



Personal Service for Sunday 7^h August 2022

Call to Worship.

Hebrews chapter 11 verse 1. “To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see”.

H & P. 505 (S t F. 34): O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

Prayers of praise, thanksgiving and repentance.

O God, our Father, you gather us together as the community of Christ here on this planet, and here in this space. You do not see any distance between one person or another, just your flock in your sheepfold. We thank you, Lord of all, for your inclusive and all-embracing love.

Saviour of the world, Jesus our friend and brother, you tell us that as you are one with your heavenly Father, then so are we. We praise you for your trust and guidance in leading us in to the sanctuary of heavenly glory.

Spirit of our living God, you protect our souls and guide our thoughts and actions. We thank you for your gentle presence helping us to be worthy of being children of our holy Lord.

As we gather we give thanks for all that sustains our lives and makes them joyful. We thank you for friends and families, for helpers and those whom we can help. We thank you for knowledge and discernment. We thank you for comfort and love.

We thank you for all that makes our lives complete in you, Father, Son and Spirit. Amen.

Silence – for personal prayers of thanks.

Bowing our heads, before the source of all grace, we bring to mind our regretful dependence on the guidance of the world. We, who know you so well, are still of this world and we, deliberately or unconsciously, follow its ways and give too much credence to its standards. We hear voices of prejudice and discrimination and do not, always, speak out against them. We crave more and more while others have less and less. We have thoughts and opinions that we know are not of you. We humbly reach out to your cross and crave the forgiveness its image declares.

Silence.

Father God your Son calls us your little sheep. Help us to be more like sheep, following the paths laid out by our shepherd, the safe paths that keep us out of the clutches of temptation. We know that we are forgiven and loved because we are now able to call you “our Father”. Thank you, Lord. Amen

The readings for today.

Isaiah chapter 1, verses 1 and verses 10 - 20.

Luke chapter 12, verses 32 – 40.

H & P. 244 (S t F. 185): Sing we the King who is coming to reign.

The Address.

“For, lo the days are hastening on by prophets shown of old. When, with the ever circling years, shall come the time foretold. When the new heaven and earth shall own the Prince of Peace their King. And all the world repeat the song which now the angels sing”. Edmund Hamilton Sears (1810 – 1876)

“And you must be ready because the Son of Man will come at a time when you are not expecting him”. Luke chapter 12 verse 40.

The return of Jesus is certain, when He will return is known only to God. BUT He will return. He tells us to be ready and waiting. Waiting is difficult. We humans are not always good at it. There is an innate patience to know, to see and to be informed. Being in control comes more naturally than giving in to the will of others – even God.

The Gospel reading, for today, comes after teaching about prayer and sharing. It comes after the listeners had been told to expect forgiveness based on their ability to forgive. It comes after a man who wanted Jesus to settle an earthly dispute about inheritance had, actually received a litany on sharing and the futility of storing up earthly treasures. This comes with the reassurance that we belong to God, as Jesus tell s his ‘little flock’ not to be afraid.

In our world that has failed to listen to God’s prophets for so long, and seen the consequences in human failure and in the ravaging of the earth, these

words are needed. The return of Jesus is one of the rocks on which Christianity is founded. The people, gathered in His presence, would have known the history of their nation. The way that being led astray by human temptations had, previously annoyed God and brought about the Exile in to Babylon. The words of Isaiah and the other brave, although sometimes reluctant, prophets would have been part of their spoken sagas. Tales laden with warning, doom and gloom but, still, they allowed themselves to stray, to become self-righteous and only pay lip service to the ways of God, not heart service. These people, who heard Jesus words knew about the promised Messiah – they just didn't recognise Him when they were in His presence. So many in our world, today, are the same as those people, blind to the person of God in flesh, Jesus the Christ. However, that makes no difference, He will still return. When He does it will be the little flock that will be gathered in to the fold. The little flock that He exhorts to wait. Expectantly not impatiently. We are told how we should behave whilst waiting. Praying, giving glory and thanks to God for all His blessings. Giving as well as receiving. Being as generous, as we can, with all our gifts; remembering that not all gifts are material. Not making false idols that take our eyes and lives away from the focus on our Lord and His ways. Being ready to greet the bridegroom, whatever time he comes. Not impatient, getting angry or anxious. Not like waiting in a queue and wondering why we are in the slow one. Or, waiting at the bus stop, constantly looking at watches, and knowing that the information indicator is wrong! Not like those at all. We are to wait hopefully and joyfully. Opening the door and welcoming our honoured guest in to his rightful place which is our hearts. It will happen. Our call to worship assures of the eternal presence and promises of God. Jesus Christ is already living and breathing in our lives, the time is coming when the whole world will see. Do not be afraid little flock, for your Father is pleased to give you the Kingdom. Do not be afraid. Amen.

H & P. 767 (S t F. 661): Give me the faith which can remove.

Prayers of Intercession.

Silence.

As we gather in your presence, Lord, we wait for your power to reach out to the whole world and in to the hearts of all humankind.

Father God, we pray for all who witness for you. We pray for the leaders of the church throughout the whole world. We pray for a revelation of your ways of forgiveness and for sacrificial giving. We ask that all, who serve, in any capacity would first humble themselves and seek your guidance. Lord God please empower your church to speak boldly to our aching world so more would join your little flock.

Silence.

Father God, we pray for the leaders of our world. We pray that they would govern with humility not pride. That they would serve everyone not just the powerful. That they would seek an end to enslavement, injustice, inequality and prejudice. Lord God please enter the hearts of the mighty and give them the joy of being humble.

Silence.

We pray for all whose hearts are aching. For the hungry, the disenfranchised, the voiceless and the fleeing. We pray for those whose lives are coming to end and those who are supporting them. We pray for the sick, the lonely and the fearful. Lord God, you call us your flock, what a blessing. We pray for your embrace for all who feel lost because of their circumstances. May they know your comfort and love.

Silence.

Little flock, here on earth and in Heaven. We rejoice with the angelic choir knowing that, to You, all the voices sound the same. We thank you for your promise of eternity and the longed for return of Jesus our Lord. In his name we bring all of our prayers. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

H & P. 241 (S t F. 177): Lo, He comes with clouds descending.

We join, separately but together as the body of Christ, in the words of **The Grace.**