

Sunday 24 May 2020

The paper-version Service



For now, we cannot meet in the building – but the church is still open!

All of our services are on-line www.goodshepherdfourmarks.org.uk but we're producing this weekly sheet which captures our Sunday service for those who can't access the internet.

To Begin: Grab a Bible. If safe, perhaps light a candle. Find a comfortable place and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the modern songs from this Sunday's Service set out below.



Opening Prayer: Father God, thank you for your extraordinary grace to us in Jesus. Help us receive this grace, this love and your forgiveness. Send your Holy Spirit that we might worship you as we read, reflect, worship and pray. And as we go forwards, help us, full of your Holy Spirit, to declare your love to the world by our deeds and words, to the glory of your name. Amen

Songs:

Into your hands I commit again with all I am, for you, Lord. You hold my world in the palm of your hand, and I am yours forever.

Jesus, I believe in you. Jesus, I belong to you. You're the reason that I live; the reason that I sing with all I am.

I'll walk with you, wherever you go, through tears and joy, I'll trust in you. And I will live in all of your ways, and your promises, forever.

Jesus, I believe in you.

I will worship, I will worship you

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise, the city of our God, the holy place, the joy of the whole Earth.

Great is the Lord in whom we have the victory, he aids us against the enemy, we bow down on our knees.

And Lord, we want to lift your name on high, and Lord, we want to thank you, for the works you've done in our lives; and Lord, we trust in your unfailing love, for you alone are God eternal, throughout Earth and Heaven above.

Read: Ephesians 3:11-22.

Living to Tell Others (a summary of the talk given by Howard Wright):

Exciting News: In the whole of this Ephesians letter Paul cannot help being excited about Jesus. So excited that pretty much the whole of chapter one is presented as one sentence and his excitement continues through the letter.

Paul is in lockdown, literally, locked-up, a prisoner, as he says, ‘the prisoner of Christ Jesus.’ Paul may be being held captive by the Roman authorities, but his heart is held captive by Jesus.

He begins this chapter 3 with: *‘For this reason...’* and then gets no further, immediately getting excited again about what God has done – reinforcing the points made in the previous verses about the extraordinary grace of God:

All people, everyone, Gentiles and Jews, are together included in God’s love.

Earlier we read that we are all being built into a holy temple (2:19-21). The original readers would have known of the great temple of Artemis and many of the glorious home of the Almighty God in Jerusalem. But neither temple came close to the wonder of God’s new scheme of

us, individually and together, as his dwelling place – living stones!

We are together participants of the astounding mystery that we are all now heirs of God.

The news of Jesus is stunningly good. There is such hope now and forever because of Jesus. He is the one truly reliable source of truth, the one dependable foundation upon which to build, the bringer of genuine joy, peace and the source of all love.

Messengers of the News:

Understandably, Paul gets excited about his role in announcing this news (:7), and in verse 10, he widens this, God’s *‘intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms,...’*

Paul is locked up by the ‘authorities’ but God and the Good News of Jesus cannot be contained, and God is creator of not just this world but the whole cosmos, he is not a petty deity



of the sort the Greek and Roman citizens living in Ephesus believed in.

He is the God who speaks and the whole universe begins its life. The God whose limitless power sustains all existence, which stretches far beyond all we have seen or imagined, and whose breath enables life for us and all creation.

The picture in Ephesians is of the church, you and I, collectively and individually, being visual aids to all creation: spiritual and physical powers, angels and demons; Roman and all subsequent political authorities; to science and arts, to rich and poor, to all genders, sexualities, ages and abilities, that: There is a God, the Father of all, who reigns as King and Judge. This God can raise the dead, and this God made you, knows you and loves you and has made it possible, through Jesus and the cross, for anyone who asks, to know Him today and forever – which is the life we all desire and need.

We the church, as the bride of Christ, are invited into a place central to the Gospel today. To participate now and forever, in company with God, and in this current time, to live out the responsibility and privilege of telling others. The church building may be closed but the

church is still very much open and alive sharing the exciting Good News by our love and words.

Sharing this News Today: Paul was in lockdown, even more so than us, yet found a way to encourage others, he wrote this and other letters and spoke to those who would listen to him (see Acts 24-26 and 28:28-31). Today we can still write letters, pick up the phone or talk over the garden gate.

We can anchor ourselves in Jesus. Reading the Bible, praying, use any aids available to help us. If possible for us, we can connect to a small group, to be encouraged by others.

And during this time between Ascension and Pentecost, join in the Thy Kingdom Come prayer initiative and be praying for those we know to become Christians. This week and every week, be looking for opportunities to share friendship, love and the message of Jesus as opportunities arise with those around us.



Prayers: Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. (Philippians 4:6)

- Pray for the day ahead and its tasks
- Pray for the nations
- Pray for organisations
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends
- Pray for the Church



A prayer for all those affected by coronavirus: Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer: 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.

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, COGS, the communities around us and our whole nation. The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace. (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV)

The Notices: If you know of others who'd like to receive this, or you'd rather not receive it; or if you find yourself isolated and not able to get neighbours, friends or family to help, then ring Howard, 01420 563344.

- This week until Pentecost is Thy Kingdom Come – a sheet of prayer ideas is enclosed.
- Daily HOPE is a new initiative of the Church of England.



A free phone line of hymns, reflections and prayers