

Please join us after the service for refreshments.

Never marry but for love; but see that thou lovest what is lovely.
He that minds a body and not a soul
has not the better part of that relationship,
and will consequently lack the noblest comfort of a married life.

Between a man and his wife nothing ought to rule but love.
As love ought to bring them together,
so it is the best way to keep them well together.

A husband and wife that love one another
show their children that they should do so too.
Others visibly lose their authority in their families
by their contempt of one another,
and teach their children to be unnatural by their own examples.

Let not enjoyment lessen, but augment, affection;
it being the basest of passions to like when we have not,
what we slight when we possess.

Here it is we ought to search out our pleasure,
where the field is large and full of variety, and of an enduring nature;
sickness, poverty or disgrace being not able to shake it
because it is not under the moving influences of worldly contingencies.

Nothing can be more entire and without reserve;
nothing more zealous, affectionate and sincere;
nothing more contented than such a couple,
nor greater temporal felicity than to be one of them.

Never Marry But For Love: William Penn (1644-1718)

Contact the clergy...

Parish Office 0151 236 5287 enquiries@livpc.co.uk

Revd Michelle Montrose (Asst Priest) revmichelle@livpc.co.uk 07528 331316

Fr Bill Addy (Asst Priest) revbill@livpc.co.uk 07836 225709

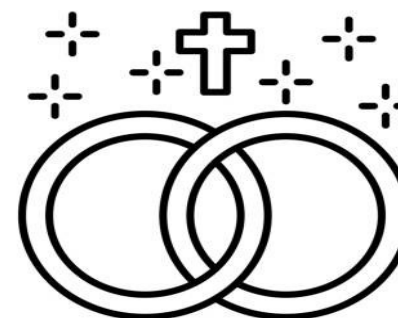
Mthr Jennifer Brady (Asst Priest) revjennifer@livpc.co.uk 07871 678126

Fr Steven Shakespeare (Asst Priest) frsteven@livepc.co.uk 01512365287

www.livpc.co.uk

A Celebration of Love

2 March 2025



Welcome to Liverpool Parish Church.

All are welcome to take part as they feel called.

*This evening we celebrate God's gift of love, and the reflection of
that gift in the lives of couples to be married here this year,
and those married here recently.*

Before the service

Organ: Variations (Organ Concerto op.4 no.1 in G) – George Frederick Handel
(1685-1759)

Please stand, as you are able, as the clergy enter and the Saint Nicholas' Singers sing the introit:

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum; benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui, Jesus. Sancta Maria, Mater Dei, ora pro nobis peccatoribus, nunc et in hora mortis nostrae. Amen.

[Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.]

Words: Luke 1.28

Music: Franz Peter Schubert (1797-1828)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you. **And also with you.**

God is love, and those who live in love live in God, and God lives in them.

**Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
To his feet thy tribute bring.
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
Who like me his praise should sing?
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise the everlasting King.**

**Praise him for his grace and favour
To our fathers in distress;
Praise him still the same for ever,
Slow to chide, and swift to bless.
Praise him! Praise him!
Glorious in his faithfulness.**

**Father-like, he tends and spares us;
Well our feeble frame he knows;
In his hands he gently bears us,
Rescues us from all our foes.
Praise him! Praise him!
Widely as his mercy flows.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us; And lead us not into
temptation, But deliver us from evil. Amen.**

The Saint Nicholas' Singers sing the anthem:

For the beauty of the earth,
For the beauty of the skies,
For the love which from our birth
Over and around us lies

Refrain: Lord of all, to thee we raise This our joyful hymn of praise

For the beauty of the hour,
Of the day and of the night,
Hill and vale, and tree and flower
Sun and moon and stars of light: *Refrain*

For the joy of human love,
Brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth and friends above,
For all gentle thoughts and mild: *Refrain*

For each perfect gift of thine,
To our race so freely given,
Graces human and divine,
Flow'rs of earth and buds of heav'n: *Refrain*

Words: F. S. Pierpoint (1835-1917)

Music: John Rutter (born 1945)

The Blessing: (please stand)

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side, and guide you in truth and peace;
and the + blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Organ: Toccata (from Symphonie Nr.5) – Charles Marie Widor

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**Finish then thy new creation, pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation, perfectly restored in thee,
Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and
praise!**

Words: Charles Wesley (1707-88)

Music: 'Blaenwern' William Rowlands (1860-19037)

Vows (please stand)

Please repeat each line after the Priest:

We live in love;
Love lives in us.
We live in God;
God lives in us.
We turn away from God,
Yet God has called us children.
As Jesus Christ loves us
with a love stronger than death,
we vow to love all people
by the help and love of God.

Prayers (please sit or kneel)

Almighty God give you grace to persevere, that he may complete in you the work he has already begun, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you send your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of all your people. Open the hearts of these your servants to the riches of his grace, that they may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Eternal God, true and loving Father, in faithful love you make your servants one. May we together witness to your love in this troubled world; may unity overcome division, forgiveness heal injury and joy triumph over sorrow, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

**Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name,
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.**

**Angels, help us to adore him;
Ye behold him face to face;
Sun and moon, bow down before him;
Dwellers all in time and space.
Praise him! Praise him!
Praise with us the God of grace.**

Words: Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847) based on Psalm 103

Music: 'Praise, My Soul' John Goss (1800-80)

Preface (please sit)

In the presence of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we gather this evening to celebrate the gift of love, and to rejoice together in the expression of love through marriage and faithful partnership.

Love is shared in many ways, and finds many expressions: at first we know the love of parents, grandparents, carers, and those who tend to us when we are new-born and helpless. In time we may know the love of sisters and brothers, of our wider family, and of strangers.

As we grow, we learn the love shared in friendship, and discover in time romantic love and physical attraction. Life may challenge our love for others and ourselves, for the paths of life and love are sometimes stony. In our pain and in our joy, we look to God, who knit us together in our mothers' womb, who knows us fully and loves us without end.

Today we renew our commitment to love God in ourselves and one another, and to show God's love for the world in our lives.

The Declarations and Collect

Will you, with all your heart, look for the signs of God's love in the world, seek God in the face of the stranger and the unloved, and declare that love in your life? **We will.**

Will you, with all your heart, look for the signs of God's love within you, seek God at work in your lives, and accept God's love for all that you are? **We will.**

Let us pray.

God our Father, you have taught us through your Son that love is the fulfilling of the law. Grant to us your servants that, loving one another as he commanded, we may continue in your eternal love, 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 Saint Nicholas' Singers sing the anthem:

Jesu, joy of man's desiring,
Holy wisdom, love most bright;
Drawn by Thee, our souls aspiring
Soar to uncreated light.
Word of God, our flesh that fashioned,
With the fire of life impassioned,
Striving still to truth unknown
Soaring, dying round Thy throne.

Words: Martin Jahn (c.1620-82) translated Robert Bridges (1844-1930)

Music: Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)

First Reading (Ephesians 3.14-end)

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

The Saint Nicholas' Singers sing:

*Panis angelicus fit panis hominum, dat panis coelicus Figuris terminum;
O res mirabilis! manducat Dominum pauper, pauper servus et humilis.*

[May the Bread of Angels become bread for mankind, the Bread of Heaven puts all foreshadowings to an end; Oh, thing miraculous! The body of the Lord will nourish the poor, the poor, and humble servant]

Words: St Thomas Aquinas (1225-74)

Music: Cesar Franck (1822-90)

Second Reading (A moment of happiness—Mewlana Jalaluddin Rumi)

A moment of happiness,
you and I sitting on the verandah,
apparently two, but one in soul, you and I.
We feel the flowing water of life here,
you and I, with the garden's beauty
and the birds singing.
The stars will be watching us,
and we will show them
what it is to be a thin crescent moon.
You and I unselfed, will be together,
indifferent to idle speculation, you and I.
The parrots of heaven will be cracking sugar
as we laugh together, you and I.
In one form upon this earth,
and in another form in a timeless sweet land.

Sermon— Revd Michelle Montrose

Please stand to sing:

**Love Divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down,
Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercies crown.
Jesu, thou art all compassion, pure unbounded love thou art;
Visit us with thy salvation, enter every trembling heart.**

**Come, almighty to deliver, let us all thy life receive;
Suddenly return, and never, never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing, serve thee as thy hosts above,
Pray, and praise thee, without ceasing, glory in thy perfect love.**