



CHESTER
CATHEDRAL

A Service of Lament, Prayer and Hope

**10th September 2023
6.00pm**

**Address:
The Rt Revd Mark Tanner
The Bishop of Chester**

WELCOME

We welcome you to Chester Cathedral. It is a place where the mission of the church to proclaim God's love is central, and your welcome presence here for worship helps to strengthen this vital act of witness.

We gather today to express our sadness, our shame, our shock and our grief at recent events at the Countess of Chester Hospital. We stand together in prayer and support of one another at this deeply challenging time in the life of our city and county, and particularly of the families of those most affected by this tragedy.

Though we grieve with sadness for things which cannot be restored, we look to the future with hope in Christ in whom all things are made new.

We are working environmentally to save paper. The service can be downloaded to your device using the QR code at the back of the nave, or by visiting [Services - Chester Cathedral](#). Hymns, readings and responses will also be presented on the screens. Please join in the sections in bold type. Throughout the service, where indicated, please only stand if you feel able to do so.

Please stand, if able, to sing

Opening Hymn

Dear Lord and Father of mankind,
forgive our foolish ways!
Re-clothe us in our rightful mind,
in purer lives thy service find,
in deeper reverence praise,
in deeper reverence praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
beside the Syrian sea,
the gracious calling of the Lord,
let us, like them, without a word
rise up and follow thee,
rise up and follow thee.

O Sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
where Jesus knelt to share with thee
the silence of eternity,
interpreted by love,
interpreted by love!

Drop thy still dews of quietness,
till all our strivings cease;
take from our souls the strain and stress,
and let our ordered lives confess
the beauty of thy peace,
the beauty of thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
thy coolness and thy balm;
let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
speak through the earthquake, wind,
and fire,

○ still small voice of calm,
○ still small voice of calm!

John Whittier 1807-92

REPTON
C. Hubert H. Parry 1848-1918

LAMENT

The Dean says

Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in
Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping.
Rachel is weeping for her children; she
refuses to be comforted for her children,
because they are no more.

Jeremiah 31: 15

We meet in the presence of God
who knows our needs,
hears our cries,
feels our pain,
and heals our wounds.

Please be seated for words of welcome.

Bible reading

The Nave choir sing a setting of Psalm 77

I will cry unto God with my voice :
even unto God will I cry with my voice,
and he shall hearken unto me.

In the time of my trouble I sought the
Lord : my sore ran and ceased not in the
night-season; my soul refused comfort.

When I am in heaviness, I will think upon
God: when my heart is vexed, I will
complain.

Thou holdest mine eyes waking :
I am so feeble, that I cannot speak.

I have considered the days of old :
and the years that are past.

I call to remembrance my song :
and in the night I commune with mine
own heart, and search out my spirits.

Will the Lord absent himself for ever :
and will he be no more intreated?

Is his mercy clean gone for ever :
and is his promise come utterly to an end
for evermore?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious :
and will he shut up his loving-kindness in
displeasure?

And I said, It is mine own infirmity :
but I will remember the years of the right
hand of the most Highest.

I will remember the works of the Lord :
and call to mind thy wonders of old time.

I will think also of all thy works :
and my talking shall be of thy doings.

Thy way, O God, is holy :
who is so great a God as our God?

Thou art the God that doeth wonders :
and hast declared thy power among the
people.

Psalm 77: 1-14

Prayer

The Dean prays

God of all compassion and healing,
we pray today for those
who have lost loved ones:
may they know your loving presence
as they travel through the varied
landscapes of grief.

In their pain and sadness,
surround them with your comfort;
in their anger and bewilderment,
speak words of peace;
in their anxiety and fear,
help them feel safe again.

We give you thanks
that you hold all of us in your love,
wherever we are
on our journey through life.

In these difficult days,
help us to travel together in friendship,
trusting that you will lead us
to the sunshine of new hope.

Amen.

PRAYER

The Dean says

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord hear my voice!

Psalm 130.1

Responsory

Cast your burden upon the Lord:
he will sustain you.

Bible reading

Read by Dr Dotty King

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'See the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away'.

Revelation 21: 3-4

Lighting of candles

While the choir sing, seven candles are lit to remember the victims, with an additional candle lit to mark those whose deaths remain unknown. There will be an opportunity for other congregation members to light candles after the service at the candle banks around the Cathedral.

Motet

*Bleib bei uns, denn es will Abend werden,
und der Tag hat sich geneiget.*

*Bide with us, for evening shadows darken, and
the day will soon be over.*

Luke 24: 29

Josef Rheinberger 1839-1901

Prayer

The Dean prays

Loving God, you travel with us
through all of life's landscapes;
when the skies are dark
with pain and sorrow,
when the path ahead seems impossible
and we're frightened of the future,
when storms of anger rage in us
because of life's injustices,
and when the sun breaks through
with sudden, joyful warmth.
As we hold all those affected in our hearts,
help us know your nearness today:
comfort us in our sadness;
reassure us in our uncertainty;
keep us company in our anger;
and lead us into healing and hope.
Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

The Lord's Prayer can be offered in your own language

Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

**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.**

HOPE

The Dean says

The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is his faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:22-23

Responsory

Fear not, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name; you are mine.
**Fear not, for I have redeemed you.
I have called you by name;
you are mine.**

Bible reading

Read by The Revd Canon Jane Brooke

What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not with him also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was

raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8: 31-35, 37-39

Reflection

The Bishop of Chester

Hymn

Please stand to sing together

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!

Thomas O. Chisholm 1866-1960

FAITHFULNESS

W.M. Runyan 1870-1957

Please remain standing. The Bishop says

Closing prayer

In our fear, Lord, be our confidence.

In our weakness, be our strength.

In our panic, be our calm.

In our sickness, be our healing.

In our confusion, be our anchor.

In our insecurity, be our rock.

In our darkness, be our light.

In our grief, be our solace.

In our despair, be our hope.

In our storm, be our sunshine.

In our night, be our day.

Amen.

Nick Fawcett

Blessing

May God give you

his comfort and his peace,

his light and his joy,

in this world and the next;

and the blessing of God almighty,

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,

be among you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Please remain standing as the procession leaves and the organ is played. You are welcome to stay for quiet reflection or to light a candle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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*Poem: "Parable and Paradox", Malcolm Guite ©
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