

*Benefice of The Lee and the Benefice of Hawridge
with Cholesbury and St Leonard's*

Festival Evensong Order of Service

To mark the 500th Anniversary of the Tyndale Bible
Sunday 11th October 2026 at 5.00 PM
at The Old Church of St. John the Baptist, The Lee
500th Anniversary of the Tyndale Bible

Enter church

Introduction and Notices:

Good evening.

It's my pleasure to welcome you as we come together to mark the 500th Anniversary of the Tyndale Bible with this festival evensong service.

Before we formally begin our worship let's pause for a moment of silence and reflection, to gather our thoughts and focus them on the word made flesh, our saviour Jesus Christ, who we come to honour and glorify, in this celebration.

Hymn:

Our service commences with our first hymn:

Number 373: Help us, O Lord, to learn

The Greeting:

¹⁶ All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3: 16 - 17

Preparation:

Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness; and that we should not dissemble nor cloke them before the face of almighty God our heavenly Father; but confess them with an humble, lowly, penitent, and obedient heart; to the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same, by his infinite goodness and mercy. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God; yet ought we most chiefly so to do, when we assemble and meet together to render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands, to set forth his most worthy praise, to hear his most holy Word, and to ask those things which are requisite and necessary, as well for the body as the soul. Wherefore I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me with a pure heart, and humble voice, unto the throne of the heavenly grace, saying after me;

Confession:

**Almighty and most merciful Father,
we have erred, and strayed from thy ways like
lost sheep.**

**We have followed too much the devices and
desires of our own hearts.**

We have offended against thy holy laws.

**We have left undone those things which we
ought to have done;
and we have done those things which we ought
not to have done;
and there is no health in us.**

**But thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us,
miserable offenders.**

**Spare thou them, O God, which confess their
faults.**

**Restore thou them that are penitent;
according to thy promises declared unto
mankind
in Christ Jesu our Lord.**

**And grant, O most merciful Father, for his
sake,**

**that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous,
and sober life,
to the glory of thy holy name.**

Amen.

Absolution:

Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness, and live; and hath given power and commandment to his ministers, to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins: he pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel. Wherefore let us beseech him to grant us true repentance, and his Holy Spirit, that those things may please him, which we do at this present; and that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure, and holy; so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Hymn:

Please stand to sing our next hymn:

Number 509: Rise and hear! The Lord is speaking

The Versicles and Responses:

O Lord, open thou our lips
and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise.

O God, make speed to save us.

O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the
Holy Ghost;

**as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without end.**

Amen.

Praise ye the Lord.

The Lord's name be praised.

Psalms 119: 89 - 96

The Lord exists for ever;

your word is firmly fixed in heaven.

Your faithfulness endures to all generations;

**you have established the earth,
and it stands fast.**

By your appointment they stand today,

for all things are your servants.

If your law had not been my delight,

I would have perished in my misery.

I will never forget your precepts,

for by them you have given me life.

I am yours; save me,

for I have sought your precepts.

The wicked lie in wait to destroy me,

but I consider your decrees.

I have seen a limit to all perfection,

**but your commandment is exceedingly
broad.**

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,

and to the Holy Ghost;

as it was in the beginning,

is now, and ever shall be,

world without end.

Amen.

Old Testament Reading

Georgie will now bring us our Old Testament reading:

Proverbs 8: 4 – 11

Georgie Haywood

This is the word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

Hymn:

Please stand to sing our next Hymn:

Number: 490

Lord, I have made your word
my choice

Magnificat:

Please stand to say the Magnificat – which we will say antiphony – alternate verses.

- 1 My soul doth magnify the Lord:
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
- 2 **For he hath regarded :**
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
- 3 For behold, from henceforth :
all generations shall call me blessed.
- 4 **For he that is mighty hath magnified me :**
and holy is his Name.
- 5 And his mercy is on them that fear him :
throughout all generations.
- 6 **He hath shewed strength with his arm :**
he hath scattered the proud in the
imagination of their hearts.
- 7 He hath put down the mighty from their seat :
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
- 8 **He hath filled the hungry with good things :**
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
- 9 He remembering his mercy hath holpen his
servant Israel :
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and
his seed for ever.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be: world without end.
Amen.**

New Testament Reading:

Our New Testament reading is taken from
John 17: 6 – 8, 14 – 19

⁶I have declared thy name unto ye men which thou gavest me out of the world. Thyne they were and thou gavest them me and they have kept thy sayings.

⁷Now they know that all things whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee. ⁸For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me and they have received them and know surely that I came out from thee: and do believe that thou didst send me.

¹⁴I have given them thy words and the world hath hated them because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world. ¹⁵I desire not that thou shouldst take them out of the world: but that thou keep them from evil. ¹⁶They are not of the world as I am not of the world. ¹⁷Sanctify them with thy truth. Thy saying is truth.

¹⁸As thou didst send me into the world even so have I sent them into the world ¹⁹and for their sakes sanctify I myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Nunc Dimittis:

We say the Nunc Dimittis together:

Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word.

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation;

Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

To be a light to lighten the Gentiles and to be the glory of thy people Israel.

Glory be to the Father,

and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost;

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Sermon:

Let us pray:

"Blessed Lord, who hast caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: Grant that we may in such wise hear them, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy Word, we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life, which thou hast given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Amen

William Tyndale's heart and passion was to give ordinary people the ability to read the bible in a language they understood and related to, in their native language, in their own tongue. He believed that the Good News of the Gospel should be accessible by all.

Furthermore, he knew that if he made the scriptures comprehensible to everybody, they might discern for themselves, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the truth they contained unto salvation.

Accordingly, he set about translating the bible, first the New Testament, with an intention to go on and translate the Old, into vernacular English, knowing full well that such a course of action was not only an anti-establishment undertaking but also forbidden and considered an act of heresy.

This year we celebrate the 500th Anniversary of his publishing of his English Translation of the New Testament, an act so radical that it cost him his life. He was consequently martyred for his bible translation and distribution activities.

The translation of the bible into English was a treat to the establishment, the religious and political rulers, as it challenged their authority and control over their subjects. If the interpretation of the bible was limited to the educated, they could determine and exert power and dominion over the people and tell them what to believe and how to act. The availability of an English translation of the scriptures would, however, allow the ordinary people of England to determine the truth for themselves, liberating them from such domination and hegemony, and the ruling classes knew it. This is what made Tyndale's mission such a dangerous act.

He was motivated by his belief that God reveals himself through the scriptures. 'God is but this word' was his mantra. He wanted ordinary people to come to know God, without the need for the mediation of the church. Through his English translation he gave all people direct access to God's revelation of himself, in and through the scriptures, and the freedom to read his word for themselves.

His heart was to enable ordinary people to respond to God directly and without mediation and develop a personal faith for themselves. Accordingly, in his translation he chose words that reflected the new ways of understanding personal faith and the church, which the sweeping waves of reformation were bringing to the fore.

In this sense his work was truly liberating and followed after the influential reformer Erasmus who had said: “Christ desires his mysteries to be published abroad as widely as possible. I would that scriptures were translated into all languages, of all Christian people, and that they might be read and known.”

Correspondingly, Tyndale’s translation naturally challenged the traditions, structures and authorised teaching of the western church, just as Martin Luther had done when he published his 95 theses, and laid the foundation for the English reformation.

He placed the scriptures into the hands of ordinary people, in the belief that anyone, whatever their position, class or status could approach God directly and personally in prayer and in faith.

Most significantly he enabled the three key principles of the reformation to be available to all - justification through faith alone, justification through scripture alone and the right of private judgement.

Ordinary people were able to be saved by true faith, through the revelation of the scriptures, for themselves and by their own determination.

This meant that the people were able to respond themselves to God's revelation and be liberated unto personal salvation in Christ alone through faith.

Rather than being told what to think and how to behave, the people could now determine themselves what they believe and be more sincere in their faith.

Ironically, of course, this also meant that whilst many people opted to follow Christ themselves, many others rejected the truth and determined it was not for them. They became enlightened, some to the light of Christ, others to the bright lights of the world.

As we reflected this morning, 'Many are called but only some are chosen'.

Those that did opt for faith in Christ, however, were enabled to do so with a greater integrity and veracity than before and they could be more heartfelt in their response and stauncher and more committed in their faith and witness, to the glory of God.

Tyndale's English translation certainly played its part in this enlightenment, and this is perhaps his greatest legacy and his enduring influence; the ability of each and everyone of us to make up our own mind and determine our own response, which of course the revelation of God in the scriptures compels us to do.

The glory of God.

Amen

The Apostles Creed:

We respond to the revelation of God's word to us by affirming the faith that was determined from the scriptures and distilled into the Apostles creed, which we now proclaim together.

**I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth:
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father
Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick
and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Catholick
Church;
The Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of
sins;
The Resurrection of the body, And the Life
everlasting.
Amen.**

[Turn over for the Versicles and Responses]

The Versicles and Responses

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

Christ, have mercy upon us.

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer

Uniting our prayers with the whole company of heaven, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us:

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.

Amen.

○ Lord, shew thy mercy upon us.

And grant us thy salvation.

○ Lord, save the King.

And mercifully hear us when we call upon thee.

Endue thy Ministers with righteousness.

And make thy chosen people joyful.

○ Lord, save thy people.

And bless thine inheritance.

Give peace in our time, ○ Lord.

**Because there is none other that fighteth for us,
but only thou, ○ God.**

○ God, make clean our hearts within us.

And take not thy Holy Spirit from us.

The Collects:

Lord,
give to your people grace to hear and keep your word
that,
after the example of your servant William Tyndale,
we may not only profess your gospel
but also be ready to suffer and die for it,
to the honour of your name;
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.

O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels,
and all just works do proceed:

Give unto thy servants that peace which the world
cannot give;

that both our hearts may be set to obey thy
commandments,

and also that by thee we being defended from the fear
of our enemies may pass our time in rest and
quietness;

through the merits of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Lighten our darkness, we beseech thee, O Lord;
and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and
dangers of this night;
for the love of thy only Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Hymn:

Please stand to sing our next Hymn:

Number: Backpage God has spoken by the prophets

Prayers of Intercession:

Let us pray:

Almighty God, you planted in the heart of your servant William Tyndale a consuming passion to bring the Scriptures to people in their native tongue, and endowed him with the gift of powerful and graceful expression and with strength to persevere against all obstacles: Reveal to us your saving Word, as we read and study the Scriptures, and hear them calling us to repentance and life; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Lord Jesus,

We pray for your Church, that we may always be faithful guardians and a bold proclaimers of your truth. We pray for all translators, linguists, and publishers who work to make the scriptures accessible in every native tongue. Give your Church a consuming passion for the gospel, that your people may not only profess the word but live it out daily.

Amen

Taking a lead from the heart of your servant William Tyndale, we ask that you send your church true expounders of the word. Grant all bishops, priests, and lay leaders the power to speak directly to the hearts of your people. May their teaching be clear, free from self-glory, and completely focused on your honour and praise. Equip your people to discern for themselves the truth you wish speak to them.

Amen

Remembering Tyndale's dying cry, "Lord, open the King of England's eyes," we pray for the leaders of our own nation and the rulers of the world. Open the eyes of all in authority to see justice, truth, and the value of human dignity. Where there is spiritual blindness, political tyranny, or censorship, let the light of your truth break through.

Amen

We pray for our local community, schools, and universities. Just as Tyndale desired that even the "boy that driveth the plough" should know the scriptures, we pray that all may come to know the truth of thy saving word.

Amen

We pray for ourselves.

We acknowledge our sin and trespass.

Yet be Thou a merciful Father, and deal not with us according to our deserving... but give us grace that we may so live that Thy holy name may be hallowed and solidified in us. And keep our hearts, that we neither do nor speak; no, that we not once think or purpose anything but that which is to Thy honour and praise, and above all things make Thy name and honour to be sought of us and not our own name and vain glory.

Amen.

We hold before you all who suffer for their faith, remembering that your servant William endured long imprisonment without light or heat. Give strength, comfort, and endurance to all prisoners of conscience and those facing systemic opposition. We pray also for the sick and those facing personal trials that your living voice may bring them healing and wholeness.

Amen

We give thanks for the noble army of martyrs, for William Tyndale, and for all who have died in the faith of Christ. Keep us bound together by your Holy Spirit with all your saints and bring us at last into your city of light.

Amen

The prayers conclude with the grace:

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost,
be with us all evermore.
Amen.**

Hymn:

Our service concludes with our final hymn:

Number 431: We have a gospel to proclaim

The Blessing:

Rev. Chris Haywood

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

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

And the blessing of the God almighty,

Sign of cross

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be upon you and remain with you always.

Amen.

Vestry Prayer:

The Lord be with you

And also with you

Let us bless the lord

Thanks be to God

May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of

Christ rest in peace

and rise in glory