

A Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of

Susan Topalian

19.12.1954 – 8.2.2024



2pm Friday 1st March 2024

All Saints, Long Ashton

*Susan compiled the contents of this service in January 2022.  
Her comments are included in inverted commas.*

## OPENING SENTENCES

*“... St. Francis wrote the original hymn – a bit of a hero of mine!  
Include the verse about death....”*

## HYMN

*Tune: Lasst uns erfreuen*

All creatures of our God and King,  
lift up your voice and with us sing,  
    alleluia, alleluia!

Thou burning sun with golden beam,  
thou silver moon with softer gleam,  
    O praise Him, O praise Him,  
    alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Dear mother earth, who day by day  
    unfoldest blessings on our way,  
    O praise Him, alleluia!  
The flowers and fruits that in thee grow,  
    let them His glory also show:  
    O praise Him, O praise Him,  
    alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

And thou, most kind and gentle death,  
    waiting to hush our latest breath,  
    O praise Him, alleluia!  
Thou leadest home the child of God,  
and Christ our Lord the way hath trod:  
    O praise Him, O praise Him,  
    alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Let all things their Creator bless,  
and worship Him in humbleness,  
O praise Him, alleluia!  
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son,  
and praise the Spirit, Three in One:  
O praise Him, O praise Him,  
alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

*“Words of Jesus which I have found to be true and want to share:”*

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

*Matthew 11:28-30*

*Silence*

On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

*John 7:37-38*

*Silence*

*“Words of Paul, who unexpectedly met Jesus and experienced the love of God; then had a tough life of persecution travelling round the world beyond Palestine telling them about Jesus:”*

Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Romans 8:35-39*

*Silence*

HYMN

*Tune: Kingsfold*

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Come unto Me and rest;  
lay down, thou weary one, lay down  
thy head upon My breast.”

I came to Jesus as I was,  
so weary, worn, and sad;  
I found in Him a resting place,  
and He has made me glad.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“Behold, I freely give  
the living water, thirsty one;  
stoop down, and drink, and live.”

I came to Jesus, and I drank  
of that life-giving stream;  
my thirst was quenched, my soul revived,  
and now I live in Him.

I heard the voice of Jesus say,  
“I am this dark world’s Light;  
look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,  
and all thy day be bright.”

I looked to Jesus, and I found  
in Him my Star, my Sun;  
and in that Light of life I’ll walk,  
till trav’ling days are done.

## REMEMBERING SUSAN

### HYMN

*Tune: Corvedale*

There's a wideness in God's mercy  
like the wideness of the sea;  
there's a kindness in His justice,  
which is more than liberty.  
There is no place where earth's sorrows  
are more felt than up in heaven;  
there is no place where earth's failings  
have such kindly judgment given.

But we make His love too narrow  
by false limits of our own;  
and we magnify His strictness  
with a zeal he will not own.  
There is plentiful redemption  
in the blood that has been shed,  
there is joy for all the members  
in the sorrows of the Head.

For the love of God is broader  
than the measure of man's mind;  
and the heart of the Eternal  
is most wonderfully kind.  
If our love were but more simple  
we should take Him at His word;  
and our hearts would be enraptured  
by the presence of the Lord.

THE REVEREND JAMES HARRIS

PRAYERS & LORD'S PRAYER

FOR THE BEAUTY OF THE EARTH

*John Rutter*

POEM

AND THAT WILL BE HEAVEN

and that will be heaven

and that will be heaven  
at last... the first unclouded  
seeing

... to stand like the sunflower  
turned full face to the sun... drenched  
with light... in the still centre  
held... while the circling planets  
hum with an utter joy

... seeing and knowing  
at last... in every particle  
seen and known... and not turning  
away

... never turning away  
again

*Evangeline Paterson*

*Silence*

BLESSING

HYMN

*Tune: Blaenwern*

Love divine, all loves excelling,  
joy of heav'n to earth come down,  
fix in us Thy humble dwelling;  
all Thy faithful mercies crown!  
Jesus, 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,  
nevermore 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.

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 heav'n we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before Thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

*“Running straight into loud and joyful organ music and Church Bells.”*

*On receiving her diagnosis in Autumn 2020 Susan wrote the following in her journal:*

*“...an image emerged while dancing, reinforced by Autumn walks in Dawson’s Walk, our lovely local wood, of a tree letting go of its leaves one by one. ...A sense of this being a journey of letting go and of God’s promise of providing springs in a dry valley as I travel home.”*



*“As I write this, it grieves me to leave you all, but I trust you to God’s love. Love that never fails.”*