

A Service of Thanksgiving and Farewell  
to mark the  
Retirement of Olivia, 10<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Reading  
2019 – 2024



at Reading Minster of St Mary the Virgin  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2024

*Music before the service:*

*Master Tallis's Testament* - Herbert Howells (1892-1983)

*Allegretto (Sonata in G)* - Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

*Fidelis* - Percy Whitlock (1903-1946)

*Notices – The Revd Sonya J Wratten, Vicar, Reading Minster*

## **Processional Hymn**

**There's a wideness in God's mercy  
like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in his justice  
which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows  
are more felt than up in heaven;  
there is no place where earth's failings  
have such kindly judgement given.**

**For the love of God is broader  
than the measure of our mind,  
and the heart of the Eternal  
is most wonderfully kind.  
But we make his love too narrow  
by false limits of our own;  
and we magnify his strictness  
with a zeal he would not own.**

**There is plentiful redemption  
through the blood that has been shed;  
there is joy for all the members  
in the sorrows of the Head.  
There is grace enough for thousands  
of new worlds as great as this;  
there is room for fresh creations  
in that upper home of bliss.  
If our love were but more simple,  
we should take him at his word;**

**and our lives would be all gladness  
in the joy of Christ our Lord**

*John Stainer 1840–1901; Frederick William Faber 1814–1863*

## **Gathering and Greeting**

*Bishop Steven*

Welcome in the name of Christ.

God's grace, mercy and peace be with you.

**And also with you.**

## **Words of Welcome and Introduction**

*Opening prayer*

**Come Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of your faithful people,  
and kindle in us the fire of your love,  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

## **Confession and Absolution**

*Bishop Olivia*

Before God, and the whole company of God's people,  
I confess to my brokenness: to the ways I have wounded my life,  
the lives of others, and the life of the world.

**May God forgive you; Christ renew you,  
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.**

Amen.

**Before God, and the whole company of God's people,  
we confess to our brokenness: to the ways we have  
wounded our lives, the lives of others, and the life  
of the world.**

May God forgive you; Christ renew you,  
and the Spirit enable you to grow in love.

**Amen.**

*All sit*

Choir of Reading Minster: *Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est*

Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.  
Congregavit nos in unum Christi amor.  
Exsulemus, et in ipso jucundemur.  
Timeamus, et amemus Deum vivum.  
Et ex corde diligamus nos sincero.  
Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.

Where there is charity and love, God is there.  
The love of Christ brought us together.  
Let us be glad and rejoice in him.  
Let us fear and love the living God.  
And let us love each other sincerely from the heart.  
Where there is charity and love, God is there.

*Maurice Duruflé 1902-1986*

## **Litany of Thanksgiving**

*Two former Taizé pilgrims 2024*  
*Steven Buckley, former Director of Communications*  
*Rhodri Bowen, Parish Development Adviser*

Give thanks to the Lord who is good  
**God's love is everlasting.**

Come, let us praise God joyfully  
**Let us come to God with thanksgiving.**

For this beautiful world; for its intricate and wonderful ecosystems;  
for creatures great and small; for its mystery;  
its seen and unseen splendours  
**We thank you, Lord God.**

For human life; for talking and moving, thinking and laughing  
together; for common hopes and hardships shared from birth until  
our dying  
**We thank you, Lord God.**

For work to do and strength to do it; for the comradeship of shared endeavour; for good humour and encouragement

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For relationships of love and friendship; for companionship, mutual forgiveness, faithfulness and loyalty, shared burdens and joys

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For children; for their energy and curiosity; for their brave play and startling frankness; for their sudden sympathies and absorbent minds

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For the young; for their high hopes and ideals; for their challenge and unwillingness to accept worn out assumptions; for their irreverence, their fresh thinking and ideas; their search for freedom

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For growing up and growing old; for wisdom deepened by experience; for rest in leisure; and for time made precious by its passing

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For your help in times of doubt and sorrow; for preserving us in temptation and danger

**We thank you, Lord God.**

For the Church into which we have been called; for the good news we receive by Word and Sacrament; for our life together in Christ

**We praise you, Lord God.**

For all who minister in the Church, and today especially for Bishop Olivia, for her service to us and among us

**We praise you Lord God**

For your Holy Spirit, who guides our steps and brings us gifts of faith and love; who prays in us and prompts our grateful worship

**We praise you, Lord God.**

Above all, O God, for your Son Jesus Christ, who lived and died and lives again for the reconciliation of all creation to you; for our hope in him; and for the joy of serving him

**We thank and praise you, Eternal God, for all your goodness to us.**

Give thanks to the Lord, who is good.  
**God's love is everlasting.**

## **Reading Gospel Choir**

### **Readings**

#### **Psalm 139: 1-12**

*Read by Andrew Try, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire*

O Lord, you have searched me and known me.  
You know when I sit down and when I rise up;  
you discern my thoughts from far away.  
You search out my path and my lying down,  
and are acquainted with all my ways.  
Even before a word is on my tongue,  
O Lord, you know it completely.  
You hem me in, behind and before,  
and lay your hand upon me.  
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
it is so high that I cannot attain it.

Where can I go from your spirit?  
Or where can I flee from your presence?  
If I ascend to heaven, you are there;  
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.  
If I take the wings of the morning  
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,  
even there your hand shall lead me,  
and your right hand shall hold me fast.  
If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me,  
and the light around me become night',  
even the darkness is not dark to you;  
the night is as bright as the day,  
for darkness is as light to you.

## **John 21:4-14**

*Read by Samane Ranayehosseini, refugee from Iran confirmed by Bishop Olivia in 2022.*

Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, 'Bring some of the fish that you have just caught.' So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after he was raised from the dead.

### **Reflection from Bishop Olivia**

#### **Intercessions**

*Led by The Ven Stephen Pullin, Archdeacon of Berkshire  
The Revd Canon Liz Jackson, Associate Archdeacon of Berkshire*

#### **Farewells**

*Andrew Try, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire  
John Sykes, Chair of the House of Laity, Oxford Diocesan Synod*

### **Reflection from Bishop Steven**

## Blessing

*A churchwarden says:*

We give thanks for your presence and encouragement

*A lay minister says:*

We give thanks for your guidance and support

*A representative of the clergy says:*

We give thanks for your wisdom and care

*An area dean says:*

We give thanks for your prayers and your leadership

*A lay chair says:*

We give thanks for your love and friendship

*Bishops Steven and Gavin, Archdeacons and the Area Team gather round Bishop Olivia, lay hands on her and say:*

We bless you, our sister, as you lay down your ministry and work here in the Diocese of Oxford and go your way. We hold before God all that we have borne together and shared together over the years, giving thanks for all that has been good and fruitful. Pray for us, as we shall pray for you. May God surround and enfold you and Keith with his love and protection, wherever God's Spirit leads. Amen.

## Laying down of Episcopal responsibility

*The congregation remains seated as Bishop Olivia moves to the High Altar. The Choir of St Paul's Wokingham sings Prayer to Jehovah as Bishop Olivia lays the pastoral staff of the Bishop of Reading on the altar, removes her cope and mitre and kneels*

*Bishop Olivia prays quietly*

Take, dear Lord, and receive all of my liberty,  
my memory, my understanding, my entire will,  
everything that I have and call my own.

It all comes from you; to you, dear Lord, I give it back.

Do with it what you will.



Give me only your love and your grace; that is enough for me.  
Amen.

*Bishop Olivia moves to the nave and with Keith walks to the West Door*

### **Prayer to Jehovah**

Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,  
pilgrim through this barren land;  
I am weak, but Thou art mighty;  
hold me with Thy powerful hand.  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
feed me till I want no more,  
Bread of heaven, bread of heaven,  
Feed me, feed me till I want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,  
whence the healing stream o'erflow.  
Let the fire and cloudy pillar  
Lead me all my journey through.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer,  
Be thou still my strength and shield.  
Strong deliverer, strong deliverer  
Be my strength and shield.

When I tread the verge of Jordan,  
bid my anxious fears subside.  
Death of death, and hell's destruction,  
land me safe on Canaan's side.  
Songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to Thee,  
Songs of praises, songs of praises  
I will ever give to Thee.

*Molly Ijames b. 1978*

### **Final Blessing**

*All stand*

*Bishop Steven gives the Final Blessing:*

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; show love to everyone.

Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit:  
and the blessing of Almighty God,

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

**Amen.**

### **Recessional Hymn**

**To God be the glory, great things he has done!  
So loved he the world that he gave us his Son,  
who yielded his life an atonement for sin,  
and opened the life-gate that all may go in.**

*Refrain:*

***Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord,***

***Let the earth hear his voice!***

***Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!***

***Let the people rejoice!***

***O come to the Father through Jesus the Son***

***and give him the glory, great things he has done!***

**O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood!**

**To ev'ry believer the promise of God**

**The vilest offender who truly believes,**

**That moment from Jesus a pardon receives.**

*Refrain*

**Great things he has taught us, great things he has  
done,**

**and great our rejoicing through Jesus the Son.**

**But purer and higher and greater will be  
our wonder, our rapture, when Jesus we see.**

*Refrain*

*William Howard Doane (1832 – 1916)*

*Organ: Sortie in Eb major, Louise James Alfred Lefébure-Wély*

***Please stay for refreshments in the church following this Service.***

*Litany was adapted from “The Book of Common Worship: Daily Prayer” publ.  
Westminster/John Knox Press 1993.*

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