

## Discernment Service for start of 2022

This is a special service in which we come together as a parish to seek wisdom from each other and from God as we move into the third year of the Covid pandemic. We are all exhausted and stressed. St Paul's was already a very small parish before the pandemic, and was already struggling to find people willing to commit to leadership roles. Now... well, now we are on our knees before the God who loves us. There are only two things that will get us through this:

1. God's enabling grace, and
2. Our love for each other.

This service will be different in a number of ways, but don't worry! We will be back in the church and back to our usual format next week and for the rest of the year.

### Say together:

#### Psalm 71.1-6

<sup>1</sup> To you, Lord, have I come for shelter:

let me never be put to shame.

<sup>2</sup> In your righteousness rescue and deliver me:

incline your ear to me and save me.

<sup>3</sup> Be for me a rock of refuge, a fortress to defend me:

for you are my high rock, and my stronghold.

<sup>4</sup> Rescue me, O my God, from the hand of the wicked:

from the grasp of the pitiless and unjust.

<sup>5</sup> For you, Lord, are my hope:

you are my confidence, O God, from my youth upward.

<sup>6</sup> On you have I leaned since my birth:

you are the one who brought me out of my mother's womb,

and my praise is of you continually.

### Gerbera Scale activity

#### 1 Corinthians 13.1-13

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. <sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not

insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup> Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. <sup>9</sup> For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup> but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup> When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. <sup>12</sup> For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup> And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

Brief reflection and introduction

Discernment Process

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

Loving God,

we thank you for this world of wonder and delight.

You have given it to us to care for,

so that all your creatures may enjoy its bounty.

Lord our God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that when we turned away from you,

you sent Jesus to live and work as one of us,

and bring us back to you.

He showed us how to love you

and set us free to love and serve one another.

Lord our God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

We thank you that on the cross

Jesus took away our sin,

all that keeps us from each other and from you.

He frees us from hate and fear,

from all that destroys love and trust.

Lord our God,

**we give you thanks and praise.**

And so with everyone who believes in you,

with all the saints and angels,

we rejoice and praise you, saying:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,  
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

And now we thank you  
for these gifts of bread and wine;  
may we who receive them,  
as Jesus said,  
share his body and his blood.

On the night he was betrayed, he took bread  
and gave you thanks.

He broke the bread and gave it to his friends, and said,  
'Take and eat. This is my body given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.'

After supper he took the cup  
and gave you thanks.

He shared the cup with them and said,

'This is my blood poured out  
so that sins may be forgiven.

Do this in remembrance of me.'

**Christ has died.**

**Christ is risen.**

**Christ will come again.**

You have gathered us together  
to feed on Christ  
and to remember all he has done for us:

Fill us with your Spirit  
that we may follow Jesus  
in all we do and say,  
working for justice and bringing your peace  
to this world that you have made.  
Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Blessing and honour and glory and power  
are yours for ever and ever. Amen.**

*Intercession*

Accept our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray,

**Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
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 for ever. Amen.**

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

We who are many are one body, **for we all share in the one bread.**

The gifts of God for the people of God.

Come let us take this holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ in remembrance that he died for us, and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

Bread rolls are distributed to the groups, saying:

*The body of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in eternal life*

Or

*The body of Christ, given for you*

P: Living God,  
in this holy meal you fill us with new hope.  
May the power of your love,  
which we have known in word and sacrament,  
continue your saving work among us,  
give us courage for our pilgrimage,  
and bring us to the joys you promise.

**Most loving God,  
Most loving God,  
you send us into the world you love.  
Give us grace to go thankfully and with courage  
in the power of your Spirit.**

P: **Blessing**

The peace of God which passes all understanding  
keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his  
Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;  
and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be  
among you and remain with you always. Amen .

**LA: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord:  
In the name of Christ. Amen**