

St Andrew's and St George's West

Order of Service, October 11, 2020

The Parable of the Divine Wedding Feast – an invitation



As you prepare for this service, think back to some special meals to which you have been invited over the years. Can you remember the person who invited you? How did it feel to be invited? Who else was invited?

Piano music

Welcome and Introduction to the Parable of the Divine Wedding Feast

Sharing the Peace accompanied by the music for Hymn 798
The Peace of the Earth be with You

Our Call to worship based on Psalm 106

Leader Praise the Lord! Let us give thanks to the Lord,

All **for he is good and his steadfast love endures forever.**

Leader May we never forget the Lord our God

All **but seek after God's justice that we may know his glory.**

Leader Let us worship the Lord!

HYMN 484 Great God, Your Love has Called us Here verses 1, 2, 5

Great God, your love has called us here,
as we, by love, for love were made.
Your living likeness still we bear,
though marred, dishonoured, disobeyed.
We come, with all our heart and mind
your call to hear, your love to find.

We come with self-inflicted pains
of broken trust and chosen wrong,
half-free, half-bound by inner chains,
by social forces swept along,
by powers and systems close confined
yet seeking hope for humankind.

Great God, in Christ you set us free
your life to live, your joy to share.
Give us your Spirit's liberty
to turn from guilt and dull despair
and offer all that faith can do
while love is making all things new.

Brian Wren (b. 1936)

Prayer of adoration and confession

We say together

**Lord God, you invite one and all to your divine feast,
so here we are.**

You make space for us whoever and wherever we are.

May we feel your welcome and extend that same grace to others.

**Wherever we have been, whatever brings us to this act of worship,
may we experience an encounter with you, O living God,
and may that encounter transform our lives,
transform our despair into hope,
transform our fear into joy
and our loss into new beginnings.**

**Forgive what we have been, renew what we shall be
and take us from here inspired to serve you in the world.
Keep on working in us and through us
until we extend our reach and our arms in welcome
and you are worshipped as you ought to be
in every corner of the world.**

In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Lord's prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread and
forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
now and forever, Amen.**

But no one arrived - a telling of the parable of the divine wedding feast for our times

Voice 1 The bells were ringing, because there was a wedding.
The streets were lined with people, because there was a wedding.
The socially distanced crowds had begun to gather, because there was a wedding.

All **But no one arrived. Oh no!**

Voice 2 Where were the guests who were invited to the wedding?
Where were the well-dressed who were invited to the wedding?
Where were the important people invited to the wedding?

All **No one came. Oh no!**

Voice 1 Some said they were too busy to come to the wedding.
Some said they didn't have a hat or a face covering suitable for a wedding.
Some said they needed more time to come to the wedding.

All **So no one arrived. Oh no!**

Voice 3 The king told his servants to invite everyone to the wedding.
The king told his servants to invite all the crowds to the wedding.
The king told his servants to invite anyone they saw to the wedding.

All **Does that mean us? Oh no!**

Voice 3 But the king wanted everyone to come to the wedding.
"The food is all ready, so come to the wedding."
"I'll give you outfits with matching face coverings, so come to the wedding."

All **So everyone replied, "Oh yes!"**

Voice 2 So everyone who was waiting was invited to the wedding.
Everyone who was watching was invited to the wedding.
Everyone who was poor and least was invited to the wedding.

All **And they began to celebrate. Oh wow!**

Voice 1 Are we invited to go to the wedding?
Shall we go now and go to the wedding?
Is there a place for us to go to the wedding?

All **There is, let's go! Oh yes!**

Voice 2 It's a celebration everyone, this wonderful wedding!
It's a picture of the kingdom, this wonderful wedding!
It's a story of welcome, this wonderful wedding!

All **Are we invited? Oh yes, we are!**

New Testament Reading: Matthew 22: 1-14 New Revised Standard Version

The Parable of the Divine Marriage Feast

Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, saying: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a wedding robe, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

Anthem There's a wideness in God's mercy

Words: Frederick William Faber (1814-1863)

Music: Maurice Bevan (1921–2006)

Reflection

Prayers for others and ourselves

After each section, the Taizé chant, Oh Lord hear my prayer

Inclusive God, why is your world so divided?

O Lord hear my prayer

Why are we so divided?

We have a compulsion to label and to categorise, to separate and demonise.

Good or evil, black or white, male or female, straight or gay, rich or poor, young or old, we seem incapable of seeing the whole colourful spectrum that you created, and to see each of us as created in your image.

O Lord hear my prayer

While we are busy hoarding, your children continue to suffer and we are too busy to notice, far less make a difference.

During this pandemic give us wider arms and bigger hearts

and greater understanding to know that sharing what we have will not diminish us.

You bless us so that we might bless others and pray for them.

Today we hold before you....

O Lord hear my prayer

As we pray for wars to end,
may we refuse to invest in all that causes destruction.
As we pray for homes for the homeless and food for the hungry
may we be willing to share the space and the wealth that we hold tightly.

O Lord hear my prayer

Prise open our hands and our hearts, to care and share freely.
Heal the blindness that prevents us from seeing
and our muteness that prevents us from speaking out against injustice wherever it is found
and give us wisdom to know how to change things for good
and how to empower others to enable change too.

Inclusive God, inspire us to be inclusive too. Amen.

O Lord hear my prayer

HYMN 141 Oh, the Life of the World is a Joy and a Treasure

Oh, the life of the world is a joy and a treasure,
unfolding in beauty the green-growing tree,
the changing of seasons in mountain and valley,
the stars and the bright restless sea.

Oh, the life of the world is a fountain of goodness
overflowing in labour and passion and pain,
in the sound of the city and the silence of wisdom,
in the birth of a child once again.

Oh, the life of the world is the source of our healing.
It rises in laughter and wells up in song;
it springs from the care of the poor and the broken
and refreshes where justice is strong.

So give thanks for the life and give love to the Maker,
and rejoice in the gift of the bright risen Son,
and walk in the peace and the power of the Spirit
till the days of our living are done.

Kathryn Galloway (b. 1952)

Sending

Each time we meet in George Street, on-line or on the phone, God throws a Divine party.
He is glad we came, delighted we made the effort.
You are God's special guests.

Remember this as we leave our time together.

God the Creator,
Jesus the Son,
our guide, the Spirit,
makes time for us
each and every day.

Sung blessing The Lord bless you and keep you

The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you:
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.

Organ Music Toccata Théodore Dubois

As you leave – A Wedding Feast favour for you (sorry but George Street only)
A traditional wedding gift of **five** almonds which symbolises a strong bond or union between the couple, or in this case between you and Christ, as it is a number which cannot be divided equally into two whole numbers.

Leaders: The Reverend Colin Douglas, Andrena Crawford, Sally Evans and Nick Evans
Director of Music: Brigitte Harris
Vocal ensemble: Eleanor Cozens, Eleanor Wilson, Caitlin McGillivray, Drew Crichton, Tim Cooper, Andrew Carvel
Piano accompaniment: Eleanor Cozens
Organist: Drew Crichton
Technical team: Alison Bruce, Andrew Carvel, Susan McLarty, Mary Margaret Scott

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Finally, St Andrew and St George say 'Stay Safe'

