  
As I have loved you,

so you are to love one another.'

Alleluia. The peace of the Risen Christ be always with you.  
**And also with you. Alleluia!**

**All**

*Deacon*

Let us offer one another a sign of Christ's peace.

## **OFFERTORY HYMN**

NEH 296

1 Lord, enthroned in heavenly splendour,  
First-begotten from the dead,  
Thou alone, our strong defender,  
Liftest up thy people's head.  
Alleluya, Alleluya,  
Jesu, true and living Bread!

2 Here our humblest homage pay we;  
Here in loving reverence bow;  
Here for Faith's discernment pray we,  
Lest we fail to know thee now.  
Alleluya, Alleluya,  
Thou art here, we ask not how.

3 Though the lowliest form doth veil thee  
As of old in Bethlehem,  
Here as there thine angels hail thee,  
Branch and Flower of Jesse's stem.  
Alleluya, Alleluya,  
We in worship join with them.

4 Paschal Lamb, thine Offering, finished  
Once for all when thou wast slain,  
In its fullness undiminished  
Shall for evermore remain,  
Alleluya, Alleluya,

Cleansing souls from every stain.

5 Life-imparting heavenly Manna,  
Stricken Rock with streaming side,  
Heaven and earth with loud hosanna  
Worship thee, the Lamb who died,  
Alleluya, Alleluya,  
Risen, ascended, glorified!

## **Prayer of PREPARATION of the TABLE**

*President* Blessed be God,  
who feeds the hungry,  
who raises the poor,  
who fills our praise.  
*All* **Blessed be God forever.**

## **THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER**

*President* The Lord be with you.  
*All* **And also with you.**

*President* Lift up your hearts.  
*All* **We lift them to the Lord.**

*President* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.  
*All* **It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
For he is our great high priest  
who has entered once for all  
into the heavenly sanctuary,  
evermore to pour upon your Church  
the grace and comfort of your Holy Spirit.  
He is the one who has gone before us,  
who calls us to be united in prayer

as were his disciples in the upper room  
while they awaited his promised gift,  
the life-giving Spirit of Pentecost.  
Therefore all creation yearns with eager longing  
as angels and archangels sing the endless hymn of praise:

## **SANCTUS & BENEDICTUS**

St. Helen's Service

*All*            **Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
Holy, holy, holy Lord,  
God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna, hosanna in the highest,  
hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna, hosanna in the highest,  
hosanna, hosanna in the highest.**

***Please kneel or sit***

*President*      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 friends  
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.

**All** Jesus Christ is Lord:  
**Lord, by your cross and resurrection  
you have set us free.  
You are the Saviour of the world.**

President 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 all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

**All** 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 LORD'S PRAYER**

*The President introduces 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.

## **BREAKING OF THE BREAD**

*The President breaks the consecrated bread*

*President* We break the bread of life,  
and that life is the light of the world.

*All* **God here among us, light in the midst of us  
Bring us to light and life.**

## **THE INVITATION**

*President* Alleluia. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

*All* **Therefore let us keep the feast. Alleluia.**

## **AGNUS DEI**

St. Helen's Service

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

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

**have mercy on us,  
have mercy.**

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

*The President and people receive Communion or a blessing  
Please come to a communion station when indicated by a Warden.*

## **ANTHEM**

### **God is gone up**

**Gerald Finzi**

*God is gone up with a triumphant shout:  
The Lord with sounding Trumpets' melodies:  
Sing Praise, sing Praise, sing Praise, sing Praises out,  
Unto our King sing praise seraphicwise!  
Lift up your Heads, ye lasting Doors, they sing,  
And let the King of Glory enter in.*

*Methinks I see Heaven's sparkling courtiers fly,  
In flakes of Glory down him to attend,  
And hear Heart-cramping notes of Melody  
Surround his Chariot as it did ascend;  
Mixing their Music, making ev'ry string  
More to enravish as they this tune sing.*

## **COMMUNION HYMN**

**HON 88**

1 Brother, sister let me serve you.

Let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant too.

2 We are pilgrims on a journey,  
Fellow trav'lers on the road;  
we are here to help each other  
walk the mile and bear the load.

3 I will hold the Christlight for you  
in the night-time of your fear;  
I will hold my hand out to you,  
speak the peace you long to hear.

4 I will weep when you are weeping;  
when you laugh, I'll laugh with you;  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
till we've seen this journey through.

5 When we sing to God in heaven,  
we shall find such harmony,  
born of all we've known together  
of Christ's love and agony.

6 Brother, sister let me serve you,  
let me be as Christ to you;  
pray that I may have the grace to  
let you be my servant, too.

## **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

*President*

Eternal God,  
whose Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life:  
grant us to walk in his way,  
to rejoice in his truth,  
and to share his risen life;  
who is alive and reigns, now and for ever.

*All*

**Amen.**

# THE DISMISSAL

## NOTICES

*Including Banns of marriage*

# THE BLESSING

*President*      The Lord be with you.  
*All*              **And also with you.**

Go forth into the world in peace;  
be of good courage;  
hold fast that which is good;  
render to no one evil for evil;  
strengthen the fainthearted; support the weak;  
help the afflicted; honour everyone;  
love and serve the Lord,  
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit;  
and the blessing of God almighty, †  
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
be among you, and remain with you always.

*All*              **Amen.**

# HYMN

NEH 436

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
To his feet thy tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven.  
who like me his praise should sing?  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise the everlasting King!

2 Praise him for his grace and favour  
To our fathers in distress;  
Praise him still the same forever,  
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.  
Praise him! Praise him!

Praise him! Praise him!  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

3 Father-like he tends and spares us;  
Well our feeble frame he knows;  
In his hands he gently bears us,  
Rescues us from all our foes.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Widely as his mercy flows.

4 Angels, help us to adore him;  
Ye behold him face to face;  
Sun and moon bow down before him,  
Dwellers all in time and space.  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise him! Praise him!  
Praise with us the God of grace!

***At the end of the hymn  
please turn to face the West (rear) doors of the church***

*Deacon*            Go in the peace of Christ. Alleluia, alleluia.  
*All*                **Thanks be to God. Alleluia, Alleluia.**

***Please remain standing to sing:***

## **THE NATIONAL ANTHEM**

God save our gracious King,  
Long live our noble King,  
God save the King!  
Send him victorious,  
Happy and glorious,  
Long to reign over us,  
God save the King!

***Please remain standing as the Civic Party depart***

# **VOLUNTARY**