

A Service of Thanksgiving with the Blessing of the Boats



*We will be taking a collection; please give generously to the Royal National Lifeboat
Institution & St Martin's Parish Church*

THE GATHERING

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

The Lord be with you

All **And also with you**

Welcome & Opening Prayers

We sing a hymn:

1 Eternal Father, strong to save,
whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
its own appointed limits keep:

*O hear us when we cry to Thee
for those in peril on the sea.*

2 O Christ, whose voice the waters heard,
and hushed their raging at Thy word,
who walkedst on the foaming deep,
and calm amid the storm didst sleep:

3 O Holy Spirit, who didst brood
upon the waters dark and rude,
and bid their angry tumult cease,
and give, for wild confusion, peace:

4 O Trinity of love and power,
our brethren shield in danger's hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them wherso'er they go:
*thus evermore shall rise to Thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea.*

Thanksgiving

Let us thank God for the gift of this new day,
for the fire of his love that fills our lives
and for the wind of his Spirit that protects us from harm.
For all of these gifts:

All **We thank you Father God.**

Other prayers of thanksgiving follow, and this response is used:

For all of these gifts:

All **We thank you Father God.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

*We hear the **First Reading**, from Proverbs Chapter 8
read by a representative of St Catherine's Sailing Club*

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.
Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
when he had not yet made earth and fields,
or the world's first bits of soil.
When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,

when he assigned to the sea its limit,
so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,
rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

At the end we hear...

This is the Word of the Lord. *All: Thanks be to God.*

*We hear the **Gospel Reading**, from Matthew Chapter 4
Read by a representative of the RNLI*

As Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

At the end we hear...

This is the Gospel of the Lord. *All: Praise to you O Christ.*

***An Address** by Rev Jonny Scott, Rector of St Martin*

I wonder what's brought you here today?

Is the Sea Sunday Service something that's always in your diary – every year. Is it tradition?

Did mum or dad drag you along and you've really got no idea what you're doing here?
Don't worry, I feel like that sometimes.

Were you happily wandering along the Breakwater when you saw something curious happening and you thought you'd stop to take a look? Well, you're welcome. I'm glad you've stayed.

I wonder what brought you here today. Or maybe a better way of asking that is to say: 'I wonder what called you here today?'

That the amazing thing about the sea – it calls to us. Like a giant watery magnet, it has an insatiable pull. I remember when I was young we would drive across England from the

mountains of Cumbria where we lived to a holiday camp in Dorset. After 6 hours of driving, we could just sense that we were getting closer to the sea. The light in the air. The salt smell on the breeze. The sound of the gulls. And then there it was – the first one to spot the sea was the winner.

The sea had called to us, drawn us to itself. We were powerless to resist.

In the Disney film Moana, there's an incredible song – 'How Far I'll Go'. (Don't worry, I'm not going to sing it.). In this song, the daughter of the Island Chief looks longingly out beyond the shore of the Island she has never left. She looks to the line where the sky meets the sea, and it calls her. For Moana, the ocean is a place of hope, destiny and endless possibility. She knows that she must go on a quest – it begins where the land meets the ocean waves, but once the wind is in her sails, there's no telling how far she'll go.

We know the power of adventure that the sea calls us to. It's not safe. It's not predictable or reliable. It's not easy. But it calls to the deepest part of ourselves, the part that knows that there is more out there than we can possibly imagine.

Is it any wonder then, that Jesus went down to the boats on the Sea of Galilee to look for fishermen when he sought out his very first friends and followers?

Jesus wanted people who would join his quest; who had a thirst for venturing into the unknown. Here were folk – just ordinary folk with scars on their hands and sand in their hair – who knew what it meant to go beyond the horizon, to leave the comfort of home and take the ultimate risk.

But none of them knew that their journey would lead them into strange lands and through violent storms; lead them into conflict with an Empire and onto a hill with a cross outside Jerusalem. None of them knew that their quest would lead them to an empty tomb and the foundation of a whole new understanding of the power of the love of God.

But it did. It was not safe. It was not easy. But it called to the deepest parts of them. Peter, Andrew, James and John. Sons of the sea. Brothers in a boat. They left their nets and followed Jesus.

Jesus called them, and they understood that feeling. The insatiable call of adventure.

When we stand here by the Sea, it not so hard to imagine.

What called you here today? Was it just tradition? Were you really just passing by? Or was there something deeper? A call to follow something has stirred in your soul, something beyond the everyday?

Listen to that voice – because it may just lead you on a quest that will truly change your life.
Amen

We sing a hymn:

1. Will You Come And Follow Me

If I But Call Your Name?
Will You Go Where You Don't Know
And Never Be The Same?
Will You Let My Love Be Shown,
Will You Let My Name Be Known,
Will You Let My Life Be Grown
In You And You In Me?

2. Will You Leave Yourself Behind

If I But Call Your Name?
Will You Care For Cruel And Kind
And Never Be The Same?
Will You Risk The Hostile Stare
Should Your Life Attract Or Scare?
Will You Let Me Answer Prayer
In You And You In Me?

3. Will You Let The Blinded See

If I But Call Your Name?
Will You Set The Prisoners Free
And Never Be The Same?
Will You Kiss The Leper Clean,
And Do Such As This Unseen,
And Admit To What I Mean
In You And You In Me?

4. Lord, Your Summons Echoes True

When You But Call My Name.
Let Me Turn And Follow You
And Never Be The Same.
In Your Company I'll Go
Where Your Love And Footsteps Show.
Thus I'll Move And Live And Grow
In You And You In Me.

PRAYERS

The prayers will include the following response:

Lord of Sea and Sky:

All ***Hear our Prayer***

Let us pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us

All **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.**

BLESSING OF THE BOATS

Lord of sea and sky, of wind and rain, of calm and storm:
We ask your blessing upon these boats and all who sail in them.
Bless all navigators and crews and give them the assurance of your protection.
Watch over all who fish, who carry passengers,
who crew lifeboats, or bring essential cargoes to our shore.
Defend everyone in danger, storm, or peril,
that we may, day by day, live to honour your name,
through Jesus Christ our Saviour.

All **Amen**

We sing a hymn

1 Will your anchor hold in the storms of life,
when the clouds unfold their wings of strife?
When the strong tides lift, and the cables strain,
will your anchor drift, or firm remain?

*We have an anchor that keeps the soul
steadfast and sure while the billows roll;
fastened to the Rock which cannot move,
grounded firm and deep in the Saviour's love!*

2 Will your anchor hold in the straits of fear,
when the breakers roar and the reef is near?
While surges rage, and the wild winds blow,
shall the angry waves then your bark o'erflow?

3 Will your anchor hold in the floods of death,
when the waters cold chill your latest breath?
On the rising tide you can never fail,
while your anchor holds within the veil.

**4 Will your eyes behold through the morning
light**
the city of gold and the harbour bright?
Will you anchor safe by the heavenly shore,
when life's storms are past for evermore?

BLESSING AND DISMISSAL

The Rector offers a final blessing.

May God the Father watch over you;
may the Lord Jesus smile upon you and be gracious to you,
and may the Spirit of God help you to live justly, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with him, all the days of your life;
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you and all whom you love and pray for
this day and for ever more.

All **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed in whatever way to today's service, especially to Deputy Steve Luce and the RNLI, Dr Ben Rogers and the Sailing Club, and Joan Richard MBE who has done a phenomenal job in organising all the practicalities.