

Church at home for Jan 10th 2021

Sit comfortably in a quiet place and prepare, start with a brief period of silence, turning your mind and spirit towards God. You may want to have a cross or candle in view as a focus.



Following on the theme of last week which was brought out in our yearly service of commitment, our Covenant Service we look further into New beginnings. Starting with our Call to worship.

Call to worship

A new year has begun. Let us leave behind all that is past,
and walk together into the future.

Let us trust in the God of new beginnings, and worship the God of fresh hopes.
Lord of our journeys, help us this day to have eyes to see your leading,
ears to hear your guidance, and a heart of courage,
that we may journey faithfully and find your way –
even when the path may seem difficult and dark.
Amen.

Hymn StF 272 From heaven you came, helpless babe-Servant King.

Prayers

Lord God, how awesome you are. Your voice is powerful and majestic.
Once, the earth was without shape. Dark and empty.
Then you spoke, awesome God. And light shone.
You separated the light from the darkness. The whole world changed.
You later sent your Son, Jesus. To live and walk among us on the earth.
His ministry heralded by John the Baptist. Who baptized Jesus in the Jordan.
The whole world changed. The sky split open.
And your Holy Spirit came down like a dove. Then you spoke, awesome God.
And continue to speak today through your Holy Spirit.
All Majestic, awesome, all-powerful God, we adore your holy name. Amen.

God, through your might and power the world was created, and through it now the world is changed, and ever changing. We read in the Scriptures of how you changed people's lives. We hear it in the stories of saints old and new. We know it through the experience and lives of our own communities. We thank and praise you for all that you have done through the changes you have made – and are still making – in our lives. We thank and praise you for the gift of your Holy Spirit who gives us – your people – strength, and the blessing of peace. **Amen.**

Lord, when you came into the world, things changed. When we came into a relationship with you, things changed. Life became filled with a new sense of purpose and peace. But, Lord, sometimes we let you down by doing wrong things or failing to do right things.

We are sorry, Lord.

Sometimes, Lord, through pride, stubbornness or fear we build barriers and keep others at arm's length – even you, Lord.

We are sorry, Lord.

At times we give in to our weaknesses and temptations, failing to draw on your strength. At times we are troubled by difficult situations and find it hard to trust you.

We are sorry, Lord.

Help us to turn such things around and turn to you. Help us to learn from the past and, drawing on your strength and peace, make a better future.

Amen.

Assurance of forgiveness

O God, when Jesus was baptized, you spoke of your love for him. You showed your love for us through Jesus' death and resurrection. By the power of the cross, the darkness of our wrongdoing is banished by the light of your loving forgiveness.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Let us join together in the prayer which our Lord taught us- Our Father.....

Psalm 29 StF 807 said responsively.

Readings: NT Reading Acts 19: 1-7
Gospel Reading Mark 1 : 4-11.

Address. Our gospel reading this week is the start of St. Marks gospel. Relating to Old testament prophesy. Mark's gospel was written for the people of Rome.

Anyone of influence in the Roman world would be heralded by a messenger and this is how Mark begins his record of the life of Jesus Christ, The messenger is John the Baptist and he tells us that he is the preparing the way for someone who is much greater to follow. Jesus Christ.

John invited people to be baptised to repent their sins and prepare for greater things to come. New beginnings. Using the Greek word *metanoia* often translated as repentance, but really it is more exciting because *metanoia* invites you to look to the future, new beginnings rather than repentance which suggest looking back on past misdemeanors. Let us look forward to the future. We have so much to be thankful for and our future is laid before us, let us make the most of what is come. John's ministry threatened people whereas Jesus offered change and he worked with everyday people, people who make mistakes and need a new start. Our reading from Acts tells us that Apollus who was a particularly good speaker had not received all the information about the importance of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. He was informed by the believers of Ephesus, people like Priscilla and

Aquila and was then able to go on to share his new found faith with the people of Greece. We are all constantly learning, adding to our experience of life and faith. We are having to find new ways of sharing our faith in these unusual times and it is important that we continue to share our faith, Through the way we live our lives and how we support our community. We can still keep in touch with people through the many different types of technology. We have been able to prepare services and distribute them through email, Zoom and Facebook- it is not face to face but it is safe and personal safety is very important at this time. Church will be open again as soon as it is safe to open the building. The new types of service have enabled some people who were not able to come to church to feel that they are more connected to the church family. The circuit Facebook service is going to continue even when we are back in our buildings and is known as the 12th church in the circuit.

We are able to support our community through food donations, acts of kindness to our neighbours and also through our prayers.

We are all very aware of the changes which need to take place and one thing which this pandemic has highlighted is our vulnerability and the importance of our environment. Greta Thunberg recently on her 18th birthday asked for a promise from everyone that they will do everything they can for the planet. Think back to the first few verses from Genesis, look around you and appreciate the world in which we live and do your best to preserve the environment. We have appreciated our gardens and the nature so much recently.

We are so blessed. When Jesus was baptised, God pronounced his delight in his son Jesus Christ. We are encourage to seek to serve him and seek his delight as we strengthen our faith. May we go forward to love and serve the Lord. Let us look forward with a positive attitude- looking for light and hope in the months to come.

Let us pray..

Loving God, you have given us a world to care for and people to love.

Keep us mindful of what you call us to do and not to neglect your creation or our fellow human beings.

Help us to make new beginnings for ourselves and for others – in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Hymn StF 370 Breathe on me, breath of God

Prayers of intercession

Eternal God, it feels as if the whole world has changed
and yet in you there is stability and the opportunity of a new beginning.
So, we pray now for those whose lives are in turmoil,
those whose lives have been turned upside down, those who feel lost.
May they feel supported, find fresh hope,
and use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for those for whom the lockdown has come as a relief,
for those who now feel safer,
but we pray too for those who now feel desperate,
alone and worried about their jobs, their finances, their mental health.
May they feel supported, find fresh hope:
Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for children and young adults as their schooling is disrupted,
we pray for those who enjoy learning from home,
but pray too for those who will lose confidence,
who miss their friends, who feel vulnerable.
We remember their parents
and the parents of children with special needs,
struggling to cope on their own.
We pray for teachers, administrative staff,
and all those who feel overwhelmed.
May they feel supported, find fresh hope:
Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for the people of a divided America
at this time of political and racial tension and transition,
for outgoing President Donald Trump and President-elect Joe Biden.
We pray too for countries around the world
struggling with ethnic violence and militancy.
We remember the people of West Africa
and in particular the people of Niger, villagers who live in fear,
those who have been wounded in recent attacks
and those who have been bereaved.
May they feel supported, find fresh hope:
Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for those who have been injured
or lost their homes and loved ones in the severe weather,
remembering particularly the people of Norway affected by landslides,
and those in Australia battered by cyclones.

We pray for those who work in the emergency services,
those whose work is dangerous and traumatic.

We pray for those in refugees camps
with little protection from the weather,
those who sleep rough,
those who can't afford to heat their homes.

May they feel supported, find fresh hope:

Lord, use our prayers in Jesus' name to strengthen them.

We pray for one another, our families,
our communities, our church fellowships.

May we support those who are unwell or grieving.

May we bring fresh hope to those who feel forgotten and are vulnerable,
and may we – both practically and prayerfully – share our faith
in your Son Jesus in whose name we entrust these prayers to you.

Amen.

Hymn StF 553 I am a new creation

Final Prayer and the Grace

Lord, help us to be open to your prompting
as we seek to discover what you would have us be and do.
Remind us again and again that you have promised to be our
guide and companion on our journey.

Help us to look forward with renewed commitment,
and bless our thinking and speaking and doing.

In your name.

Amen

The Grace

This week's service has been prepared by Chris Watkins. Local Pastor.

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