

13th November, 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.

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:

When I survey the wondrous cross
on which the Prince of glory died,
my richest gain I count but loss,
and pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
save in the death of Christ, my God!
All the vain things that charm me
most,
I sacrifice them through his blood.

See, from his head, his hands, his
feet,
sorrow and love flow mingled
down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
or thorns compose so rich a crown?

Were the whole realm of nature
mine,
that were a present far too small.
Love so amazing, so divine,
demands my soul, my life, my all.

Sermon by Rev Howard Wright: We live fearlessly.

Read 1 John 4:7-21 and John 13:1-5

In this passage from 1 John is so much to encourage and challenge us. This passage contains the amazing quotes: 'God is love', and 'perfect love drives out all fear'.

Love comes from and originates with, God. Meaning that we can love because God does. John has already stated that God is light (1:5) and pointed to God as Spirit (4:2), now he God declares that God is love - twice (vs. 8 & 16)!

Love, we are told, makes the world go round, is all we need, and is found all around us. Love is at the centre of God's being. God is love, but love is not God – though many would have it be so.

Our ethics, our moral decisions today are often based on 'love' as our guiding principle, but 'love' can be misdirected, especially when we only understand love to be a feeling. The Bible has a deep understanding of love. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Love in this context is an act of will, a decision based on the very best for another. Love has a steel to it, it is tough, and, if we are honest, humanly unattainable, but it is also, intensely attractive. We long to be loved as described in Corinthians, and we are!

God is love! Re-read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 and substitute the word 'love' for 'God'. God is love, and he loves us at this depth and with this passion. How do we know? Read vs. 9-10. John 3:16 tells us that God so loved, that he gave us Jesus. Jesus demonstrates God's extraordinary love in human form, he leaves glory to come to us, lives with us, teaches us and dies for us. *'Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.'* (John 13:1b NIV 1984). God takes the initiative, He loves us first (v.10).

Do we daily receive and know this love? We might need to spend time reflecting upon the love God has given to us. It's sometimes rightly said, there is nothing that we can do to make God love us less, and nothing we

can do to make him love us more, he already loves us to the fullest extent of his love. Ask God to help you receive His love and read Romans 8 – His perfect love drives out all fear (v.18).

Love comes from God, our ability to love depends upon God, and our ability to love God and neighbour, is an indicator of our closeness to God. John says, that if we don't live in love we are without God!

Jerome, one of the very early Church writers wrote about John, *'the blessed evangelist'* that in his old age, *'he would not say anything else in the meetings but this: "Little children, love one another!" When at last the disciples and brothers present got tired of hearing the same thing again and again, they said, "Master, why do you keep saying the same thing?" John replied with a saying worthy of him: 'Because it is the Lord's command, and it is enough if it is really done'*

Jesus warned that a time would come when, *'Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, ...'* (Matthew 24:12). Looking again at the list in 1 Corinthians, can we place our own name, as we placed God's earlier? Or is it more, *'Howard is not patient, etc.'*! We might need to receive the challenge of God to get closer to him and receive more of his love, and more of his Spirit, to enable us to be even more reflective of him – taking on the family likeness and joining in the family business. Otherwise we risk being the clanging cymbal and ultimately of no substance – nothing!

So we depend on his love, (v.16) and we are made complete by his love (vs. 12 & 17). We can sure of his love (v. 13) and we can know no-fear because of his love (v. 18). How then are we to live, we are to live in God and his love, demonstrating and sharing his love with the world! Let us pray for God's help to do this.

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)

- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, neighbours, and for family & friends.
- Pray for the Church.



Collect: *Twenty-second Sunday after Trinity*

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written for our learning: help us so to hear them, to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them that, through patience, and the comfort of your holy word, we may embrace and for ever hold fast the hope of everlasting life, which you have given us in our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive 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. 16th Nov. at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: 23rd Nov. at 11am in Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.