

### **Words of Welcome**

*We may be unable to gather this morning in the familiar surroundings of St Chad's Church, but we are still God's gathered people. Wherever we are, whether we join one another by screen or through this sheet, we come together to share God's love and to hear his word.*

### **Greeting**

Let us worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

**All Amen.**

The Lord be with you

**All and also with you.**

This is the day that the Lord has made.

**All We will rejoice and be glad in it.**

### **Opening Prayer**

**All Lord, direct our thoughts, and teach us to pray. Lift up our hearts to worship you in spirit and in truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **A Special Prayer for Today**

Gracious Father, you gave up your Son out of love for the world: Lead us to ponder the mysteries of his passion, that we may know eternal peace through the shedding of our Saviour's blood. **Amen.**

### **We Say Sorry**

God our Father, we come to you in sorrow for our sins. For turning away from you, and ignoring your will for our lives; Father, forgive us: **save us and help us.** For behaving just as we wish, without thinking of you; Father, forgive us: **save us and help us.** For failing you by what we do and think and say; Father, forgive us: **save us and help us.** For letting ourselves be drawn away from you by temptations in the world about us; Father, forgive us: **save us and help us.** For living as if we were ashamed to belong to your Son; Father, forgive us: **save us and help us.**

### **Words of Forgiveness**

Almighty God, who in Jesus Christ has given us a kingdom that cannot be destroyed, forgive us our sins, open our eyes to God's truth, strengthen us to do God's will and give us the joy of his kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

**Readings from the Bible** Ezekiel 37:1-14 Romans 8:6-11

### **Reflection on Ezekiel 37: Claire Wilson**

If earlier this month you watched Sports Relief, you will have seen seven celebrities take on the brutal challenge of crossing 100 miles of the Namib desert in temperatures over 35 degrees, to reach the Eduard Bohlen shipwreck on Africa's skeleton coast.

Absorbing all of that physical and mental pressure, all seven made it to their destination, each changed by their experiences and discovering too a greater understanding of themselves, a new compassion for others, and a renewed vigour for life itself.

Can you imagine how Ezekiel felt in our bible passage? As a prophet sent by God, he finds himself transported to a valley full of dry bones, similar to the carcasses of ships abandoned in the Namib. Yet, amidst this lifeless place, God's 'hand is upon' Ezekiel who is led by the 'Spirit of the Lord'. God is very present in the desolation, not remote or aloof.

God asks Ezekiel a simple question: 'Can these bones live?' He replies, 'O Lord God, you know'. Is this response sarcastic or was Ezekiel serious. If the latter, he was acknowledging that God alone knows the true state of the bones, and what might be achieved, an understanding that in God—everything is possible.

As the prophet follows God's instructions, miraculously the bones, sinews, flesh and skin come together and with the breath of Ezekiel, the bones are revitalised—they stand and breathe, a vast multitude.

### *Reflection Continued:*

In the midst of our own desolate circumstances, we are reminded that God is with us. He knows our current plight, and he has not walked away from us.

Instead, God calls us to follow Him. He uses us as He used Ezekiel. God calls us to breathe new life into the dry bones of our present situation.



To bring hope through life-giving and affirming acts of kindness and sacrifice, examples of which are all around us—from the way we respect and care for one another, through our voluntary work and in the calls made simply to stay in touch.

Finally, take a look at the picture! And see how an abandoned shipwreck in that same Namib desert has been turned creatively into lodges where people can visit and life can thrive. From dry bones to new life.

### *Saying what we Believe*

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist? **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again? **We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?  
**We believe and trust in him.**

This is the faith of the Church. **This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### *The Lord's Prayer*

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen**

### *Words of Blessing*

May Christ who out of defeat brings new hope and a new future, fill you with his new life. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you and those you love, this day and always. **Amen.**

### *Our Prayers*

Lord Jesus, we give thanks that You are with us in this time of trouble. We ask for your blessing upon all who are called to serve others; for all medical staff, delivery teams, drivers and so many others who risk their own lives, so that others will be treated.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, You came to heal the sick, and especially now we pray that your healing presence be upon all who are ill. Reassure the anxious, relieve those worried for loved ones and care for all who are lonely or alone.

Lord in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Lord Jesus, we pray for all in authority, that they will be guided by your ways of truth and humility. Protect the weak and equip those called to serve them. Lord, where bones are dry, we pray for your life giving Spirit to bring new life. **Amen**

*Our prayers continue in a moment of silence as we bring before God the blessing of those whom we hold dearly in our hearts. We conclude with the prayer that Jesus taught us.*