



Welcome to St Botolph's Church

Jesus said "If anyone is thirsty,
let them come to me and drink"

Sunday 30th March 2025

We gather to worship

The Lord is here; **his Spirit is with us.**

Praise God who loves us; **Praise God who cares.**

Prayer of Preparation

Loving, compassionate Father, as a mother hen gathers her chicks, so you draw the whole human family to yourself. Bring us together now, Lord, that we may today and forever be united under your wing in all our sorrows and joys. Amen.

Hymn

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of the Lord!

Unnumbered blessings give my spirit voice;

Tender to me the promise of His Word;

In God my Saviour shall my heart rejoice.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His name!

Make known His might, the deeds His arm has done;

His mercy sure, from age to age the same;

His holy Name, the Lord, the mighty One.

Tell out, my soul, the greatness of His might!

Powers and dominions lay their glory by;

Proud hearts and stubborn wills are put to flight;

The hungry fed, the humble lifted high.

Tell out, my soul, the glories of His Word!

Firm is His promise, and His mercy sure.

Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord

To children's children and forevermore!

A time of confession

Hear the words of comfort our Saviour Christ says to all who truly turn to him: Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Lord our God, in our sin we have avoided your call. Our love for you is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Have mercy on us; deliver us from judgement; bind up our wounds and revive us; in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Dedicating our Bookmarks *led by Gill Poppleton*

God writes to us in his Word; words of welcome, words of guidance, words of love. As a loving Mother, our Lord guides us and reveals both self and love to us as we read, and as we rest in him.

May these bookmarks call us back to that loving conversation with the One who brought us into being, as we come, day by day, to spend time with our Lord. In Jesus' name we pray; **Amen**

For the care of mothers; **Thanks be to God.**

For their patience when tested; **Thanks be to God.**

For their love when tired; **Thanks be to God.**

For their hope when despairing; **Thanks be to God.**

For their service without limit; **Thanks be to God.**

Hymn

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not;
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness!
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided,
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

A Song of St Anselm

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.**

Jesus, like a mother you gather your people to you;
you are gentle with us as a mother with her children.

Often you weep over our sins and our pride,
tenderly you draw us from hatred and judgement.

You comfort us in sorrow and bind up our wounds,
in sickness you nurse us, and with pure milk you feed us.
Jesus, by your dying we are born to new life;
by your anguish and labour we come forth in joy.
Despair turns to hope through your sweet goodness;
through your gentleness we find comfort in fear.
Your warmth gives life to the dead,
your touch makes sinners righteous.
Lord Jesus, in your mercy heal us;
in your love and tenderness remake us.
In your compassion bring grace and forgiveness,
for the beauty of heaven may your love prepare us.

**Gather your little ones to you, O God,
as a hen gathers her brood to protect them.
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.**

First Reading Luke 2: 33 – 35 *read by Jane Dansie*

The child's father and mother marvelled at what was said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: 'This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, ³⁵ so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.'

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

Reflection time *as Philip plays Chorale for Mothering Sunday*

Second reading Luke 15: 1-3, 11b – end

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, 'This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them.'

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: 'There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, "Father, give me my share of the estate." So he divided his property between them.

¹³ 'Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ 'When he came to his senses, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!" ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called

your son; make me like one of your hired servants.” ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

‘But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms round him and kissed him.

²¹ ‘The son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

²² ‘But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.” ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ ‘Meanwhile, the elder son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ “Your brother has come,” he replied, “and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.”

²⁸ ‘The elder brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

³¹ “My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

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

Sermon

Hymn

All my hope on God is founded,
all my trust he shall renew;
he, my guide through changing order,
only good and only true:
God unknown, he alone
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,
sword and crown betray his trust;
all that human toil can fashion,
tower and temple, fall to dust.
But God's power, hour by hour,
is my temple and my tower.

Day by day our mighty giver
grants to us his gifts of love;
in his will our souls find pleasure,
leading to our home above:
love shall stand at his hand,
joy shall wait for his command.

Still from Earth to God eternal
sacrifice of praise be done;
high above all praises praising
for the gift of Christ his Son:
hear Christ's call, one and all –
we who follow shall not fall.

We declare our faith

Let us declare our faith in God.

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family
in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through
faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

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

***Prayers of intercession*, including Collect of the Day led by Clive Carrington**
God of love, passionate and strong, tender and careful:
watch over us and hold us all the days of our life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

and ending with The Lord's Prayer

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.

Hymn

Love divine, all loves excelling,
Joy of heaven to earth come down!
Fix in us Thy humble dwelling,
All Thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesus, Thou art all compassion,
Pure unbounded love Thou art;
Visit us with Thy salvation,
Enter every trembling heart.

Come, Almighty to deliver,
Let us all Thy grace receive;
Suddenly return, and never,
Never more Thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
Serve Thee as Thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise Thee without ceasing,
Glory in Thy perfect love.

Finish then Thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see Thy great salvation
Perfectly restored in Thee!
Changed from glory into glory,
Till in heaven we take our place;
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.

Closing Prayer and Blessing

Praise God who loves us.

Praise God who cares.

May God, who gave birth to all creation, bless us: may God, who became incarnate by an earthly mother, bless us: may God, who broods as a mother over her children, bless us.

May almighty God bless us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Today's voluntary is *Minuetto e Minore from Piano sonata number 11 in B flat op. 22 by Beethoven*

Please stay for refreshments in the hall (at the end of the corridor)

Giving is an important part of our worship.

Did you know, one of the easiest way to give is by using the Parish Giving Scheme?

<https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/donors/find-your-parish/colchester-st-botolph-colchester/>

NOTICES

Soup 'n' Snack Lunch this Thursday, 3rd April from 12. noon at Castle Methodist. Come and meet new and old friends whilst having lunch.

Easter cards are now available to be delivered in the parish. Please look at the list in the Welcome Area and sign if you can deliver a road/s.

Lent Course 2025 –Our Lent Study Group continues to meet on Wednesdays from 10.30am., We are studying the booklet 'Living Hope' – all are welcome to attend.

There is no Midday Prayer Space this Wednesday. The next Midday Prayer Space will be **16th April.**

FORTHCOMING SERVICES

6th April (Passion Sunday) at 10.30am – Morning Worship led by Michael Foster

13th April (Palm Sunday) at 10.30 am – Holy Communion led by Revd. Emma Smith

17th April Maundy Thursday – There will be a service at 7.30 pm at Christ Church, The Last Supper.

18th April at 10.30am – Reflective Service led by LLM Sara Humphreys & LLM Clive Joyce

20th April at 10.30am – Holy Communion led by Pat Prestney