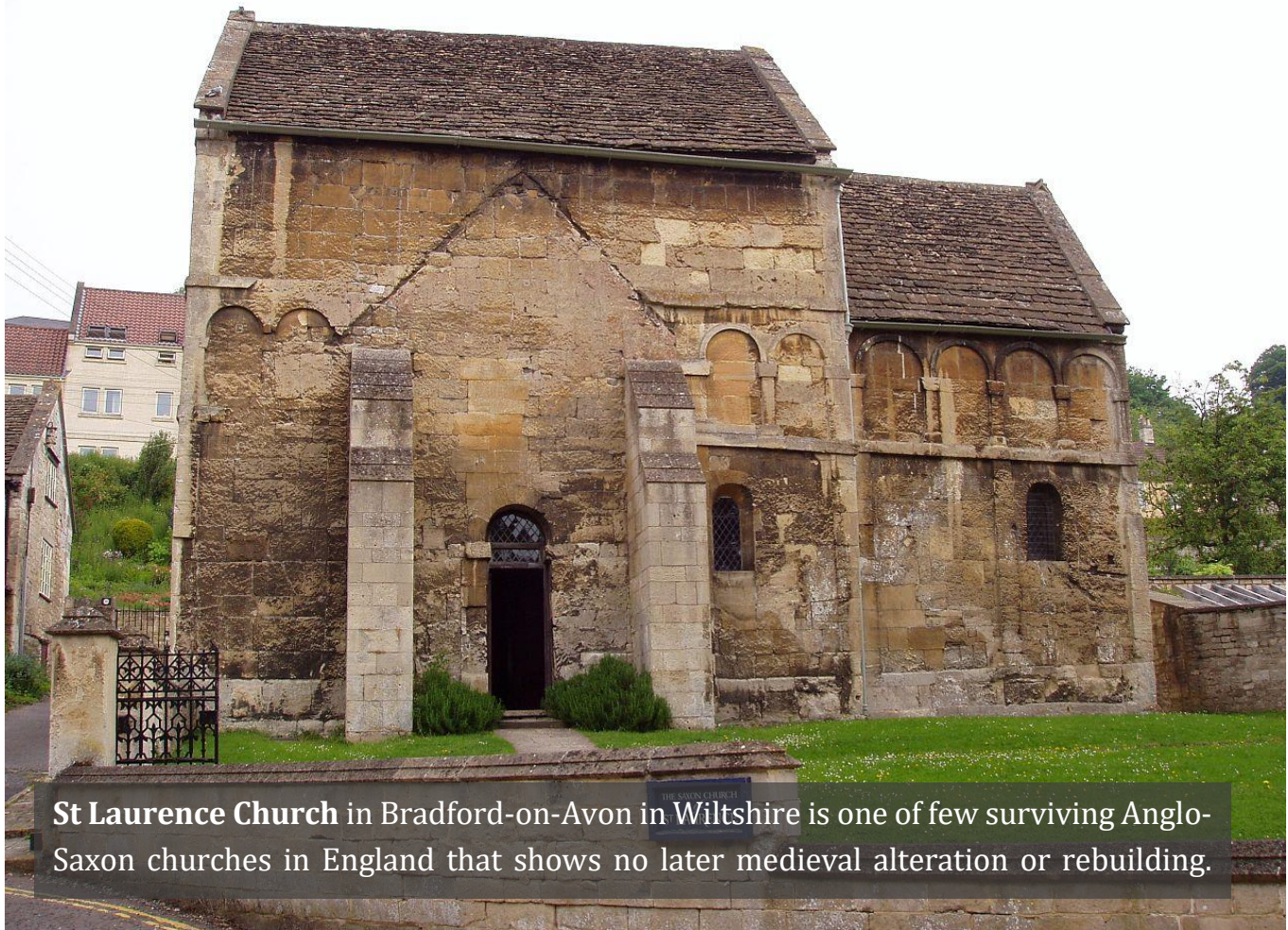


Wednesday 10 August 2022

St Laurence



St Laurence Church in Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire is one of few surviving Anglo-Saxon churches in England that shows no later medieval alteration or rebuilding.

The sources for the martyrdom of Laurence are among the earliest, though the details are thin. Laurence was one of the seven deacons at Rome. He was closely associated with Pope Sixtus II who was martyred a few days before him. His examiners insisted he produce the Church treasures. He promptly did so by assembling all the poor and is reputed to have said, 'These are the treasures of the Church.'

He died on this day in the year 258 AD. The story of his being put to death on a gridiron is a much later addition to his story.

Sermon © Jo Monk.

Liturgy © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

Prayers of intercession © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are all on YouTube. Click on the links to hear them.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [When I needed a neighbour](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

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

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The 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.**

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.’

And 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.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The saints were faithful unto death

and now dwell in the heavenly kingdom for ever.

As we celebrate their joy,

let us bring to the Lord our sins and weaknesses,
and ask for his mercy.

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.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Laurence

Almighty God,
who made Laurence a loving servant of your people
and a wise steward of the treasures of your Church:
fire us with his example to love as he loved
and to walk in the way that leads to eternal life;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of Tobit

Revere the Lord all your days, my son, and refuse to sin or to transgress his commandments. Live uprightly all the days of your life, and do not walk in the ways of wrongdoing; for those who act in accordance with truth will prosper in all their activities. To all those who practice righteousness give alms from your possessions, and do not let your eye begrudge the gift when you make it. Do not turn your face away from anyone who is poor, and the face of God will not be turned away from you. If you have many possessions, make your gift from them in proportion; if few, do not be afraid to give according to the little you have. So you will be laying up a good treasure for yourself against the day of necessity. For almsgiving delivers from death and keeps you from going into the Darkness. Indeed, almsgiving, for all who practice it, is an excellent offering in the presence of the Most High. *Tobit 4:5-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

The point is this: the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the one who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work. As it is written, 'He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness.

2 Corinthians 9:6-10

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 O God of earth and altar
O God of earth and altar

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)
[\(different version\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to the crowds, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and wealth.'

Matthew 6:19-24

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

Jesus said, 'Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasure in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also' (Matthew 6:19–21). Today's readings are about money and possessions and how we use them, but they're about more than that. They're about how we see the world and its values. There's nothing wrong with having money or possessions in moderation, but if we start to regard them as a goal in their own right, or if we expect them alone to bring us happiness, we are going to be very disappointed.

Advertising tries constantly to convince us that buying one more thing or having one more experience will make us happy and fulfilled. We buy that new dress or that new car and for a little while it makes us feel special: but if we were unhappy before, we'll soon find that we're still unhappy. We're just unhappy and driving around in a new car. We travel to the other side of the world on an exotic holiday in the hope that it will change our lives: and nothing changes, because wherever we go, we take ourselves and our problems with us.

Real transformation must come from within. It seems obvious when it's stated like that, but how many of us spend our lives trying to pretend it isn't true; spending time and money on outward change in the hope that this time, at last, somehow, this will be the turning point when everything changes for the better?

Inner change takes time, and it takes work. The fruits of the Spirit don't come to us overnight. I can't tell God, 'Give me patience. NOW!' and expect to get it. I won't become kinder or gentler or more self-controlled by reading a self-help book or going on a course. These things may help me towards greater self-awareness, but they won't get me there all at once.

So how do we 'store up treasures for ourselves in heaven'? We can find some helpful answers in the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus says we can start by being 'humble and pure in heart' (Matthew 5:5, 8). When we are pure in heart, we see spiritual things clearly and we start to 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' (Matthew 5:6). This leads us to show mercy (Matthew 5:7), make peace (Matthew 5:9) resist anger (Matthew 5:22) and keep our word (Matthew 5:37). It enables us to turn the other cheek when people insult us (Matthew 5:39), to go the extra mile in helping others (Matthew 5:41) and to love, not only those who we find it easy to get on with, but those we find difficult too (Matthew 5:44). It also helps us stop worrying about material things so much and to trust God to provide for our needs (Matthew 6:25). At heart, it's all about seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness (Matthew 6:33).

It takes time and prayer and there are no easy or immediate results. Perhaps that's why the advertising industry is so successful: it persuades us that we can get immediate results at little cost. But it isn't true. If we want something of real value, we have to pay the price, not in money, but in spiritual work.

Jesus puts the choice to us quite starkly: 'No-one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve both God and wealth'. So the question is: do we want those costly treasures of heaven enough to make the necessary changes in our lives? Who do we want to serve?

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.**

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

We come before the Lord God Almighty with our prayers. Let us pray:

We pray to the God of love and truth: teach us about yourself. Help us to move from love of the world to love of you.

Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

We pray to the God of love and truth: help the church in its ministry of living the Kingdom of God. Help us to move from love of the world to love of you.

Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

We pray to the God of love and truth: heal the world of its anguish and help its many institutions and people. Help us to move from love of the world to love of you.

All Hear our prayer.

We pray to the God of love and truth: help the people we know to live their lives in fullness and grace. Help us to move from love of the world to love of you.

Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

We pray to the God of love and truth: help those who have died to move ever closer into God's greater presences. Help us to move from love of the world to love of you.

Lord, in your mercy,

All Hear our prayer.

Merciful Father,

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

The peace

Once we were far off,
but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the
shedding of Christ's blood,
for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Whatever you do (to the least of my people)

[\(please click here\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God give you grace to follow his saints
in faith and love and steadfastness
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 [What a friend we have in Jesus](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)
[What a friend we have in Jesus](#) (different version)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

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 salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For following the example of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
your holy martyr Polycarp shed his blood for the glory of your name.
His death reveals your power made perfect in our human frailty.
You choose the weak and make them strong
in bearing witness to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
With joyful hearts we echo on earth
the song of the angels in heaven
as they praise your glory without end:

**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 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.

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 Laurence 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.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

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.**

Breaking of the Bread

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.**

All **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.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God, who gave us this holy meal
in which we have celebrated the glory of the cross
and the victory of your martyr Laurence:
by our communion with Christ
in his saving death and resurrection,
give us with all your saints the courage to conquer evil
and so to share the fruit of the tree of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.