

A Service of Thanksgiving for 25 years of ministry to  
Old Town, Swindon by  
the Revd. Canon Simon Stevenette



A rededication to the continuing Christian ministry within the  
Old Town Partnership of Churches and the Bristol Diocese  
for us all

Theme: 'God's continuing mission, past, present and future'

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 7.30pm in Christ Church, Swindon**

The service is dedicated to the memory of the Revd John and Angela Stevenette who gave so much to Simon, Nicola and the Christian ministry of Christ Church Swindon over the years.



*'their generosity of spirit knew no bounds'*

Welcome to our special service of thanksgiving. We come together as one community in Christ to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the installation of Simon to the Parish of Christ Church with St Mary's, Swindon.

As you prepare for worship, please spend some time reflecting on the words of Isaiah 6 v.8: *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying 'whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' And I said, 'Here I am, send me!'* How would you respond to the same question?

When a priest celebrates his anniversary.  
It is actually not about him.  
It's about the PRIESTHOOD of which he is a model.  
It's about CHRIST whom he exemplifies.  
It's about the wonderful work of a priest,  
And the way he touches the lives of so many.  
In occasions like this  
We have a chance to express our love and gratitude  
For all Simon's achievements  
In the twenty five years of his ministry  
In the Lord's vineyard in this place.

*Before the service the Christ Church bellringers will ring a full peal of Grandsire  
Caters*

## **Please stand for our first Hymn when its announced**

Christ is made the sure foundation,  
Christ the head and cornerstone,  
chosen of the Lord, and precious,  
binding all the church in one,  
holy Zion's help for ever,  
and her confidence alone.

To this temple where we call you,  
come, O Lord of Hosts, today;  
you have promised loving kindness,  
hear your servants as we pray;  
bless your people now before you,  
turn our darkness into day.

Hear the cry of all your people,  
what they ask and hope to gain;  
what they gain from you, for ever  
with your chosen to retain,  
and hereafter in your glory  
evermore with you to reign.

Praise and honour to the Father,  
praise and honour to the Son,  
praise and honour to the Spirit.  
ever Three and ever One,  
One in might and One in glory  
while unending ages run.

*'Urbs beata Jerusalem' (c. 7<sup>th</sup> century)  
Trans. John Mason Neale (1818-1866) alt.*

## **Welcome - The Revd Canon Simon Stevenette**

### **The Revd. Canon Simon Stevenette says:**

Behold, our defender, O God, and look upon the face of you anointed.  
For one day in your courts is better than a thousand

*Psalm 84: 8-9*

The Lord be with you  
**And also with you**

**The Ven. Christopher Bryan, Archdeacon of Malmesbury, will say:**

Beloved in Christ, we have come together to offer our worship and praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, and to give thanks for the ministry of priests in this place; and especially for the devoted work of Simon Stevenette.

We pray for his continued health and wisdom  
that, by the power of the Holy Spirit,  
he may continue to give himself to the service of God.  
We commit ourselves afresh to serve our community  
that the earth may be filled with God's love, justice and peace.

**Choir Anthem: 'God so loved the world' (John Stainer)**

*Please sit or kneel*

**The Revd. Canon Simon Stevenette:**

We come to God from whom no secrets are hidden,  
To ask for his forgiveness and peace.

God be gracious to us and bless us,  
and make your face shine upon us:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

May your ways be known on the earth,  
Your saving power among the nations:  
Christ, have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,  
And reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:  
Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

The almighty and merciful Lord  
Grant you pardon and forgiveness of all your sins,  
Time for amendment of life,  
And the grace and strength of the Holy Spirit.

**Amen**

## **The Liturgy of the Word**

### **Collect**

God our Father, Lord of all the world,  
through your Son you have called us into the fellowship  
of your universal church:

hear our prayer for your faithful people  
that in their vocation and ministry  
each may be an instrument of your love,  
and give to all your servants the needful gifts of grace;  
through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen**

### **New Testament Bible reading - Ephesians 3:14-21 read by Nicola Stevenette**

#### **A prayer for the listeners**

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, for ever and ever. Amen.

This is the word of the Lord

### **Thanks be to God**

*Please remaining standing for these songs but do feel free to sit if you need to particularly after coming forward for anointing.*

## **Worship songs:**

Faithful one, so unchanging  
Ageless one, you are my rock of peace  
Lord of all I depend on you  
I call out to you, again and again  
I call out to you, again and again

You are my rock in times of trouble  
You lift me up when I fall down  
All through the storm  
Your love is, the anchor  
My hope is in You alone

*Doerksen Brian Robert / Brian Doerksen  
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King of kings, Majesty  
God of Heaven living in me  
Gentle Saviour, closest friend  
Strong Deliverer, beginning and end  
All within me falls at Your throne

Your Majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty

Earth and Heaven worship You  
Love eternal, Faithful and True  
Who bought the nations, ransomed souls  
Brought this sinner near to Your throne  
All within me cries out in praise.

Your majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now  
In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty

Your majesty, I can but bow  
I lay my all before You now

In royal robes I don't deserve  
I live to serve Your Majesty

*Jarrold Cooper*

**At the beginning of these songs there will be an opportunity for every body to come forward to receive anointing with Chrism Oil blessed by Bishop Viv on Maundy Thursday at Bristol Cathedral for Christian service.**

The words to be used as the Sign of the Cross is made on your hands will be:

Leader: Jesus' light shine in you and through you to others

Response: **Amen**

### **Song**

There is a Redeemer,  
Jesus, God's own Son,  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
Holy One.

*Thank you O my Father,  
For giving us your Son,  
And leaving your Spirit  
Till the work on earth is done.*

Jesus, my Redeemer,  
Name above all names,  
Precious Lamb of God, Messiah,  
O for sinners slain.

When I stand in glory,  
I will see his face,  
And there I'll serve my King for ever,  
In that Holy place.

*Melody Green*

## **Gospel - Matthew 5:13-16 - read by Thomas Stevenette**

### **Salt and Light**

'You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

This is the word of the Lord

### **Thanks be to God**

**Partnership Choir Anthem: 'For the Beauty of the earth'** (John Rutter)

**Sermon: God's continuing mission, past present and future**

**The Revd. Geoffrey Gleed**

*Geoffrey has been a wonderful friend and colleague to Simon over the last 25 years within the Old Town Partnership of Churches. The first Partnership to be founded in Britain in 1969. We congratulate Geoffrey on his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary recently as Organist and Choirmaster at Immanuel United Reformed Church, Upham Road.*

### **Hymn**

O Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end;  
be thou for ever near me,  
my Master and my friend:  
I shall not fear the battle  
if thou art by my side,  
nor wander from the pathway  
if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me;



the world is ever near;  
I see the sights that dazzle.  
The tempting sounds I hear;  
my foes are ever near me,  
around me and within;  
but, Jesus, draw thou nearer  
and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear the speaking  
in accents clear and still.  
above the storms of passion,  
the murmurs of self-will;  
O speak to reassure me,  
to hasten or control;  
O speak, and make me listen,  
Thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised,  
to all who follow thee,  
that where thou art in glory  
there shall thy servant be;  
and Jesus, I have promised  
to serve thee to the end:  
O give me grace to follow,  
My Master and my friend.

O let me see thy footmarks,  
and in them plant mine own;  
my hope to follow duly  
is in thy strength alone:  
O guide me, call me, draw me,  
uphold me to the end;  
and then in heav'n receive me,  
my Saviour and my friend.

*John Ernest Bode (1816-1874)*

*Please remain standing for **The Blessing of Simon by Archdeacon Christopher***

Almighty God, you have given your servant Simon the desire to serve you  
as a Priest in your Church  
And called him to faithful service in this Parish for the past 25 years.  
Today we ask afresh for your blessing:  
Give him reverence in administering the sacraments,  
Faithfulness in proclaiming your word,  
Diligence in pastoral care,  
Wisdom in leadership,  
Tenderness in comforting,  
Discernment in challenging,  
Power in healing the wounds of Christ's people,  
And humility and sacrifice in all things.  
Grant that Simon may know that it is not in the beginning but the  
continuing of the desire to serve you to the end,  
Until it be thoroughly finished, which yields the true glory;  
So may your blessing remain upon him and sustain him in this calling;  
In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***Please sit or kneel for The Prayers for God's blessing for the life of the Old  
Town Swindon parish***

**Led by Lay Ministers, Margaret Williams MBE and Ailsa Palmer, who also led  
the prayers at Simon's Induction 6<sup>th</sup> October 1998.**

As then, the intercessions will begin and end with the Taizé chant 'O Lord hear  
my prayer'.

*Taizé is an ecumenical Christian community in France where Simon first  
discerned a call to ordained ministry during a visit on the Hull University  
pilgrimage as a 19 year old in August 1981.*

O Lord hear my prayer  
O Lord hear my prayer  
When I call answer me  
O Lord hear my prayer  
O Lord hear my prayer  
Come and listen to me

*This will be repeated 4 times after the words  
'Lord in your mercy'*

At the end of the prayers we will all pray together

**Strengthen us to carry forward the work of Christ;  
That we and all who confess your name  
May unite in your truth  
Live together in your love,  
And reveal your glory in the world'  
Through Jesus Christ our Lord  
Amen**

**Simon:** As our Saviour has taught us, so we 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  
And forgive us our sins  
As we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
But deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,  
Now and for ever.  
Amen**

**Baptism Welcome for Caspar Marcel Stevenette – led by the Revd. Canon Simon Stevenette**

*Caspar was baptised on 27<sup>th</sup> August in Christ Church.*

We especially pray for Caspar and his parents Tom and Rae as they move to Moscow this Thursday as their new work serving our country with the Foreign Office.

We pray for ourselves that we would be ambassadors for Christ wherever he calls us to serve.

*Simon gives Tom and Rae A LIGHTED CANDLE, saying:  
Receive this light.*

*And when the candle has been given he says*

This is to show that you have passed  
from darkness to light.

**Shine as a light in the world**

to the glory of God the Father.

## THE WELCOME

*The priest and the congregation, representing the whole Church, welcome Caspar*

God has received you by baptism into his Church.

**We welcome you into the Lord's Family.**

**We are members together of the body of Christ;**

**we are children of the same heavenly Father;**

**we are inheritors together of the kingdom of God.**

**We welcome you.**

*Please stand for the Act of Commitment all together:*

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good

Response: **His mercy endures for ever**

Leader: Happy are the people whose God is the Lord

Response: **Happy the people who are chosen as God's own.**

Leader: alleluia I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart

Response: **In the assembly of the congregation. I will give thanks Alleluia.**

## Loving God

**You have bound us together for 25 years as pastor and congregation within the Old Town Partnership, to work for the advancement of your Kingdom in Swindon and throughout the world.**

**We give you thanks for the ministry we have shared together through these years.**

**We pray for your church throughout the world and for our parish of Christ Church Swindon in the Swindon Deanery within the Bristol Diocese. For all those, of all ages, who live and work with us here.**

**We pray for our parish of Old Town Swindon that we, your church in this place, as the Beacon on the Hill, will shine your light in all dark places as the salt of the earth and the light of the world.**

**As team-mates with you Lord, strengthen us in our weakness remembering 'when we are weak we are strong'.**

**The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ**

**The love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit , now and evermore  
Amen**

## Hymn

Lord for the years  
your love has kept and guided.  
urged and inspired us,  
cheered us on our way.  
sought us and saved us,  
pardoned and provided:  
Lord of the years,  
we bring our thanks today.

Lord, for that word,  
the word of life which fires us,  
speaks to our hearts  
and sets our souls ablaze,  
teaches and trains,  
rebukes us and inspires us:  
Lord of the word,  
Receive your people's praise.

Lord, for our land  
in this our generation,  
spirits oppressed by pleasure,  
wealth and care;  
for young and old,  
for commonwealth and nation,  
Lord of our land,  
Be pleased to hear our prayer.

Lord, for our world,  
when we disown and doubt you,  
loveless in strength  
and comfortless in pain,  
hungry and helpless,  
lost indeed without you:  
Lord of the world,  
We pray that Christ may reign.

Lord for ourselves;  
in living power remake us –  
self on the cross  
and Christ upon the throne,  
past put behind us,  
for the future take us:  
Lord of our lives,  
To live for Christ alone.

*Timothy Dudley-Smith (b. 1926)*  
© Timothy Dudley-Smith

*Please remain standing*

Leader: Make your ways known upon earth Lord God  
All: **Your saving power among all peoples**  
Leader: Renew your church in holiness  
All: **And help us to serve you in joy**  
Leader: Make us instruments of your peace  
All: **And let your glory be over all the earth**

### **The Blessing**

Christ the good shepherd  
Who laid down his life for the sheep  
Draw you and all you who hear his voice  
To be one flock within one fold  
And the blessing of God almighty  
The Father, the Son and the Holy spirit  
Be among you and remain with you always

**Amen**

### **The Partnership Choir: 'HALLELUJAH' from 'Messiah' (George Frideric Handel)**

Leader: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord  
Response: **In the name of Christ we go. Amen**

### **Organ Voluntary; Toccata from fifth symphony (Widor)**

*There will be retiring offertory for the continuing mission work of Christ Church  
There is contactless available*

The Christ Church PCC invite you to celebrate together with a Cheese Wine and Soft drinks reception in our Community Centre which is ten years old in November

*We would like to thank you all for coming this evening and for all your kindness, support, cards, gifts and prayers. It is much appreciated.*

*We sang this hymn below at our wedding in St Edward's, Leek on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 1986, it is the prayer which has been the foundation of our marriage and ministry.*

*God bless you all*

With our love

Simon and Nicola

Make us channels of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let us bring your love.  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

O Master, grant that we may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all our souls.

Make us channels of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life, let us bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, only light,  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

O Master, grant that we may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console;  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make us channels of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
In giving to all that we receive,  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

**Please continue to pray for Simon, Nicola, Thomas, Robert, Edward, William Hugo and all their family as they continue their adventure of life and ministry together in Swindon and further afield.**

