



Lichfield Bishops' Clergy Conference

Opening Worship

Monday 23rd April 2018

We had hoped

Gathering Music: Come to the Well – Casting Crowns

Welcome Hymn/Song

All who are thirsty – Come Lord Jesus Come

Brenton Brown, Glenn Robertson © 1998 Vineyard Songs.

Responses

Seek the Lord while he may be found,

call upon him while he is near;

let the wicked forsake their way,

and the unrighteous their thoughts;

let them return to the Lord, that he may have mercy on them,

and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

nor are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so are my ways higher than your ways

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 55 6-9

Opening Prayers

Wilderness God

as we begin this time together

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help us to bring the whole of ourselves
into the mystery of your presence.
Your thoughts are not our thoughts.
You are beyond our imagination!
Your ways are not our ways,
for we have sometimes lost the path of love.
We come to you now in our weakness and vulnerability
to find in you our healing and wholeness.
Meet us now in this place and time
and be our guide as we walk the path of your love again.

Amen

We bring to God the ways in which our church has turned inwards,
times when we are anxious about declining congregations,
times when we are preoccupied by paperwork, or financial difficulties,
times when we spend our energies keeping "the show on the road."

(Silence)

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

We bring to God the ways in which our church has got stuck in the past,
times when we have chosen the conventional or respectable path,
times when we have preferred the comfort of the familiar ways,
times when we have missed the challenge of the new.

(Silence)

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

We bring to God the ways in which our faith has become stale,
times when we have been closed to new ideas and possibilities,
times when we have been deaf to your call to change,
times when we have failed to see you in our neighbour.

(Silence)

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

**God give us grace to walk with lightened tread,
to embrace the possibilities of this time together,
to forgive and be forgiven,
in the grace that is your gift for us.**

Amen.

Psalm 130

- 1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.
2 **Lord, hear my voice!**
Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my supplications!
3 If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,
Lord, who could stand?
4 **But there is forgiveness with you,**
so that you may be revered.
5 I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;
6 **my soul waits for the Lord**
more than those who watch for the morning,
more than those who watch for the morning.
7 O Israel, hope in the Lord!
For with the Lord there is steadfast love,
and with him is great power to redeem.
8 **It is he who will redeem Israel**
from all its iniquities.
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
As it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen

Reading

Luke 24 13-21 NRSV

Now on that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem, and talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them, but their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?' They stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answered him, 'Are you the only stranger in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have taken place there in these days?' He asked them, 'What things?' They replied, 'The things about Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since these things took place.'

Living word of God

Live in our lives today

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Reflection – we had hoped

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Shared Silence – 4 minutes of quiet music as we reflect on what “we had hoped” for.

Arvo Part “Fur Elina”

Address – Bishop Michael

Song

Take O take me as I am

John L Bell © 1995 WGRG, CCL No: 528067

Prayers of Recognition

We leave with God our disappointments and regrets,
all that we would let go of today,
and we trust God to receive them and to hold them.

Song **Take O take me as I am**

We offer to God our hidden selves,
all that we hope and dream for,
and we trust God to receive them and to hold them.

Song **Take O take me as I am**

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We leave with God the voices of negativity,
all that continues to undermine us,
And we trust God to receive them and to hold them.

Song Take O take me as I am

We listen for God's word, of affirmation,
that we are God's children, loved and called,
and we dare to trust in that voice above all others.

Song Take O take me as I am

Prayers of Intercession

For all who we have left behind today, for our families, friends, homes, and all who we love. Hold them in your love.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

For all the situations we have left behind today, unfinished business, painful places, ongoing cares. Hold them in your love.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

For all whose hopes have been dashed, those living with disappointment. Hold them in your love.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

For those running away from a conflict, from a violent relationship, from themselves. Hold them in your love.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

For those who have lost all hope, living with depression or in despair, considering ending their lives.

Hold them in your love.

Lord hear us

Lord graciously hear us

God of our deepest selves,

**as we walk with Jesus on the Emmaus road,
as we face our fears and doubts,
as we leave behind all that has weighed us down,
may we tread with lightened step,
through the days we are together,
knowing that we are loved
and meant for life with you for ever.
Amen.**

The Conference Collect

Almighty God
who gives us a living hope
through the resurrection of Christ from the dead:
refresh and inspire us again
with renewed vision and confidence,
that your gift of hope might shine through our living
and awaken hope in all we serve;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Blessing

God who loves us to our very depths.
Jesus who saves us from our very worst.
Spirit who moves us to become our true selves.
Bless us now and bring us to life in your love.
The blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
be with you now and for evermore.
Amen

Hymn/Song

Gather Us In

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