

Service for Sunday 4 October 2020



Call to Worship

Praise God's name with singing, Honour God with thanksgiving. The people will see their God at work and be glad. Let all who seek God's help be encouraged. Let us, like the heavens and the earth praise God. Rejoice, and be glad, we are restored by God's presence with us.

Prayer

God, present, available, active and welcoming; there is no place where you are absent, there is no heart that you cannot touch, there is no situation beyond your transforming spirit. Help us to worship you, now, with sincerity and energy, giving the best we can offer, expecting you to lead us into surprises of your kingdom of love. Through Jesus, our Lord and saviour. Amen.

We really want to thank you, Lord.

*We really want to bless your name.
Alleluia, Jesus is our King. x2*

We thank you Lord, for your gift to us,
Your life so rich, beyond compare,
The gift of your body, here on earth
Of which we sing and share. *Chorus.*

We thank you, Lord, for our life together,
To live and move in the love of Christ,
Your tenderness which sets us free,
To serve you with our lives. *Chorus*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise him all creatures here, below,
Praise him above, you heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. *Chorus*

Reading 1 Joshua 4 v 1 – 9

4 When all the people had crossed the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, ²“Now choose twelve men, one from each tribe. ³Tell them, ‘Take twelve stones from the very place where the priests are standing in the middle of the Jordan. Carry them out and pile them up at the place where you will camp tonight.’” ⁴ So Joshua called together the twelve men he had chose, one from each of the tribes of Israel. ⁵ He told them, “Go into the middle of the Jordan, in front of the Ark of the LORD your God. Each of you must pick up one stone and carry it out on your shoulder twelve stones in all, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁶ We will use these stones to build a memorial. In the future your children will ask you, ‘What do these stones mean?’ ⁷ Then you can tell them, ‘They remind us that the Jordan River stopped flowing when the Ark of the LORD’s Covenant

went across.’ These stones will stand as a memorial among the people of Israel forever.” ⁸ So the men did as Joshua had commanded them. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan River, one for each tribe, just as the LORD had told Joshua. They carried them to the place where they camped for the night and constructed the memorial there. ⁹ Joshua also set up another pile of twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan, at the place where the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant were standing. And they are there to this day.

Reading 2 Ephesians 3:14 – 21

¹⁴ When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, ¹⁵ the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. ¹⁶ I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. ¹⁷ Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God’s love and keep you strong. ¹⁸ And may you have the power to understand, as all God’s people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. ¹⁹ May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God. ²⁰ Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think. ²¹ Glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus through all generations forever and ever! Amen.

Prayer: Your words to us are life, health and eternal, abundant, life. Speak clearly to us and make yourself real to us. Amen.

Be still for the presence of the Lord,

The Holy One is here
Come bow before Him now,
With reverence and fear
In Him no sin is found
We stand on holy ground
Be still for the presence of the Lord,
The Holy One is here

Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around
He burns with holy fire,
With splendour He is crowned
How awesome is the sight
Our radiant King of light
Be still for the glory of the Lord,
Is shining all around

Be still for the power of the Lord,
Is moving in this place
He comes to cleanse and heal,
To minister His grace
No work too hard for Him
In faith receive from Him
Be still for the power of the Lord
Is moving in this place

Message

God wanted Joshua to remind the people of where they had come from, on their faith journey, and where they were going to, in the strength and love of God. God was directing them where they should cross, the river Jordan. They had never been this way before, but God has asked that 12 large boulders should be taken from the river bed and made into a structure, so that if they will remember how faithful God had been towards them, in every aspect of life, should they pass this way again. On seeing this imposing structure, children would ask about it. This would enable those who had travelled this way before to give testimony of God's constant presence with them and how God brought them safely into the promised land. We have been through an unprecedented time, with the Covid-19 Pandemic, but God has been faithful to us. If we were to mark our journey, what would we want to remember of how God has been faithful and present with us? Our life may have been limited, and yet God has revealed Godself to us; in many surprising ways, keeping us faithful and true, supported and able to support others. Our reading from Ephesians reminds us that the presence of Jesus makes the difference, between what we can achieve on our own and what God can achieve through us; allowing us unlimited resources, inner strength and resolve, rooted and empowered in God. Nothing has been held back from us! The full potential of God; revealed in Jesus, by the power of the Holy Spirit. What else do we need? God doesn't wait for us to attain a certain level or skill. The gifts that God bestows on us are given freely and unconditionally. How wonderful of God to trust us with the length, depth, height and width of love, and be responsible for sharing what we have received ourselves, in order to give love to people. In this way, God works and we are transformed by God's love and equally, give that transformation and growth to people, who are searching for God in their lives. In this time of restrictions, we have the freedom of faith and the capacity to embrace all the love God gives us. We then, reflect that love to others and that makes us doubly blessed. What a wonderful God we serve! As God calls us into the service of love, we make our own way markers, so that if we pass this way again, we will be reminded how much God has supported our faith journey and blessed us richly.

Remembering the faithfulness of God is crucial to our ability to be witnesses of God's goodness and salvation, through Jesus Christ. We are like the living cairn, a pile of stones, which bear witness to God's commitment to us and the world. *"You are living stones that God is building into his spiritual temple. What's more, you are his holy priests. Through the mediation of Jesus Christ, you offer spiritual sacrifices that please God.* 1 Peter 2:5. God is building us into family, where everyone is welcomed, and no one is ever turned away. To create such a family we need to share all that we are with God and with one another. And in return, we will receive everything we need from God's treasure store of spiritual gifts. Nothing is withheld, but we have to be prepared to receive all that God wants to give us, to make us true and effective disciples of Jesus. We have a lot to give thanks to

God for, in the way that God has been close to us, in the past few months; as well as all through our lives.. May we make our own faith memorials, in gratitude to an incredible God, Creator, Saviour and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Prayers

God, you are not distant from us. You came to us in vulnerability. You offered yourself as a gift of love. We pray today for those who are in the midst of darkness: the darkness of poverty; the darkness of loneliness, the darkness of grief, the darkness of despair. Wherever shadows threaten to overwhelm Wherever they erode dignity or crush the spirit, Wherever they hold terror, or danger, or hopelessness **Come Lord Jesus, light of all people, shine in the darkness.** We pray today for all victims and perpetrators of violence. For those who have lost sight value of human life. We pray today for our bodies with all their aches and pains; with all their limitations; The secrets and memories they hold; their vulnerability, their woundedness; we bring our bodies to you, whatever state they are in. Help us to love, cherish and care for them. **Come Lord Jesus, God-made-flesh Shine your healing light in our darkness** Amen.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;

He makes me lie in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters, His goodness restores my soul. *And I will trust in You alone, And I will trust in You alone, For Your endless mercy follows me, Your goodness will lead me home. Chorus*

He guides my ways in righteousness, And He anoints my head with oil, And my cup, it overflows with joy, I feast on His pure delights. *Chorus*

And though I walk the darkest path, I will not fear the evil one, For You are with me, and Your rod and staff Are the comfort I need to know. *Chorus x 2*

Prayer

We thank you for our time together, worshipping you and gaining strength for the week ahead. Thank you for speaking to us through words of love and listening to our prayers as we show our care for people in our lives; those close to, and those we will never meet, but whose lives have touched ours. Remind us of the dimensions of your love and give us the capacity to grow our love, in you, loving God. Help us to put down markers, each day, which guide people to you. Amen.

Blessing

Grace is on our lips and in our hearts this morning, Lord: your grace is in our hands. We take it with us, spreading thankfulness wherever we go. Amen.