

Amen

Evening Service 28th June 2020

Reading 1 Chronicles 16:7-36 (verses 7-14 and 31-36 to be read during service)

A little over 20 years ago I was a civil servant working in London, we were in exciting political times, after many years of conservative government, labour had won the 1997 general election and overnight swept away the very unpopular policy I had been enforcing which affected the way local authorities delivered their services. We spent a heady two years consulting local authorities that we recognised as being innovative and with their help developed some ideas that we thought would work well as a new way of doing things. Then there was some really hard work to do, we had to put it all in words – to draft the words that would make the good ideas into law. We produced a draft, it went to parliament and after months of discussions in committee the words had been refined, with some new ideas added, others taken, it was approved by parliament, but there was one more stage before it became law, before it had an impact on every local authority in England it required the signature of lady in her 70s. Formally it's called Royal Assent, but without the signature of the Queen, we had produced a carefully considered lengthy document, with her signature we had created a new Act of Parliament, legislation that would make a difference to how services were delivered everywhere.

Giving assent to something changes how that thing affects us, not just with the law of the land but with our communication with God. It would be very easy for our saying Amen at the end of the Lord's Prayer or any other prayer to become little more than a kind of audible full stop, but that should never be the case. Amen is a Hebrew word meaning 'it is so', 'so be it' or surely or truly - when we say Amen we are saying we really agree with the words that have just been said – this is not a casual 'whatever' or 'OK' but a firm and definite agreement. It follows that there may be times when we decide that we don't agree with the words people have spoken and choose not to say Amen

When we say Amen at the end of the Lord's Prayer, we are saying Amen to all the things that we have talked about in the last few weeks.

Amen to knowing a God who loves and cares for us like a parent, and gave us His wonderful creation to live in

Amen to a God who we recognise as being holy

Amen to God's kingdom where all are treated equally being known all over the earth and to His children living by His rules.

Amen to living in faith that God will provide all the basics we need for life and not being anxious about them.

Amen to willingly forgiving others and to accepting forgiveness from God and others.

Amen to resisting temptation and staying right with God.

Amen to God's just kingdom, to his reign in the glory of the power that is love

Amen to the meaning and power in all the words of the prayer we say so often.