PARISH OF ESHER
Christ Church, Esher with St George's, West End

A Service for All Souls



'The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.'

Deuteronomy 33.27

Christ Church, Sunday 1 November 2026, 4.30pm

Welcome to our annual service for All Souls.

We come together today to remember those
whom we love but see no longer. As we treasure their
memory and give thanks for all they have meant to us,
we unite ourselves with them in worshipping God,
the One in whom the bond of love is never broken.

Silence is kept before the service begins.

Choir Introit

Within our darkest night (Taizé chant)

Welcome

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.

Words of welcome or introduction may be said.

We meet this day to remember our loved ones who have passed through the valley of the shadow of death; to renew our faith and trust in God, to comfort those who are grieving, and to receive help and strength as we continue together along the journey of life.

Hymn

Abide with me

No. 10 in the Ancient & Modern hymnbook

Reading

Lamentations 3.17-26, 31-33

My soul is bereft of peace;
I have forgotten what happiness is;
so I say, 'Gone is my glory,
and all that I had hoped for from the Lord.'

The thought of my affliction and my homelessness
is wormwood and gall!
My soul continually thinks of it
and is bowed down within me.
But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases,
his mercies never come to an end;
they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul,
'therefore I will hope in him.'

The Lord is good to those who wait for him,
to the soul that seeks him.
It is good that one should wait quietly
for the salvation of the Lord.

For the Lord will not
reject for ever.
Although he causes grief, he will have compassion
according to the abundance of his steadfast love;
for he does not willingly afflict
or grieve anyone.

Sung Psalmody

Psalm 23, sung to the setting by Richard Coulson (1948-2006)

Reading

John 5.19-25

Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. The Father loves the Son and shows him all that he himself is doing; and he will show him greater works than these, so that you will be astonished. Indeed, just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so also the Son gives life to whomsoever he wishes. The Father judges no one but has given all judgement to the Son, so that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. Anyone who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.

Very truly, I tell you, anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgement, but has passed from death to life. Very truly, I tell you, the hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live.'

Choir Motet

Give rest, O Christ

From the Russian Orthodox Funeral Rite, translated by W J Birkbeck

Sermon

Anthem

If ye love me, keep my commandments

Text from John 14.15-18
Music by Philip Wilby (b.1949)

Act of Remembrance

Let us pray.

Father of all, by whose mercy and grace your children remain in everlasting light and peace; we remember with thanksgiving those whom we love but see no longer; including …

The names of those we remember are read and the lights are dimmed. You are invited to light your candle as your loved one's name is read and place it on the ledge in front of you, where it can burn until the end of the service. You are welcome to take the candle home with you.

A short silence is kept.

Rest eternal grant unto them, O Lord:
and let light perpetual shine upon them.
May they rest in peace
and rise in glory.

Anthem

Cantique de Jean Racine

Canticle of Jean Racine, Op. 11 (1865), by Gabriel Fauré (1845-1924)

Prayers

O God our Maker,
we give you thanks for the gift of our earthly life
and the blessings you gave to those we remember today.
Thank you for the time we shared with them
and the love we received from them.
Sustain us with the faith and the trust
that where they have gone we will follow
to that home you have prepared for all of us
where there is no season and no separation
and love can find completeness.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of all consolation,
you pursue us with untiring love
and dispel the shadow of death
with the bright dawn of life.
Look in mercy on us who mourn.
Lead us gently in our grief.
Give us patient faith in times of darkness,
strength to meet the times to come
and courage to leave our loved ones in your care,
confident in your promise of eternal life and peace.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

God of compassion,
you are tender towards your children
and your mercy is over all your works.
Heal any memories of hurt and failure,
and give us the wisdom and grace to use aright
the time that is left to us here on earth,
to turn to Christ and follow in his steps,
in the way that leads to everlasting life.

Lord in your mercy,
hear our prayer.

The Lord's Prayer

We join our prayers together in the words of 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.

Hymn

Be still, my soul

No. 594 in the Ancient & Modern hymnbook

The Blessing

May God be a bright flame before you,
a guiding star to lighten your darkness.
May God smooth the way for you
and when it is hard to see, lead you with outstretched arm.
May God shield you and surround you,
hold your sorrows, wipe your tears,
and when you are ready, lift your faces
and walk with you into the light of a new day.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you, now and always.
Amen.

Closing Music

Intermezzo from Cavalleria Rusticana

Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

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