

## Website Morning Prayer Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2021

### PRAYER OF APPROACH

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Come away .... and rest a while.' Let us come into the Lord's presence now, away from the burdens and stresses of life to receive the rest that Jesus offers to restore our souls and equip us for whatever comes next. Amen

### GREETING

We have come together in the name of Christ to offer our praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive God's holy word, to pray for the needs of the world, and to seek the forgiveness of our sins, that by the power of the Holy Spirit we may give ourselves to the service of God.

### CONFESSION

Jesus says, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we have sinned against you in thought, and word, and deed, and in what we have left undone. We are heartily sorry, and repent of all our sins. For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen**

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from all our sins, confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, and keep us in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

### THE PEACE

Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be called children of God. We meet in his name and share his peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.

If we like, we can wish peace to absent family, friends and neighbours by placing a hand on our heart and holding a moment's silence.

This touching of the heart connects us all, hand to chest, heart to heart, with love, peace and comfort to everyone.

BIBLE READING – 2 Samuel 7:1-14a

1 Now when king David dwelt in his house, and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies round about, 2 the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." 3 And Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that is in your heart; for the Lord is with you."

4 But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan,  
5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord: Would you build me a house to dwell in? 6 I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling. 7 In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"'" 8 Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David, 'Thus says the Lord of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel;  
9 and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth.  
10 And I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, 11 from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. 12 When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.  
13 He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God

GOSPEL READING – Mark 6:30-34, 53-end

Hear the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Mark. Glory to you, O Lord

30 The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. 31 And he said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while." For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat.

32 And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves.

33 Now many saw them going, and knew them, and they ran there on foot from all the towns, and got there ahead of them. 34 As he went

ashore, he saw a great throng, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

53 And when they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret, and moored to the shore. 54 And when they got out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him, 55 and ran about the whole neighbourhood and began to bring sick people on their pallets to any place where they heard he was.

56 And wherever he came, in villages, cities, or country, they laid the sick in the market places, and besought him that they might touch even the fringe of his garment; and as many as touched it were made well.

This is the Gospel of the Lord. Praise to you, O Christ

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthen us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

#### INTERCESSIONS

O God, you have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless 'til they find their rest in you. *(St Augustine)*

Help us we pray, to come to terms with the complexities of our changing society. May we accept everyone, no matter how diverse their language, culture, identity or belief may be, and yet maintain truth and integrity.

May we never shrink from the faith in which we believe and trust and always uphold the ideals set before us in the Lord Jesus, so that as far as we are able, we live in the freedom of truth he unfailingly upheld.

At this time of some covid restrictions being lifted, may the protection afforded by vaccination reduce the number of those contracting the virus, and its severity in those who do. We long for the day when

everyone is able to live a normal life, free from pandemic concerns and for the time when we are able to freely gather in worship.

We thank you for the scientists who devise the covid vaccines and treatments and all those in the medical and care professions who continue to work so hard to combat covid and myriad diseases and sickness. We give thanks also for those who keep essential services running and ensure that food is constantly available.

Be with those who are suffering from covid and other illnesses, support the bereaved and comfort the lonely and housebound.

Bless and guide this parish and all churches in the way ahead as we seek to reach out to others and share the light and love of Christ.

Merciful father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son, our saviour Jesus Christ. Amen

#### THE COLLECT

Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; through 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

#### TALK

A new word with the same spelling as an old one, but now with a very different meaning, has entered our vocabulary, the word 'woke'. Oxford Languages defines woke as: *a term that refers to awareness of issues that concern social justice and racial justice*. One urban dictionary defines woke as being *aware of the truth behind things*, while yet another definition changes this meaning to *the act of being very pretentious about how much you care about a social issue*.

The problem with defining woke is that it has become the go-to word covering a multitude of statements and actions that to some are perfectly normal, while to others are unacceptable and demand correction or counter action. It is also used as stick to beat people who are raising issues of courtesy and justice in areas such as sexuality that may be bit of a closed book to many of us. On the other hand sometimes the 'woke folk' do go a bit far in claiming to be offended. A station announcer who prefaced his message, with "Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls" was allegedly subject to a

complaint from someone who described themselves as 'nonbinary', and said that the announcement did not therefore apply to them; one person only, but the train company apologised saying that such language would not be used again.

The difficulty is that genuine freedom of speech, and I do not mean the deliberately offensive, is being increasingly suppressed. Worse, in my view, truth is being distorted to the point where it is impossible to identify truth from fiction. What is right and what is wrong? Social media, prime source of fake news, has a lot to answer for!

Truth matters and so does the right to offer an opinion honestly held, even though others may disagree. French Philosopher, wit and writer, Voltaire, was a supporter of social reform, not quite an 18th century woke but you get the gist; however, a biographer (Evelyn Beatrice Hall), describes Voltaire's philosophy as "*I wholly disapprove of what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it.*" One person's 'truth' may differ from that of another; we may not like what we hear or read, but we agree to disagree. It is also the case that some things are indisputably true and should be stated as such.

Anointed King over Israel and with constant warring at an end, David was able to settle into a splendid palace, fit for his royal household, and turn his thoughts to other matters. God's prophet Nathan heard the great King speaking about the way he lived in splendour, but that the Ark of God containing the Commandments was still housed in a tent. Clearly David had ideas about building a permanent place for it, a kingly thing to do, something that would keep him in favour with the people and with God. Nathan initially said – *well you're the King, do what you want*, but the same night, perhaps as he prayed, the prophet heard God say that it would not be David but his son Solomon who would build the temple. Perhaps God saw that David's royal pride was his principal motivation; whatever the case, Nathan decided to tell David the truth about what he had heard.

Nathan must have been a man of great courage to insist that the King drop the idea of erecting a prestigious building for God. Later the same Nathan had to be braver still when he took King David to task in the matter of his affair with Bathsheba and the killing of her husband Uriah. Nathan knew that unless the King was prepared to face up to the truth, his reign would not have much worth. David's facing the truth and turning away from wrong enabled God to build a united kingdom of Israel through him.

In our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, it does sometimes feel as if those we elect to positions of authority are economical with the truth; some political decisions are difficult to swallow. Forthright views expressed can be influenced by media hype; a new and strange, to my way of thinking, and lucrative social media linked occupation, is that of 'influencer'. Practitioners might alternatively be described as exploiters of the gullible!

What is most important is that we maintain our personal integrity. God's promise to David was that if he faced the truth his Kingdom would be established for ever, and in spite of the later serious misdeeds of the King, for which he had to repent and accept the consequences of his actions, God kept his word. However unpalatable truth may be, facing up to it not only helps us to be at peace within ourselves; it helps us to keep open our lines of communication with God, to better understand his will and purpose for us individually, as a church and, I believe, as a nation.

Hundreds of years after David, Jesus, descended from David's line, proclaimed that his followers would know the truth, and truth would set them free. The truth he spoke of was that of being honest about ourselves, and of the need for us to let the light of truth shine through the darkness of deceit and wrongdoing. Jesus dealt with truth, even when it brought him into danger and difficulty. He knew that living a lie will sooner or later bring about our downfall.

Jesus taught the need for truth, but he was also aware of human fallibility and our constant need of forgiveness. William Temple, former Archbishop of Canterbury, in his book 'Readings in St John's Gospel', commenting on the blindness to truth of the Pharisees, some of whom were masters of fake news, but also addressing our basic human nature, wrote:

*What we may not do, yet all strive to do, is to keep our eyes half-open and live by half the light. That kind of sight holds us to our sin and our sin to us. But the only way of avoiding it is to look with eyes wide open upon ourselves and the world as the full light reveals it; but this is the surrender of faith, and pride resists it. (Readings in St John's Gospel p 161 Macmillan 1952)*

Archbishop Temple's words spoke powerfully to me when I first read them. I included them in my collection of favourite things, so I see them again from time to time and they are as meaningful and ouch-making as ever.

King David lived centuries before Jesus, in a completely different age and culture, and yet neither his royal status, nor his antiquity, suppress the timeless challenge of living in the slavery of untruth, or in the freedom of truth; or for the great majority of us, as William Temple implies, somewhere in-between the two. Amen

#### LORD'S PRAYER

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray:

**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**

#### CONCLUSION

The Blessing

The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life. Amen

#### Notices

- The churches are open for private prayer on Thursdays – St James from 10 to 12 noon and St Barnabas from 2 until 4pm.
- Zoom prayers at 6pm Tuesdays and Thursdays with a brief reflection and time of prayer looking at the subject of obscure characters from the Bible. See newsletter for details.
- A working group looking at the future for St Barnabas and St James has met to look at services and a Joint PCC meeting is to consider this further.

#### The Grace

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen

**C/VS/WebsiteSun18July21**