



FREEMEN AND GUILDS OF CHESTER



Guilds’ Sunday

The Order of Service

Sunday 19th October 2025

(Twenty First Sunday after Trinity)

10.30am

The Guild Church of St. Peter

The Church of the Mayor and Corporation of the City

**The Arrival of the Civic Party**

*The congregation stands to face the west end of the church where the welcome will take place.*

Warden: Reverend Jonathan, I present to you, Sara Smith, President of the Freemen and Guilds of this ancient City of Chester.

Vicar: Mr Warden, I thank you for your presentation. In the name of Almighty God I welcome you, President Sara, to this your Guild Church of St Peter.

President: Thank you Reverend Jonathan for your welcome and the welcome you have extended to our companies.

Warden: Reverend Jonathan, I present to you Councillor Sherin Akhtar, the Lord Mayor of this ancient City of Chester.

Vicar: Mr Warden, I thank you for your presentation and in the name of Almighty God I welcome you, Lord Mayor, to this ancient Church of Chester, Church of the Corporation of Chester and may God bless you in your ministry to this City.

Lord Mayor: Thank you Reverend Jonathan for your welcome. It is with joy we greet you on this occasion of celebration for the life of our City.

Vicar: The Lord preserve both of you in your coming in and your going out from this time forth and for evermore.

*Congregation stands to sing the hymn*

**Processional Hymn**

Be Thou my Vision, O Lord of my heart;
Naught be all else to me, save that Thou art;
Thou my best Thought, by day or by night,
Waking or sleeping, Thy presence my light.

Be Thou my Wisdom, and Thou my true Word;
I ever with Thee and Thou with me, Lord;
Thou my great Father, I Thy true son;
Thou in me dwelling, and I with Thee one.

Be Thou my battle Shield, Sword for the fight;
Be Thou my Dignity, Thou my Delight;
Thou my soul’s Shelter, Thou my high Tower:
Raise Thou me heavenward, O Power of my power.

Riches I heed not, nor man’s empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always;
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.

High King of Heaven, my victory won,
May I reach Heaven’s joys, O bright Heaven’s Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my Vision, O Ruler of all.

*During this hymn the Guilds’ Standard and Mace is presented to Rev Jonathan, to be placed on the table.*

*Please sit for the Welcome and prayers of preparation.*

***Words of Welcome and Introduction***

Rev Jonathan Phillips, Vicar

**Prayers of Preparation**

Vicar: Dearly beloved, we have come together as the Freemen and Guilds of this City, and Guilds from around the nation, gathering with St Peter’s Church in the presence of God to hear and receive His Holy Word, to bring before Him the needs of this City and the world, to ask forgiveness of our sins, and to seek His grace, that through His Son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves to His service and the service of this City. The gospel calls us to turn away from sin and be faithful to Christ. As we offer ourselves to Him in penitence and faith, we renew our confidence and trust in His mercy.

**All: Lord God,**

**we have sinned against you;**

 **we have done evil in your sight.**

**We are sorry and repent.**

**Have mercy on us according to your love.**

**Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us from our sin.**

**Renew a right spirit within us**

**and restore us to the joy of your salvation,**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**The Absolution**

Vicar: May the God of love and power

forgive you and free you from your sins,

heal and strengthen you by his Spirit,

and raise you to new life in Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**First Reading – Matthew 7.24-27**

Rev John Brocklehurst

### The Wise and Foolish Builders

**24**“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25**The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. **26**But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.**27**The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

*Please stand for our worship song*

**In Christ Alone**

*Please follow the song in Sign Supported English.*

In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin’s curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life’s first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I’ll stand.

*Congregation sits for the second reading*

**Second Reading – Psalm 127**

President of the Freemen and Guilds, Sara Smith

#### A song of ascents. Of Solomon.

**1**Unless the Lord builds the house,
    the builders labour in vain.
Unless the Lord watches over the city,
    the guards stand watch in vain.
**2**In vain you rise early
    and stay up late,
toiling for food to eat—
    for he grants sleep to those he loves.

**3**Children are a heritage from the Lord,
    offspring a reward from him.
**4**Like arrows in the hands of a warrior
    are children born in one’s youth.
**5**Blessed is the man
    whose quiver is full of them.
They will not be put to shame
    when they contend with their opponents in court.

This is the Word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God**

**Sermon:** *‘Love before all else’*

Rev Jonathan Phillips

*Congregation stands to say the Creed*

**The Creed**

*Please follow the creed in Sign Supported English.*

*It may go slower than you expect.*

**All: I believe in God, the Father almighty,**

**creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

**who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,**

**born of the Virgin Mary,**

**suffered under Pontius Pilate,**

**was crucified, died, and was buried;**

**he descended to the dead.**

**On the third day he rose again;**

**he ascended into heaven,**

**he is seated at the right hand of the Father,**

**and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,**

**the holy catholic Church,**

**the communion of saints,**

**the forgiveness of sins,**

**the resurrection of the body,**

**and the life everlasting.**

**Amen.**

**Intercessions**

Led by Rev John Brocklehurst

**The Collect for the Twenty First Sunday after Trinity**

Grant, we beseech thee, merciful Lord, to thy faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins and serve thee with a quiet mind; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**The Lord’s Prayer**

*Please follow the Lord’s prayer in Sign Supported English.*

*It may go slower than you expect.*

**All**   **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.**

**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.**

**Dedication of the Nation of Guilds**

*The President of the Chester Freemen and Guilds and all guests to Chester stand to receive blessing.*

Vicar: Members of the Freemen and Guilds of our nation and this ancient City of Chester, and you, the citizens of Chester, we are gathered within this House of God.

As Vicar of St Peter’s Church Chester and Chaplain to the Freemen and Guilds of Chester, today I charge you to mark this solemn occasion and to consider, with careful thought and prayer, the reason for our gathering together and the true nature and lofty purpose of the Guilds. In that it is at all times our purpose to seek the highest welfare of our cities and nation. We are met now, before God, to pray for His blessing upon the purpose of our Guilds across the country.

I now bless you, in the name of God, charging you that as you have received the high calling of being members of the Freemen and Guilds with its privileges, you will discharge your duties for the well-ordering of our cities and nation, for the safety, prosperity and well-being of their citizens.

May you encourage due respect for virtue and religion, may you keep the laws and customs of your cities and may you keep the King’s Peace both now and forever more. And may Almighty God Bless you, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit.

**All: Amen.**

*Please sit for the Guilds’ prayer*

**The Guilds’ Prayer**

Vicar: Let us pray

**All: O God our heavenly Father, who has taught us ever to bear one another’s burdens and so fulfil the law of Christ, and in a spirit of comradeship to work together for the social welfare of your people. We humbly beseech You to let Your blessings rest upon our Freemen and Guilds. We pray this so that every member of the same may in the spirit of a dedicated life, devote themselves to further the objects of the Guilds, to promote their charities, and to preserve the highest traditions of this great City of Chester. We pray that we may learn to prepare ourselves for that better commonwealth and heavenly citizenship, which has already begun in this life and awaits us in eternity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Closing Prayer & the Blessing of the Congregation**

Vicar: Almighty Father, you are lavish in bestowing all your gifts, and we give you thanks for the favours you have given to us. In your goodness you have favoured our Freemen and Guilds and kept us safe in the past. We ask that you continue to protect our ancient City and to shelter us in the shadow of your wings. We ask this through Christ our Lord. May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless, preserve and keep you this day and forever more. Amen.

*Please stand. During the last verse the Freemen and Guildsmen will collect the Standard and the Mace.*

**The Hymn of the Freemen & Guilds of the City of Chester**

All who’are born of Guildsmen

Or prenticeship have served

The Freemanship of Chester

By Charter is reserved

As Chester City Guildsmen

We greatly ride that right

And will maintain that honour

With God’s great strength and might.

They have a great tradition

So precious and so dear

Preserved throughout the ages

And kept from year to year

May God the Lord of all things

Enable us to build

Upon that long tradition

To strengthen every Guild.

We thank the Lord our Maker

For all his gifts bestowed

We always will remember

To him all life is owed

And by his grace endeavour

To use and to preserve

The wisdom and the blessings

He gives that we may serve.

TUNE: *ELLACOMBE amended 2018*. ORIGINAL VERSION BY H.R.J. SWINNERTON. PAINTERS, GLAZIERS, EMBROIDERERS AND STATIONERS COMPANY. (Words Edited, D. Kelly; D. Starbuck Edwards; J. Phillips 2018)

**The Blessing of the City of Chester**

*The Guilds and congregation leave the Church and muster at the Cross; then the President and the Civic Party led by the Vicar and wardens process through the South Door and standing at the entrance to the Church the Vicar will bless the City.*

Vicar: Almighty God, Lord of the whole earth, pour out your blessing, we pray, upon this City of Chester, the County of Cheshire and the Diocese of Chester. Bind all who live here in goodwill and unity, give peace, prosperity and concord to every place, and may your will be proclaimed and performed by all your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All: Amen**

Vicar: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit bless, preserve and keep you all, now and for ever.

**All: Amen**

*The bell rings.*

*All Guildsmen, Freemen and members of St Peter’s are invited to come back into St Peter’s for a light lunch.*

*The Parish of Chester, St Peter*

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**Vicar of Chester St Peter and**

**Chaplain to the Freemen and Guilds of Chester**

Rev Jonathan Phillips

**Warden**

David Hobson

**President of the Freemen and Guilds of Chester**

Sara Smith

**The Lord Mayor of the City of Chester**

Councillor Sherin Akhtar