

8th March, 2026

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service.

Opening Prayer: 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.**

Hymn:

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.

Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.

The Sermon by Timothy James

Read Revelation 19:6-21 and Mark 14:60-62 – The King’s Victory

We are now approaching the climax of John’s vision in Revelation, the final phase before the complete triumph of God over evil and the vindication of his people. Chapters 19 and 20 show the ultimate reality of God’s plan for the world.

John’s vision maps out a sequence of events in symbolic form: a multitude in heaven praises God for judging corrupt powers (“Babylon”) and avenging the martyrs; the marriage of the Lamb to his purified Bride is celebrated; the armies of heaven, led by the “Word of God,” go to war against the beast, the false prophet, and human rulers allied with them; Satan is imprisoned for a thousand years; martyrs reign with Christ; and finally, the dragon makes a last attempt to attack, only to be permanently defeated. The dead are judged according to their deeds, with salvation for those whose names are in the book of life.

Understanding the symbols is crucial. The rider on the white horse is not the same as in Revelation 6:2. Details drawn from the Old Testament and elsewhere in Revelation make it clear he is the Son of Man and the Lamb. The beast represents the corrupt, idolatrous world system; the false prophet, the ideology that supports it; and the dragon, Satan.

The thousand-year reign of Christ has long been debated. Some read it literally, others symbolically, but it is probably best understood as a combination: Christ’s victory is already decisive, yet the final fulfilment lies in the future.

But the Messianic war is not purely future. Christ has already won the decisive victory, though his followers are called to continue the battle in the present. The judgment throne and the book of life reveal that history is moving toward its intended destiny. Visions in Revelation show ultimate reality – not what might be, but what already is, now seen clearly. The symbols are not merely metaphorical; they are a window into the spiritual realities that underlie the world we perceive.

Judgment is a central theme. It reflects God's character, encompassing both justice and love. The sword of the rider's mouth, Bauckham notes, is the truth of God: it is salvific, liberating those who accept it, but condemning those who reject it. Revelation presents stark outcomes: some will face eternal punishment, while the dragon, beast, false prophet, and even death itself are ultimately consigned to the fire. Yet the Bible also affirms God's mercy, leaving room for hope that even the hardest hearts may be transformed. Bauckham summarizes the possibilities as twofold: either the nations will be converted and included in God's kingdom, or the unrepentant will face judgment.

For us, the call is clear: remain faithful and remain active. Our responsibility is to seek the maximum number of names in the book of life and the minimum in the lake of fire. The vision of Revelation urges the church (that's us!) to witness tirelessly, bringing the gospel to our nation. These chapters challenge us not only to endure but to participate actively in God's mission, confident that the Messiah reigns and history is moving toward ultimate redemption.

3rd Sunday of Lent: *Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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. Amen*

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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd:

- Palm Sunday Tea and Praise at 3pm, Sunday 29th March, in Church.
- Tea and Chat and Bowls: March 18th at 2pm in Church Hall & Church.
- Coffee and Questions: March 25th at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parihofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>