

**Wednesday 24 May 2023**

# John and Charles Wesley



Aldersgate Day is celebrated on May 24 to commemorate the day in 1738 when John Wesley (image, left) first experienced assurance of his salvation. According to his journal, he reluctantly attended a group meeting that evening on Aldersgate Street, in London. As he heard a reading from Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans, he felt his 'heart strangely warmed.' He said that at about 8:45 pm 'While he [St Paul] was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I *did* trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given *me* that He had taken away my sins, *even mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and death.' In fact, Charles Wesley (right) also had a conversion experience a mere few days before.

The brothers were gifted organisers and communicators and were soon sharing this message of the assurance of salvation available to all. After their death, their 'methodical holiness movement' became a new denomination—the Methodist Church.

**Sermon** © Revd Dr Paul Monk.

**Liturgy and prayers of intercession** © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

**Bible readings** © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

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

The hymn can be accessed via a YouTube link. Please click on the links.

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

## Introduction and welcome

**HYMN 1 O for a thousand tongues** (please 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.**

Jesus is the Good Shepherd:

in every generation he raises up overseers,

to shepherd the Church of God that he obtained with his own blood.

We are sinners: let us call to mind the times when we have failed to hear his voice  
and not followed where he has led.

## Kyrie Confession

Lord Jesus, you call by name those who are yours:

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you lead us in the right paths for your name's sake:

Christ, have mercy.

**All Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are the door of the sheepfold;

those who enter by you will be saved:

Lord, have mercy.

**All Lord, have 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 John and Charles Wesley

God of mercy,  
who inspired John and Charles Wesley with zeal for your gospel:  
grant to all people boldness to proclaim your word  
and a heart ever to rejoice in singing your praises;  
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 Psalms

27 Send forth your strength, O God; ♦

establish, O God, what you have wrought in us.

28 For your temple's sake in Jerusalem ♦

kings shall bring their gifts to you.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth; ♦

make music in praise of the Lord;

33 He rides on the ancient heaven of heavens ♦

and sends forth his voice, a mighty voice.

34 Ascribe power to God, whose splendour is over Israel, ♦

whose power is above the clouds.

35 How terrible is God in his holy sanctuary, ♦

the God of Israel, who gives power and strength to his people!

Blessed be God.

*Psalm 68:27-28, 32-end.*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

## Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of St Peter

Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have received a faith as precious as ours through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ:

May grace and peace be yours in abundance in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord. His divine power has given us everything needed for life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants in the divine nature. For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. For anyone who lacks these things is short-sighted and blind, and is forgetful of the cleansing of past sins. Therefore, brothers and sisters, be all the more eager to

confirm your call and election, for if you do this, you will never stumble. For in this way, entry into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ will be richly provided for you.

*2 Peter 1:1-11*

This is the Word of the Lord

**All Thanks be to God.**

**HYMN 2 And can it be  
And can it be**

(traditional version)  
(rock version)

## Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark

**All Glory to you O Lord.**

One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another and, seeing that [Jesus] answered them well, he asked him, 'Which commandment is the first of all?' Jesus answered, 'The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.' The scribe said to him, 'You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "he is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength", and "to love one's neighbour as oneself"—this is much more important than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.' After that no one dared to question him.

*Mark 17:11-19*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**All Praise to you O Christ.**

## Sermon

I'm going to die. I don't yet know when, but I will. One day, this mortal body will cease to function and my spirit will separate from the fleshly bits. And I'll die. When I do die, God will have a choice: he can keep my soul alive forever in His presence or He can evict my soul so that it never sees Him again. It's frighteningly simple. In a sense that's His choice, His prerogative. But in a very real sense, it's not His choice but mine. If I want to live forever with God, then (to use St Peter's words), 'I have

to make my election sure' (2 Peter 1:10). It's my job to fulfil the criteria. It's me who fills in the application form for Heaven.

In our Gospel reading, we hear the story of a man coming to Jesus and asking which commandment is the most important. Without a moment's hesitation, Jesus recites the first commandment: 'love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind and all your strength.' This love is not the payment for eternal life, but an expression of our love for a God who offers us eternal life. The problem is that so many people insist that eternal life is free and, by extension, seem to be saying they deserve it. It's mine!

And it's also a sensible commandment: if God is not our everything while we live here on earth, then we may not be ready for spending eternity with Him. Imagine spending eternity with someone we've not met before.

St Peter speaks about eternal life quite often in his two epistles. It's as though eternal life is a preoccupation with him. He thinks about it a lot. He really wants to be there. It's his goal, his constant objective. It's as though the thought of Heaven is there before his eyes all the time. But I wonder if you noticed that he doesn't think of Heaven in ordinary terms: he uses a very odd phrase for Heaven: he says, we can participate in the divine nature. That is, living forever in the Heaven is an eternal absence of sin, an eternal absence of pain, or suffering. We share God's nature.

This is all so wonderful, such a gift that we are to make sure we get there. It is too important to be left to chance. St Peter is so aware of the awesome responsibility—am I saved? Am I not?—that he puts together a tick-list of criteria. I wonder if you filled out a tax form recently, or a form to claim some form of Government benefit? You know the sort of thing: 'When you have completed question 3, move on to page 11'. St Peter's mind is moving in the same way. The overall objective is to love God with all our heart, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength. That is the way to Heaven. Easier said than done. The problem is that humans are made up of humanity. We cannot straightforwardly say to God, 'Here: have it all!' We have the habit of keeping bits back, keeping them for ourselves. Worse, we can be unaware of bits of our lives that are not God's.

Think of a Russian Doll, or an onion, with successive layers. We are like that doll. As soon as we convert the outer layer, giving it to God, we need to move to the next layer in. Part of the subconscious, maybe. Part of our inner psychological makeup, perhaps. And we need to convert that too. In fact, giving our lives to God is a continual process of conversion: the outer layers are converted and given over to God, but the inner bits are still atheistic, selfish, *mine!* The challenge of the

Christian life is to get to these inner layers, inner bits of our lives and make them God's as well as the outer, visible bits.

So, St Peter has put together a tick list, a form, to work through as we grow, as we progressively give our lives to God, with the aim that we love him with all our hearts, all our soul, all our mind and all our strength.

He starts with faith: faith in God. Faith in his power and goodness. And we are to add to our faith goodness. We ask God for it because Scripture assures us that we can have no goodness of our own. We are to look out for ways to show the goodness of God. And another shell of the Russian Doll is given over to God. We Add to goodness knowledge—knowledge of God. The scriptures assure us that to know God is to love, and to love is to know Him. We therefore ask to have love. God is love, so we are asking for God Himself in our lives. And another shell is converted, given over.

And to knowledge we add self-control, which is not surprising, really because self-control is a fruit of the spirit. So we need to ask the Holy Spirit of God to come in, enter our lives in power. We will need that self-control because the devil will now realise that we mean business, and really want to evade his clutches. We ask for God, and another inner layer of self is converted. From now on the pace alters, and we add perseverance, It can be hard work, changing inside, It can be painful so we need to beware of stopping, resting too early, because the goal is to give everything to God. We persevere, casting off sloth and self interest, and another layer is converted—given over to God, and we get closer to the core of self.

To perseverance, we add godliness, and to godliness we add brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness we add love. And God is love. We are converted, bit-by-bit, thereby increasingly fulfilling the first and greatest of the commandments. As St Peter says, my brother and sisters, be all the more eager to make your calling and election sure. For if do these things, you will never fall, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom.

We celebrate today the day when John Wesley, probably the greatest evangelist this country has ever produced. He made it his duty to tell people they needed God to reach heaven, because he knew that each person he entered would one day die, and God would decide their eternal destiny. Had they loved God with all their heart, their soul, their mind and all their strength? Did they love God first or self?

And all these years later, Wesley still speaks to us. St Paul still speaks to us. Jesus still speaks to us. Make you calling and election sure. Love God with everything. And love forever with God!



## 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

Heavenly Father,  
in every age you raise up pastors and leaders for your Church  
to reflect the light of Christ and to lead us in the way of holiness.  
We thank you for those who have been shepherds of your flock:  
bless your Church today with gifts of care and nurture,  
give a pastoral heart to bishops, priests and deacons,  
and strengthen all who are called to be leaders of your people.  
Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you for the gifts of grace in the lives of John and Charles Wesley:  
give wisdom and insight to all in authority in Church and state,  
that they may use their power for good  
and the benefit of those over whom they are set.  
Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you for those pastors and spiritual directors  
whose influence is hidden from the world:  
bless them in their quiet guidance of those who seek after your holiness and truth.  
Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you for those who give pastoral care to the sick and the suffering:  
help those who are distressed through following bad advice.  
Have mercy on those whose lives lack purpose or direction  
and bring them the care they need for wholeness and healing.  
Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

We thank you for all who have worked to lead others into the way of truth and  
are now at rest:  
grant us in this life the spiritual guidance and pastoral care  
that will lead us to eternal life.  
Lord, hear us.

**All Lord, graciously hear us.**

Father, make us worthy of everlasting joy  
in the fellowship of John and Charles Wesley and all your saints  
in the glory of your kingdom,  
where you live and reign,  
God for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

Merciful Father,

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

## **The peace**

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the  
Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

**All And also with you.**

HYMN 3 [Love divine](#)

(traditional version)

[Love divine](#)

(slightly more modern version)

[Love divine](#)

(modern version with a different tune)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

## The Dismissal

Christ the good shepherd,  
who laid down his life for the sheep,  
draw you and all who hear his voice,  
to be one flock within one fold;  
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 4 [Christ the Lord is risen today!](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)

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,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Today we honour John and Charles Wesley, who in your loving providence  
enabled your Church to grow in spirit as the body of Christ.

To your children he faithfully proclaimed the good news of salvation  
and nourished them by ministering your sacraments.

Through a pastor's love he led your people to share your grace  
and witness to the world

in the communion of one true faith  
and in the work of selfless charity.

On this his feast, we join with him to praise you  
and in the company of angels and all the host of heaven  
we sing for ever of your glory:

**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 John and Charles Wesley 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 of \*\* 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.