

11th September, 2022

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe,

light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's Service set out below.



The Good Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

Opening Prayer: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Song:

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me.

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou who changest not, abide with me.

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings:

Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, thus abide with me.

I need Thy presence every passing hour:
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me.

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:
Ills have no weight and tears no bitterness:
Where is death's sting? Where, grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

Read 1 John 1:5 - 2:2. We live with God.

Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright.

The heart of John's message in these verses is this: whatever we claim about ourselves, the truth will out. It appears people were claiming to be Christian, that they were part of the family of God, and therefore the church – and doing this to gain advantage. However, their lives, their behaviour and attitudes showed up who they were. John challenges us to live to high standard, but also reassures us that God's grace would meet us when we failed – a grace he himself knew he needed.

Our Queen knew the truth, lived it, and shared it. She had deep integrity. And like John, she heard the message and declared it: "It is true that the world has had to confront moments of darkness this year, but the Gospel of John contains a verse of great hope, often read at Christmas carol services: 'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it'... Despite being displaced and persecuted throughout his short life, Christ's unchanging message was not one of revenge or violence but simply that we should love one another." (Christmas message, 2015)

The message (1:5) is that God is light. Read Psalm 104:2 and Daniel 2:22. God is Light ... magnificent and totally other – holy and glorious. Without light there is no life – nothing to see! God begins creation with light – an expression of his being. God is truth and good, and error and evil (darkness) can have no place (home) with him.

John challenges us to be people of the light, people of integrity. Whole people whose 'claim' matches our inner life and outer behaviour. In this and following passage there are 5 'claims'. Today we look at three, found in verses 1:6, 8, & 10.

1. Claim to have fellowship. I know Jesus, read 1:6.

We might claim a relationship with someone. My mum and dad attended two Buckingham Garden Parties in quick succession, and my dad always claimed that the Duke of Edinburgh said, 'I know you, don't I? I met you recently.' It's a lovely story, but even if true, the Duke didn't really know my dad, and my dad didn't really know him. We might often use the expression, 'they're a friend of mine', even, 'they're a good friend', can we say this about Jesus?

To get invited to a royal garden party requires both a history of service, and a commitment to obey the set protocol. Inappropriate behaviour would have seen any guest marched to the exit. To claim fellowship with God, we must be walking in the light. We cannot come with sin clinging to us – this is shown up in the light. We can only come by the cleansing blood of Jesus. Read 1:7. We need to be walking with and into the light. In other words our ‘claim’ matches our inner attitudes and outer behaviour.

2. Claim to be without sin. Read 1:8-10.

The Queen said: “Although we are capable of great acts of kindness, history teaches us that we sometimes need saving from ourselves – from our recklessness or our greed. God sent into the world a unique person – neither a philosopher nor a general, important though they are, but a Saviour, with the power to forgive... It is my prayer that on this Christmas day we might all find room in our lives for the message of the angels and for the love of God through Christ our Lord.” (Christmas message, 2011)

We need a Saviour and we are offered one in Jesus – but first we have to recognise that need! So many claim to have lived a good life, but John says, ‘we deceive ourselves’ and are making God out ‘to be a liar’! Do we not want to believe what God says about himself? Do we want to make God in our own image and deny his holiness, that he is light? Read John 3:19-21.

John sets the bar high, but recognises we cannot achieve this we need Jesus. Read again 1:9. Read 2:1-2. Our Lord was given the name Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins! The Prayer Book says he makes a ‘full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world.’

“This is the time of year when we remember that God sent his only son ‘to serve, not to be served’. He restored love and service to the centre of our lives in the person of Jesus Christ. It is my prayer this Christmas Day that his example and teaching will continue to bring people together to give the best of themselves in the service of others. The carol, In The Bleak Midwinter, ends by asking a question of all of us ... : ‘What can I give him... ? The carol gives the answer: ‘Yet what I can I give him – give my heart’. (Christmas message, 2012.)

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)

Queen Elizabeth has been a life-long and faithful servant of Christ. As she leaves her earthly kingdom and enters her heavenly home, may she rest in peace and rise in glory.

A Prayer for the new King, Charles III.

Everlasting God, we pray for our new King. Bless his reign, we pray, and the life of our nation. Help us to work together so that truth and justice, harmony and fairness flourish among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Collect: Thirteenth Sunday after Trinity

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.**



The 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 the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. 21st September at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 28th September in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise for Harvest, Sunday, 2nd October, 3pm – 4.30pm
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.