

18th August, 2024

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:

Beneath the cross of Jesus
I'm ready to take my stand,
the shadow of a mighty Rock
within a weary land;
a home within the wilderness,
a rest upon the way,
from the burning of the noontide
heat
and the burden of the day.

Upon the cross of Jesus
mine eye at times can see
the very dying form of One
who suffered there for me:

and from my stricken heart with
tears
two wonders I confess,
the wonders of redeeming love
and my unworthiness.

I take, O cross, thy shadow
for my abiding place:
I ask no other sunshine than
the sunshine of his face;
content to let the world go by,
to know no gain nor loss;
my sinful self my only shame,
my glory all the cross.

The Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright
Read Psalm 91 and John 14:15-21
The Lord is my refuge

Over the next couple of weeks we take a brief look at Psalms. The Psalms are a songbook, and we have to be careful about building doctrines from these songs alone – but they’ve much to teach us about prayer, worship, and the presence of God.

There were many things we learnt during COVID to help us with well-being. Including exercising, getting outdoors, mindfulness, thankfulness, etc. So, what’s our go-to when things don’t go right?

Read Psalm 121:1-2. How can we be sure of God’s help?

Firstly, God loves us. God has given us many good and positive things, but above all these things, he has given himself. He offers himself, his company and presence a chance to dwell with him (read v1.)

The remarkable thing about our God, is that we don’t have to ascend to him, he comes to us. We are not orphans – as we read in John 14:18 – we are family. Children of the Heavenly Father, precious and beloved. (Read v4, v14-16.)

Do you trust that God loves you?

Secondly, God has defeated the enemy. Verses 5-7 speak confidently of God’s victory and protection.

We have an armour to defend us – see Ephesians 6:16-17. And, read Colossians 2:13-15. God has already triumphed against the lion and the snake (see v.13). Right back in Genesis 3 – the prophecy was given that a saviour would come and rescue us and crush the serpent. And Peter (1 Peter 5:8) warns us to be alert, the devil prowls around looking for those to devour – but we are to stand firm, because the Lion of Judah, Jesus, has already defeated Satan!

We may have to walk through some dark valleys, and one day the valley of the shadow of death (see Psalm 23). But God is with us, his rod and his staff, two pieces of wood, which echo the two pieces of wood that form the cross upon which Jesus broke the power of death and Satan.

And what shadow is in any dark valley we walk through, God's shadow is bigger (see v.1)!

Do you trust that God loves you, AND, has won the victory? Then, finally, Rest in his presence and await his deliverance (again see v.1).

Read Isaiah 40:28-31. Those who hope, or wait on the Lord will be renewed. Read Matthew 11:28-29. God offers himself as a sanctuary for us.

In conclusion, this Psalm is about both the present and the future. We have now, the presence and power of God, through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and this is victory itself, though there are still tough times - the shadow of God, is bigger than the shadows over our lives. And the future of God is bigger than we can even begin to grasp.

And so, trust that God loves you, that he has won your battles for you, and dwell in his presence.

12th Sunday after Trinity: Almighty and everlasting God, you are always more ready to hear than we to pray and to give more than either we desire or deserve: pour down upon us the abundance of your mercy, forgiving us those things of which our conscience is afraid and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, 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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and 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).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: August 21st at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: August 21st at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: August 28th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday, TBA
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at <https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>