

29th December, 2024

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle 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 song from this Sunday's

Service.

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Hymn:

Come, ye sinners, poor and
wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready waits to save you,
Full of pity, love and pow'r:
He is able, He is able,
He is willing, doubt no more.

Come, ye needy, come and
welcome;
God's free bounty glorify;
True belief and true repentance,
Every grace that brings us nigh,
Without money, without money,
Come to Jesus Christ and buy.

Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness He requireth
Is to feel your need of Him:
This He gives you, this He gives you,
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all:
Not the righteous, not the
righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to call.

Agonizing in the garden,
Your Redeemer prostrate lies;
On the bloody tree behold Him!
Hear Him cry, before He dies,
"It is finished!" "It is finished!"
Sinner, will not this suffice?

Lo! th' incarnate God, ascended,
Pleads the merit of His blood;
Venture on Him, venture wholly;
Let no other trust intrude:
None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good..

The Sermon by Rev Howard Wright

Read Colossians 3.12-17 Luke 2.41-52 – Being obedient

As we come to the end of this year, are we any different from last year? We're a year older and that may mean some change physically, maybe some increased experience and knowledge – or maybe we've forgotten more than we've learnt!

We are told that 'Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.' (:52)

Though our bodies deteriorate, and minds might slow, spiritually, our souls can grow better and better. The Christian life is not an event, but a process: Salvation **and** Sanctification – see Hebrews 10:14. And read Colossians 2:6-7 and Colossians 2:12 again, and notice 1 Peter 2:1-3

The Bible often refers to the Christian life as a race. It's not a static – done once kind of thing. It's a relationship that evolves, and changes us. Read Philippians 3:12-14 and Hebrews 12:1-2.

How far are we on in this race. We are challenged to grow – read Hebrews 6:1-3 and grow so much that we too can teach Hebrews 5:12-14.

So how can we grow? We must stay close to Jesus. Read John 15:5. How do we stay close?

- Firstly, in prayer. Talk to God daily, and in all the moments of life. Especially first and last moments of the day.
- Secondly, read the Bible. Use a Bible In One Year App, Bible reading notes, or make your own plan – and as much as you can keep it up daily.
- Thirdly, join the family – services, small group, or meet with a couple of others monthly, weekly to worship, read something from the Bible and pray.

- Fourthly, develop thankfulness. The passages we've looked at speak of an 'attitude of gratitude.' Thankfulness to God is a key route to joy, peace and godliness.
- Fifthly, learn from other places. Catch up with sermons, listen to other sermons and talks (from reputable churches/speakers) online. Read a Christian book – be stretched and grow.

Jesus was willing to grow, to learn, to question. The good news is that you are reading this today – you are likely already someone pursuing God and growing. If we're in love – we want to know more about the object of our love. If we're to be in love with God we will want to grow in knowledge by even more so in relationship with this God.

The first commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart mind and strength. God has so much on offer for us and it's all free – read Isaiah 55: 1-4.

In our story from Luke, Jesus appeared lost, but was exactly where he was supposed to be. This world, our society, might consider us 'lost' if we commit to following Jesus, to growing in faith, in running the race. But we are in the right place if we're following Jesus wholeheartedly. We might be growing old but as Paul writes we are achieving something much greater for the sakes of our souls – read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.

1st Sunday of Christmas: Almighty God, who wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as he came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of his divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, 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).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: January 15th at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: January 15th at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: January 22nd at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>