

St Martin's Day

Communion & Dedication

of the Infant Memorial Garden



The Service begins with a Processional Hymn

Praise, O God, for all thy saints
By whose life thy church doth live
But today our own St. Martin,
Lord again to thee we give.

Born of parents who were heathen,
Forced to serve an earthly king,
He did serve the God he lived for,
Counting Him as everything.

Living simply as a hermit,
Giving all that he could spare,
See him cut in twain his tunic,
With a naked man to share.

Later on, a monk, he taught men,
And as bishop he did lead,
With thy Holy Spirit's guidance,
All thy followers who took heed.

Martin made a rule of life,
Which his monks did well obey,
Wealth and comfort scorned they ever,
Living but to work and pray.

God the Father, God the Son and
God the Spirit we adore,
And our own St. Martin, Patron,
Bless us now and evermore. Amen

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**

We sit or kneel as we make our confession to God.

'How often have I longed to gather your children,
as a hen gathers her brood under her wings,' says the Lord,
'but you would not come to me.'

Let us as wayward children return to God
and confess our sins.

A time of silence, as we call to mind the ways we have fallen short.

Father, you come to meet us when we return to you:
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

Jesus, you died on the cross for our sins:
Christ, have mercy.

All **Christ, have mercy.**

Spirit, you give us life and peace:
Lord, have mercy.

All **Lord, have mercy.**

May the Father forgive *you* by the death of his Son and strengthen you to
live in the power of the Spirit all *your* days.

All **Amen**

*We stand to Sing the **Gloria***

(To the Tune of 'Ode to Joy')

**Glory be to God in heaven,
peace to those who love him well;
on the earth let all his people
speak his grace, his wonders tell:
Lord, we praise you for your glory,
mighty Father, heaven's king;
hear our joyful adoration
and accept the thanks we bring.**

**Only Son of God the Father,
Lamb who takes our sin away,
now with God in triumph seated
for your mercy, Lord, we pray:
Jesus Christ, most high and holy,
Saviour, you are God alone
in the glory of the Father
with the Spirit: Three-in-One!**

The Rector says the Collect for today

God all powerful,
who called Martin from the armies of this world
to be a faithful soldier of Christ:
give us grace to follow him
in his love and compassion for the needy,
and enable your Church to claim for all people
their inheritance as children of God;
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.

All **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

A Reading from Ephesians Chapter 4 – Read by Deputy Steve Luce

But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body's growth in building itself up in love.

So then, putting away falsehood, let all of us speak the truth to our neighbours, for we are members of one another. Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not make room for the devil. Thieves must give up stealing; rather let them labour and work honestly with their own hands, so as to have something to share with the needy. Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with which you were marked with a seal for the day of redemption. Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.

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

*We stand for The **Gospel Reading** – Read by Constable Karen Shenton-Stone*

Rector Alleluia! Alleluia!
Lord, you have the words of eternal life.

All **Alleluia!**

Reader: Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew
All **Glory to you O Lord.**

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

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

The Sermon, followed by a time of silence

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.'

What does comfort mean to you? Right now.

If I asked you to close your eyes and imagine comfort – deep comfort – what would it be?

Personally, I take a deep breath. I feel warmth. I feel held. The image that comes most immediately to mind is of the two kittens we have just adopted – Tilly and Mittens. They seem hard-wired for seeking comfort. A cardboard box. A swathe of sunlight on the living room floor. A snug corner of the utility room – they are comfort-seeking creatures – perhaps that's why we love them so much: they remind us what comfort really means.

Some people talk about comfort in relation to wealth. 'Oh we're comfortably off', they will say – meaning they're loaded. Well that's fine, if that's your thing, but I don't think it's what Jesus had in mind when he said that those who mourn will be comforted.

True comfort is far deeper than a pile of cash.

And this, St Martin knew. Whatever his background, or his rank in the army; whatever his wealth or privilege; Martin knew that he was called to share a comfort far more profound than that which money or power could ever buy.

That's why, on that cold winter's night, when he met that poor man outside the city gates, Martin took his own cloak, cut it in half, and gave to the stranger the warmth and comfort that he needed.

Martin clothed this man in dignity, compassion and mercy. That is the comfort we are called as Christians to share.

I think of all those hand stitched blankets which are lovingly made every year by our community. I think of Mustard Seed Jersey, who hand deliver them to our brothers and sisters in Romania. I think of the Food Bank at the Methodist Chapel, the support workers at EyeCan, the life savers at St Catherine's RNLI, the parcels we deliver at Harvest and Candlemas. And on and on and on.

This is the ministry of comfort in our Parish and beyond which was inspired by the giving of a cloak by a Roman Soldier 1700 years ago, which was, in itself, inspired by the love of Christ.

Comfort echoes through the ages, and is made real again today by acts of mercy and acts of love.

We give comfort in the name of Christ, and in the spirit of our Patron St Martin.

But comfort is not only to be given, but received.

God promises us his comfort and his peace – it is freely given, and it is ours to freely receive.

As Christians – perhaps especially as privileged, wealthy, western Christians – we are often more eager to give than to receive. 'What need do I have of God's comfort, God's mercy, God's grace?'

Well, perhaps we have more need of it than most! In a rather paradoxical way, we find it easier to give love and charity than to receive it. But receive it we must, if we are ever to be transformed into the love of Christ.

Christ offers us a cloak as well. Remember that. We may not think we need it, but we do. Christ is longing to place a warm blanket around our shoulders, if only we are willing to accept it.

A blanket of forgiveness, a blanket of encouragement, a blanket of protection, mercy and love.

There will be times in our lives when we feel especially in need of that comfort – times of struggle, times of grief, times of anxiety. Maybe it's at those times that we can really feel it, but in truth it is always there.

St Martin gave comfort – but he was willing to receive it, too. For Martin, he found that comfort in renouncing violence, in living close to God and his people, in ministering to the

poor and needy and in accepting that he himself was poor and needy, too. It was not through his giving, but through his receiving that Martin truly knew himself to be a blessed child of God.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Those words again.

At the end of our service today we will head outside together to bless and dedicate our Infant Loss Memorial Garden. Here is my prayer, that through its grace and beauty that garden may be a warm cloak of comfort to those who stand in the cold winds of sorrow.

May all who seek God's comfort and peace receive a glimpse of it there. May those who mourn be blessed.

God's comfort is ready to be given and ready to be received. That was the mission of St Martin. That is our call today.

I end with the words of St Paul, that our Deputy, Steve, read a moment ago. 'Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.' Comfort one another, as God in Christ does comfort you.

Amen

We stand to proclaim the Creed.

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers of Intercession. This response is used:

Lord, make us to be numbered with your saints -
All **in glory everlasting**

The Intercessions may end as follows

Merciful Father

All **Accept these prayers for the sake of your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen**

We stand for the **Peace**

We are fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God,
through Christ our Lord, who came and preached peace
to those who were far off and those who were near.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you

All **and also with you.**

We exchange a sign of peace, and prepare to sing a **Hymn**, *during which the Altar
is prepared for Communion*

*Bind us together, Lord,
bind us together
with cords that cannot be broken;
bind us together, Lord,
bind us together,
bind us together in love.*

There is only one God,
there is only one King,
there is only one Body –
that is why we sing:

Fit for the glory of God,
purchased by His precious Blood.
born with the right to be free,
Jesus the victory has won.

We are the family of God,
we are his promise divine,
we are his chosen desire,
we are the glorious new wine.

THE LITURGY OF THE SACRAMENT

The President offers a prayer for the preparation of the Altar.

Blessed be God, who feeds the hungry,
Who raises the poor, who fills our praise
All **Blessed be God forever**

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord is here

All **His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

All **We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, always and everywhere to give you thanks, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.

We rejoice in the glorious splendour of your majesty for you have given us a share with Martin in the inheritance of the saints in light.

In the darkness of this passing age, they proclaim the glory of your kingdom. Chosen as lights in the world, they surround our steps as we journey on towards the city of eternal light where they sing the everlasting song of triumph.

In communion with angels and archangels and all who have served you on earth and worship you now in heaven, we raise our voices to proclaim your glory, for ever praising you and singing:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

After the words of Jesus at the Last Supper, we say:

Great is the mystery of faith.

All Christ has died: Christ is risen: Christ will come again.

The Prayer ends with the following words:

all honour and glory be yours, almighty Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

Let us sit and pray with confidence, as our Saviour taught us:

All Our Father who art in heaven...

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Jesus, Lamb of God,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, bearer of our sins,
have mercy on us.**

**Jesus, redeemer of the world,
grant us your peace.**

God's holy gifts for God's holy people
All **Jesus Christ is holy.**
Jesus Christ is Lord
To the glory of God the Father

Once you have received, please leave church through the vestry, and make your way to the Infant Memorial. The service will continue when all are gathered there.

Blessing and Dedication of the Infant Memorial Garden

We pray for those who have known the grief of infant loss.

O God, you share our sorrow.
Look with tenderness on all who have hoped for children.
Cover them with the mantle of your loving kindness
as they travel through a landscape of grief
that they believed would be spring.
Lead them by the hand until our winter is past,
and the flowers appear on the earth again.
For even as season gives way to season
these tiny, unfurled buds
have bloomed for ever in our families,
and where they have gone we will follow,
to the home that you have prepared for us
where there is no season and no separation
and love can find completeness.

All **Amen.**

We pray for all babies who have died before, during or soon after birth.

Into your arms, gracious God,
we commend these lives,
complete and precious in your sight.
For they have known not the light
nor the darkness of this world.
But only the love in which they were made and held.
As they travel from our longing to your care
receive them in heaven's safe keeping
and enfold them in your peace this day and forevermore.

All **Amen.**

We bless and dedicate our Infant Memorial Garden

God of abundant compassion,
all creation is precious in your sight,

and held in your embrace.
Bless, this infant memorial garden that we dedicate to your care.
Comfort all who seek comfort here.
Weep with all who weep here.
And abide with all who walk from here
into the fullness of life you have promised them.
This we ask in the name of the Father, and of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit.

All **Amen.**

We sing our final hymn.

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 for ever 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 spring-time 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!

The Rector offers a blessing.

May God give us
comfort and peace,
light and joy;
In this world and the next.
And the blessing of God,
Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer,
Be with us and those we love, now and always.

All **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

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

The Rector and Church Council would like to thank all who have made this Infant Memorial possible. Those who spoke so bravely about their grief; the support of the Parish of St Martin in giving permission; the labour of Lester, Paul, Ian and Jonathan Le Maistre; the skills of Bob Fosse; the generosity of Ransoms Garden Centre, Doreen Ward, Constable Karen Shenton-Stone, and Heritage Memorials.

If you would like to make a donation towards the continued maintenance of this space, please speak to the churchwardens.