

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

13 November 2022

Welcome

Apostles creed

**We believe in God
the Father Almighty
who sent Jesus into the world.
He came as a baby,
born of the Holy Spirit,
was crucified, died,
and was buried.
On the third day,
he rose from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
where he prays for us continually.
Praise the Lord. Halleluia!**

Song: Abide with me

Abide with me, fast falls the eventide
The darkness deepens Lord, with me abide
When other helpers fail and comforts flee
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away
Change and decay in all around I see
O Thou who changest not, abide with me

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness
Where is death's sting?
Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me

Hold Thou Thy cross before my closing eyes
Shine through the gloom and point me to
the skies

Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain
shadows flee

In life, in death, o Lord, abide with me
Abide with me, abide with me

Reading: John 15.1-17

15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. **2** He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes^[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. **3** You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. **4** Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. **6** If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. **7** If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and

appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

Act of remembrance

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old.

Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.

At the going down of the sun, and in the morning,

All We will remember them.

Two minutes silence

Prayers

Lord, we are sad when we think of war, of the soldiers who must fight and all the people who are killed. Today we remember their sacrifice with great sadness.

We thank them for what they did for us.

We also remember

that they won for us a victory, that without their bravery our lives would have been so very different, without the freedom we enjoy.

We thank them for what they did for us.

We are sad, too,

at the thought of your suffering, that you, too, had to be a great hero, and walk to Jerusalem,

be arrested, tried and killed on the cross.

We thank you for what you did for us.

But we remember

that you won for us a victory, that on Easter morning you rose again, to help us overcome our human nature, so that we might rise again with you.

We thank you for what you did for us.

Amen.

Song: There's a love that seeks us, love that will not leave us, knows our deepest longing, drives away our fear.

There's a God who holds us, lovingly enfolds us; we will lack for nothing, trusting he is near.

*Our God, you're wonderful,
your love will never fail,
your goodness follows us through all our days.
Our God, you're wonderful
your love forever will be with us.*

There's a love that guides us, walks the road beside us, comforting, providing, showing us the way.

Love will light the darkness, where the valley's deepest, lead us through the shadows to a resting place.

Reading recap: ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

Sermon: Who knows who this is? Benjamin Waugh founded this church alongside starting the NSPCC and having 6 children. And this person? Elsie Chamberlain was the first female minister of this church in 1941 and the first female minister to broadcast on the radio -she was unbelievably popular on the BBC. And who is this? The only ever minister in the UK to have received a George Cross: Rev Herbert Cecil Pugh, also a minister of this church from 1927-1939.

Who knows what a George Cross is? It's a medal awarded "for acts of the greatest heroism or for most conspicuous courage in circumstance of extreme danger", not in the presence of the enemy, to members of the British armed forces and to British civilians. It also has an annuity of £10,000 paid to each bereaved family.

So who was Rev. Pugh? He was born in 1898 in Johannesburg. In the First World War in 1917–19 he was a medical orderly in France with the South African Field Ambulance. After the war Pugh went to England, studied at the URC Mansfield College in Oxford between 1920–24 and became a minister. His first church was at Camberley and then here Christ Church. Pugh was married to Amy and they had three children: sons Geoffrey and Alastair and daughter Fiona, two of whom were born while he was the minister here.

At Oxford he was part of the Oxford group that inspired Alcoholics Anonymous. He used to hold weekend breaks here in Friern Barnet for people struggling with addiction. His daughter Fiona said that 'People from all over the world came to our home in north London and many found a new way of life.'

Cecil was a minister here at a time of difficulty raising funds to pay off the church building debt, campaigning to care for prisoners of war and local Jewish refugees as well as

organising peace rallies at Friary Park. After nearly 12 years of ministry, in July 1939 Cecil wrote a letter of resignation to the deacons of the church saying: 'I shall always treasure the loyalty that has been accorded to me and to my wife and the many signs of the work of the Holy Spirit in our midst. We shall be stepping out to make an even greater experiment in God's power and His grace; for we are going in faith that God knows, God cares, and God will provide. For Christ Church we shall always cherish an affection that nothing can destroy, and our prayers will always include the welfare of the family of God in this place.'

At the next church meeting, Mr Blake, Mrs Hunter and Miss Bromley all asked: 'have you changed your mind? Please stay!' Cecil stated that he felt that God had called him to step out in faith. He would quite possibly become a chaplain to the forces while Mrs Pugh and the children would return to South Africa. And Rev Pugh did exactly that, he became a chaplain and squadron leader serving on HMT Anselm by 1941. The ship was heading towards Africa, when near the Canary Islands, she was torpedoed on 5 July. I read here from his citation for the George Cross

One torpedo hit a hold on Deck C, destroying the normal means of escape. Mr. Pugh came up on deck in a dressing gown and gave all the help he could. He seemed to be everywhere at once, doing his best to comfort the injured, helping with the boats and rafts (two of these were rendered unserviceable as a result of the explosion) and visiting the different lower sections where men were quartered.

When he learned that a number of injured airmen were trapped in the damaged hold, he insisted on being lowered into it with a rope. Everyone demurred because the hold was below the water line and already the decks were awash and to go down was to go to

certain death. He simply explained that he must be where his men were. The deck level was already caving in and the hold was three parts full of water so that, when he knelt to pray, the water reached his shoulders. Within a few minutes the ship plunged and sank and Mr. Pugh was never seen again. He had every opportunity of saving his own life but, without regard for his own safety and in the best tradition of the Service and of a Christian minister, he gave up his life for others."

Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.

Pugh's actions profoundly affected some of the 1,060 survivors. One at first thought his self-sacrifice had been "silly", but then recognised his bravery as an example. Other airmen and soldiers praised Pugh's "bravery" and "sacrifice".

Why would he do this? Well, the answer lies in the book of John. As Jesus talks to his followers, he talks to them about love. He says: "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. Jesus loved his followers so much that he called them friends. Pugh took Jesus command: Love each other as I have loved you seriously. As a chaplain he loved the airmen like God loves us, with all compassion, power and strength.

Did you hear the description of what it was like in the broken ship? As Pugh was lowered into the hold, he knelt to pray and the water was already up to his shoulders.

You see Pugh took Jesus actions seriously too. When Jesus came to this earth as a baby, he then lived, and grew up to be man, who talked to his friends about love and about loving our neighbours as ourselves. Jesus challenged everything about religion, economy and politics and became known as a revolutionary man. A troublemaker. As

Jesus died on the cross, he was taunted by onlookers 'if you are the son of God, throw yourself down' but he remained. Why? Jesus remained on the cross, died, and was buried. As he died, he took on all the wrong doings of this world and entered into the darkness of the hold.

As Pugh entered into the water, he reminds me of how Jesus enters our pain, our despair and our sinful world. This Jesus does not shy away from evil but confronts it. 3 days after Jesus died, he rose from the dead. The Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus shows us that death, war and evil are not the end. While fighting may still rage around our world, our God is a god of hope, love and grace who enters our world to understand us and to be with us and to show us how to live peacefully and caring for each other. It is our job now to live according to Jesus command: love one another as I have loved you.

There is one detail of the citation that charms me, did you hear that Rev Pugh packed a dressing gown for the journey? And that this was the garment he chose to put on as the ship was sinking? Our heroes don't always look like a superhero, sometimes they wear dressing gowns. It means that all of us may have opportunity to love another person and show God's love at any time and in any situation. Pugh's daughter Fiona Daukes recalled a journalist asking 'my mother if he was brave,'. 'My mother replied that my father wasn't brave, but that he had learned to be obedient to that voice within. For him it was just the next step.'

At Cecil's induction service, they sang all sorts of old hymns but one that I knew: breath on me breath of God. The words of the first verse seem especially important today:

Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,

that I may love the way you love,
and do what you would do. I

May we love as God loves us, and be inspired
to act in courage in service of Christ.

Song: Breathe on me, breath of God.

1 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
fill me with life anew,
that I may love the way you love,
and do what you would do.

2 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
until my heart is pure,
until my will is one with yours,
to do and to endure.

3 Breathe on me, Breath of God,
so shall I never die,
but live with you the perfect life
for all eternity.

Prayers for the world

God of all peoples and nations
God of all peoples and nations,
we pray for communities and nations
trapped in the cycle of distrust, hate and
conflict,
for those who feel they must use force to
dominate others;
for those who feel they must use violence to
achieve justice;
for those who feel they must fight to defend
their homes and their families.
May there be a willingness to understand
and to forgive
between nations and communities.
May there be healing and peace.

Lord Jesus Christ, prince of peace,
we pray for individuals and families
struggling with difficult relationships, feeling
hurt or angry:

for those who find it hard to admit they
have made mistakes, who cannot forgive
others or themselves;
for those who have been let down by
someone they trusted and feel betrayed,
angry, confused;
for those who are suffering because the
people they love are continually arguing and
fighting.

May there be a willingness to understand
and to forgive
within families and friendships.

May there be healing and peace.

Holy Spirit, bringer of life and peace,
we pray for our planet, where we so often
fail to live in harmony with the rest of
creation.

We pray for those who make the big
decisions that may poison a river or save a
rainforest,
and for those who make the small decisions
about how to travel and what to buy.
May there be a willingness to understand
and to forgive
throughout God's brilliant, incomparable
world, which suffers so much at our hands.

May there be healing and peace.

Amen.

Poppy prayers

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.

Song: Be Thou my vision, O Lord of my
heart
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art
Thou my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light

Be Thou my wisdom, and Thou my true
word
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord
Thou my great Father, and I Thy true son
Thou in me dwelling and I with Thee one

Riches I heed not, nor vain, empty praise
Thou mine inheritance, now and always
Thou and Thou only first in my heart
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art

High King of heaven, my victory won
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's
sun
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall
Still be my vision, O ruler of all

Blessing