

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020

## Order of service

### Welcome

I am Judith Hewitt a Reader in this Benefice of Rural East York which includes the villages of Dunnington, Holtby, Warthill and Stockton on the Forest. It is a privilege to welcome you to join us for worship on this Sunday, when here in the Diocese of York, we recognise and give thanks for the ministry of Readers.

I am joined by Malcolm, who is also a Reader and our Recognised Parish Assistants, Sue, Irene and Arnie in leading today's worship.

As we gather from all parts of God's world, we bring to Him our hymns, our prayers, our fellowship to Him, our Lord and King.

So let us pray:

We bring to you a new song written on our hearts, a song of praise and thankfulness for all that you have done in those lives you call your own, whose hearts have been transformed, who kneel before your throne.

We bring to you a new song, a joyful melody echoing a heavenly chorus.

'Hallelujah! Salvation, glory and power belong to our God!'

As we gather so we bring to God those things we are sorry about.

Refresh our lives, Lord, in your living water, and we shall know that we are clean.

For actions we regret, words spoken in haste, relationships hurt,  
trust abused, jealousy, envy, greed,  
forgive us, and restore that which we have broken,  
that your name might be glorified through our words and through our actions.

Refresh our lives, lord, in your living water, and we shall know that we are clean.

Amen.

### Hymn

O thou who camest from above,  
the fire celestial to impart  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart.

There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return,  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work and speak and think for thee;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up thy gift in me.

Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.

## Bible reading

### Mark 1 14-20

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

## Homily

Keith Albans

During the first five years of my ministry, I was asked to consider a posting to Fiji and then one to Birmingham. On both occasions there was a lot of thought and prayer involved, but the process around the Fiji job involved an interview for both Helen and myself. The thing that took us by surprise was the prevailing attitude in the panel that going to work overseas required a kind of "second calling", something which apparently was not required to go to Birmingham! To me, considering both requests was part of the discipline of being an ordained minister whereby we are open to being used as the Church sees fit, here or there. Well we never went to Fiji – but Birmingham was good, if a little cooler!

Whenever we explore specific ministries within the Church, such as that of Reader, there is inevitably a tension between the hope that people might hear a call to offer to explore that ministry, and giving the impression that no other forms of ministry count! That's not what today is about... Which is why I chose to have that passage from Mark's gospel read.

It comes right at the beginning of Jesus's active ministry – and he offers his summary of what he is about – the time is now, the kingdom is coming, good news is on offer and the call is to repent. And then he begins recruiting followers – disciples, learners. Simon and Andrew, James and John – fishermen all – asked to leave their nets and follow... and incredibly they did, leaving Zebedee and several others somewhat stunned... And Jesus' only promise to these four brave fishermen was to change the object of their chase from fish to people...

This is somewhat similar to how the Old Testament story of the people of God begins. Instead of fishermen, it's a nomad whom God encounters – Abram – together with his family. But the call is the same – "leave, and go to a place that I will show you!"

And that is still the primary call which God makes to each and every one of us. It may or may not involve a change of location or a change of function – but it does involve a change of orbit and a change of focus. As the Covenant Service which we shared in last January puts it – "I am no longer my own but yours..." As disciples of Jesus we are called to allow our lives to revolve around the will and the purposes of God, and the call is always to be open and alert to discovering just what that might entail. In recent months, many have come to realise gifts that they have which are being used in new ways through the production of services such as this... people filming, sharing pictures, prayers and music... No special 'call' was required – rather the openness to go somewhere that brought together gift and need.

When St Paul wrote to the Church in Corinth, we know he is dealing with a community that has misunderstood this whole idea of call and calling. In Chapter 12 of his first letter he lists a whole variety of gifts and giftings which are present in the community. But instead of playing their game of ranking them according to spectacle, Paul points instead to their commonality – many gifts but the same giver – the Spirit of God. Likewise, Paul and other end many of the New Testament letters either by naming and honouring a list of little-known members of the fellowships, or simply by greeting "every saint" – and, in effect, that includes me and you.

In ordination services for both Presbyters and Deacons in the Methodist Church, the final hymn is usually one of Charles Wesley's which will be familiar to you. "O thou who camest from above." The words and the imagery of the hymn are powerful and fit the occasion particularly well. And in the third verse there is a phrase which has always meant a lot to me – not as an ordained minister, but simply as a Christian. "*Jesus confirm my heart's desire to work,*

*and speak, and think for thee.*" Working and witnessing, perhaps, seem more obvious callings – but thinking for God? Well yes – being those who try to make sense of the world and its meaning and purpose through the lens of the eye of faith – that is surely a task laid out for each of us.

Come... go... leave... follow – work... speak... think – that's the call to ministry made to every Christian, and likewise, within the Body of Christ, we are called to be a place where each one can offer their gifts in the service of the gospel and the building up of the community of faith. Thanks be to God, Amen.

### Intercessions

Let us remember that God is with us now.

Wherever we are God looks upon us in His mercy.

He is always ready to hear us when we call – therefore let us pray.

Let us pray for our world. We lift to God the terrible situation we find ourselves in as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to spread unchecked across so many nations. We ask God to give our world leaders the courage and insight to act decisively in order to control the virus, particularly as we now look ahead towards the possibility of a 2nd wave with the enormous suffering and loss of life that that would bring.

O God, have mercy on our world, as we stand on the brink of disaster and self-destruction. Have mercy on the leaders of the nations who bear the responsibility of making decisions which will affect so many lives. We also pray for those engaged in the medical profession, and those who are trying to perfect a vaccine which will be safe and effective for the whole world.

This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Let us pray for those people who are in special need at this time. We remember those who are ill, those who are lonely, those who cannot get out of the house due to old age or infirmity and those who are frightened of what the future may hold.

We take this opportunity to bring to God anyone known personally to us who is in special need today.

God of love and power we bring to you those people whom we have named and also the countless numbers who are known only to you. Grant them healing, if that may be; but above all grant them your peace and joy, that they may know that you are with them, that they are safe and that nothing can snatch them from your love or finally defeat your purposes.

This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen

We pray for the church, asking God to help us to find ways forward as we face the fact that things must change within the church.

We pray for our whole church family, remembering especially those who feel left out and discouraged for any reason. We ask God to help us to approach the future with open minds and a willingness to experiment with new forms of worship remembering always to listen for God's gentle word to guide us.

Oh God you have called us to be your witnesses in the world; give us grace to hear and obey your call. We pray that our lives may bear witness to your love shown in Jesus Christ and that our witness may reflect your light in the communities in which we live and work.

This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

Amen.

Finally – we bring together all our prayers in these words –

May God sustain us in all our works and in all our ways. May He make us humble just and true.  
May he strengthen us in holiness and righteousness and fill our homes with love and peace.

Amen

### Collect

Almighty God,  
who called your Church to bear witness  
that you were in Christ reconciling the world to yourself:  
help us to proclaim the good news of your love,  
that all who hear it may be drawn to you;  
through him who was lifted up on the cross,  
and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

### Reader ministry

When you say you are a Reader many people think you read the Bible in Church, but for those people who know me and other Readers they will know that is only a very small part of our ministry.

We are called by God, and after training, into a ministry of teaching and preaching and for me also into a funeral ministry.

**But** we are all called by God to serve Him in a variety of ways. During these unfamiliar times many have taken up a ministry of phoning those who cannot leave their homes.

In this Diocese we have Recognised Parish Assistants, who after training are equipped to serve God in various roles including pastoral care and leading worship.

In one of the psalms set for today, Psalm 119 v33-40 we have the words:

‘Give me understanding and I shall keep your law, I shall keep it with all my heart’

When God calls us to serve Him, we initially feel we don’t have the understanding or the strength to, but we then realise we are not alone. The psalmist is asking God to teach him to obey God’s law and that is what we are all called to do in our various ministries, whether it is as a Reader, an RPA, a churchyard grasscutter, a welcomer at Church, someone who prays for those in need, and the list can go on.

The psalmist knew that God’s Law is really about having our hearts changed so that we know God’s will for each and everyone of us.

So although we today remember and pray for our Readers, my prayer is also that we all search our hearts and to listen to God’s call for each and everyone of us.

### Hymn

Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,  
there is no shadow of turning with thee;  
thou changest not, thy compassions, they fail not  
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;  
all I have needed thy hand hath provided,  
great is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,  
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,  
join with all nature in manifold witness  
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,  
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;  
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,  
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

#### Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
now and for ever.  
Amen.

#### Dismissal and Blessing

My name is Mark Poole, and I am the curate of the four parishes here of Stockton, Warthill, Holtby and Dunnington. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to today's service, and to those who have made it possible for it to reach so many. And thank you to you for tuning in and joining us, wherever you are. You have been most welcome.

And especially today, we say thank you to all those who serve our communities and churches, working and giving so generously, in so many ways. And indeed, if you feel called today to offer your gifts in some way, then please do not hesitate to contact either myself, or our rector, the Reverend Nick Bird.

And so to our blessing.

May God the Father who created us in his image,  
and calls each of us to offer ourselves to him in service,  
fill us with his strength and eternal love.

And may Christ who died for us,  
fill us with the abundance of his love, mercy and grace,  
so that we might serve in his likeness.

And may the Holy Spirit,  
the source of life and creativity,  
summon out the gifts in each one of us,  
and equip us with all that we need  
to love, live and serve in his name.

And the blessing of God Almighty,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
be with us all, and those whom we love,  
now and forever more.

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