

Church at Home on Sunday 22nd November 2020

Call to Worship

God, we have been a scattered people,
roaming, looking for places to call home.
You have called us home, gathered us in,
given us a land of belonging where all are welcome.
You have sought us out, brought us in,
We been called into the pastures of God,
where there is nurture, a place to rest, safety, and kindness among all.
Let us draw near, in the goodness of God, to be with each other,
and to praise the shepherd who has gathered us here.

Amen.

Hymn StF 317 At the name of Jesus or **How deep the Father's love for us*

Prayers

O Lord

Yours is the earth and all in it.

The valleys, mountains, seas and spray; the land, the pastures, the trees and fauna.
All around us, we see stories of your bounty, your exuberant goodness, your
flourishing provision.

You have made us to live here, nurtured by this earth, and by work.

We find joy in this vocation, to be your people, living, working, resting,
supporting.

We thank you for the gifts of living, and for these gifts of bounty all around us.

Amen.

We come to you, people who are hungry, people who are thirsty,
strangers, imprisoned, exposed, knowing that you have come to us, too,
in these same guises. In our brokenness, welcome us.

And open up our defenses as we come to you,

O Lord of many guises. God, you come in disguises:

in a friend asking for a chat, in a person asking for help, in all calls for assistance. May we take the time to hear you, knowing that when we respond to one person, we are responding to you – who always responds to us .**Amen**

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the broken and have not been moved to compassion.

Truly, we say to you that we have heard people mourning and have not given them our time.

Truly, we say to you that we have witnessed oppression and have not raised our voices.

Truly, we say to you that we have seen the stranger and not said a word.

God, hiding in all strangers, all around us, we are truly sorry for what we have done, and what we have not done.

And we ask you to deepen your welcome in us, so that we might deepen our welcome around us.

Amen.

Let us join together in the Prayer which Jesus taught his disciple and in which we share- Our Father which art in heaven.....

Psalm 95 StF 818 An invitation to Worship God.

Readings

Ezekiel 34.11-16,20-24;

Ephesians 1.15-23;

Matthew 25.31-46

Address

Both our Old and New Testament readings remind us of the greatness and the care that God gives to us, his followers. Paul reminds the new church of the Ephesians that God will bring hope to his followers, sharing his world, offering encouragement and support though our faith. As compared to human leadership who may be more concerned with power and control. Something we have seen in our world particularly in the Far East and various governments here in the West recently

We are encouraged as followers of Jesus to be more like him, to follow his example. Jesus gave us many illustrations as to how we should be inspired and live our lives which are all recorded in the Bible..

The Gospels tell us all about the time Jesus was on earth and his encounters with the sick, vulnerable and rejected of society and so we are encouraged to use our time profitably to help the needy of our society today. This is something we may do within our communities in which we live. Community awareness is one of the brighter aspects of this present pandemic. Community Care and other organisations still are working hard within this community of East Leake.

We may choose to look further a field to the Charities such as All we Can who offer to send chickens or other animals to those in need in other parts of our world so that they can profit from the care and benefits. Some years ago when I was teaching I challenged my year group to fund raise for goats to be sent to Africa. After school one day I had a very concerned Head of RE who had received a card from CAFOD to say he would be in receipt of 10+ goats. He did calm down when I explained the goats were going to Africa and that they would not be running around the playground- luckily the City Farm was next door. Another project is to provide bicycles for health workers and for children to get to school, There are many ways we may get involved.

This hymn reminds us all of our responsibility and also our encounters with Christ through those we meet. "*Christ's is the place in which we move [Touching Place]*" you may like to sing it later there are several versions on You tube.

Mother Teresa when working with some of the poorest people of our world would say that they were ministering to Jesus in his "most distressing disguises."

Jim Wallis the Christian writer tells of Mary Glover who helps to run a food project in Washington DC before they start a session to care for 100's of needy people in the American capital she prays "Lord we know you will be coming through this line today, so help us to treat you well".

Let us use these example to treat everyone we meet, as we would treat Jesus and how we would like them to treat us. May we be able to recognise Christ in all our fellow human beings and may we respond instinctively and with compassion

The unusual situation in which we find ourselves today gives the opportunity to reach out to our community perhaps you would like to try the Activities below

Activities

Advent Calendar

Draw (or use a computer to create, and then print) a 6x4 grid onto an A4 sheet of paper. In a household, have one grid each. Working together or on your own, but with reference to today's Gospel reading, think of 24 things that you might do to express compassion to other people. Write one idea in each space on the grid. Work your way through the sheet during December – ideally one action each day.

Carry a piece of cotton wool with you as a reminder to be like the sheep in Jesus' story – a blessing to others through their attitudes and actions (and not like the goats, hard-hearted or dismissive of other people).

Hymn StF256 When I needed a neighbour, were you there? Or *Christ's is the world in which we live.

Prayers of intercession

Let us pray for Others and ourselves.

Dear Lord

For the times when we are sick:

may we have healing.

For the times when we are isolated:

may we have company.

For the times when we are oppressed:

may we have justice.

For the times when we are exposed:

may we have dignity.

For the times when we are mistreated:

may we have humanity.

For the times when we are ignored:

may we be heard.

For the times when we ignore, or isolate, or oppress, or expose or mistreat:

may we change.

Heavenly Father,
as we consider the parable of the sheep and the goats,
let us be followers who seek to encourage unity and cohesion
among all those who are made in your image.

May we never be people who rush to judgement,
or fall into the trap of condemning or criticising harshly
those who do not share our beliefs, political views or cultural values.

May we display your compassion, integrity and wisdom,
when engaging with the 'world',
remembering your cautions to 'judge not' or 'cast the first stone'

This we ask in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

In a time of Silence we bring to you our own personal prayers

Dear Lord, Sometimes I am tired, or I'm preoccupied with other demands.
Help me take time, help me make time, for kindness,
so that rush can take its lower place, and kindness can rise up.
Because you had much to do –
but made time anyway.

Dear Lord we thank you for the care and support offered to us, may we
reciprocate that love to others through our thoughts and actions.
We ask these and all our prayers in and through the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
and Saviour .**Amen.**

Hymn StF 673 Will you come and follow me or StF611 Brother, sister, let me
serve you

Blessing

O God of kindness, send us out with more time for interruptions,
and more generosity for kindness, so that we might see you
within these walls and beyond these walls.

Amen.

This service was prepared by Chris Watkins the Local Pastor at the Methodist
Church in East Leake. Prayers are from Roots on the Web.* Hymns not in StF but
available on You tube.