

All-age worship for 12th September 2021

Welcome to our all-age worship service!

It's wonderful to have you all with us as we come to worship God.

Before we begin, just to remind you that we can now sing **if** we keep our masks on, and while you are sitting down you are now allowed to remove them when not singing. After the service there will be drinks served from the foyer, please queue down the passageway, leaving a gap for people to get past, and once you have your drink, please bring it directly back into the church and take a seat, to avoid the foyer getting clogged up with people, thankyou.

Also, please remember to keep giving your gifts of money for the continued work of the church, there are several ways you can do this, via the website or by bank transfer, please speak to Keith if you are unsure.

Our Call to worship is from Isaiah 50 verses 4 to 9a

The Lord and King has taught me what to say.

He has taught me how to help those who are tired.

He wakes me up every morning.

He makes me want to listen like a good student.

⁵The Lord and King has unplugged my ears.

I've always obeyed him.

I haven't turned away from him.

⁶**I let my enemies beat me on my bare back.**

I let them pull the hair out of my beard.

I didn't turn my face away

when they made fun of me and spit on me.

⁷**The Lord and King helps me.**

He won't let me be dishonoured.

So I've made up my mind to keep on serving him.

I know he won't let me be put to shame.

⁸He is near. He will prove I haven't done anything wrong.

So who will bring charges against me?

Let's face each other in court!

Who can bring charges against me?

Let him come and face me!

⁹The Lord and King helps me.

Together: So who will judge me?

A gathering prayer

Creative God,

you called us into your kingdom,

and adopted us as your children.

Our Saviour,

you showed us how to be servants,

denying ourselves to serve others.

Holy Spirit,

you give us strength to take up our cross
in the service of the kingdom of God.
Teach us to serve others,
and in doing so, to serve you.
Amen.

Now let us sing: **I hear the sound of rustling in the leaves of the trees**

I hear the sound of rustling in the leaves of the trees
The Spirit of the Lord has come down on the earth
The church that seemed in slumber has now risen from its knees
And dry bones are responding with the fruits of new birth
Oh, this is now a time for declaration
The word will go to all men everywhere
The church is here for healing of the nations
Behold the day of Jesus drawing near

My tongue will be the pen of a ready writer
And what the Father gives to me I'll sing
I only want to be His breath
I only want to glorify the King

And all around the world the body waits expectantly
The promise of the Father is now ready to fall
The watchmen on the tower all exhort us to prepare
And the church responds-a people who will answer the call
And this is not a phase which is passing
It's the start of an age that is to come
And where is the wise man and the scoffer?
Before the face of Jesus they are dumb

Chorus

A body now prepared by God and ready for war
The prompting of the Spirit is our word of command
We rise, a mighty army, at the bidding of the Lord
The devils see and fear, for their time is at hand
And children of the Lord hear our commission
That we should love and serve our God as one
The Spirit won't be hindered by division
In the perfect work that Jesus has begun

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Talk: Can you remember the last time you took a risk?

(Talk to Rachel about the risk she took walking over O2)

What's the riskiest thing you have done? Why do people take risks? Where do you draw the line? Is there a situation where you would take a risk where normally you wouldn't? Would you risk your life for something or someone?

Today, we explore Jesus' call to his followers to 'take up their cross' – in other words, to be willing to die for him. How do we feel about this call? What difference does it make to us in practice?

Questions

- How often do you weigh up the risks with the rewards?
- What, for you, are the risks and rewards of following Jesus?
- How does that play out in your daily life?

Let's talk to God again, and I begin this prayer with words from Psalm 116 verses 1-9.

"I love the Lord because God hears my voice and my prayer for mercy. Because God bends down to listen, I will pray as long as I have breath!

Death wrapped its ropes around me; the terrors of the grave overtook me. I saw only trouble and sorrow.

Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Please, Lord, save me!"

How kind the Lord is! How good God is! So merciful, this God of ours!

The Lord protects those of childlike faith; I was facing death, and God saved me. Let my soul be at rest again, for the Lord has been good to me.

God has saved me from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling. And so I walk in the Lord's presence as I live here on earth!"

Lord God, thankyou for keeping us safe, whatever we individually have been through, when we see only trouble and sorrow, you save us and pull us through. Thankyou Lord God. Amen.

We continue with a family friendly version of the Lord's prayer:

Our Father in heaven, you are awesome!

Show us who you are and how you want us to be.

Make earth more like heaven.

Please give us what we need to keep going each day.

Help us when we are wrong and clean us up on the inside.

Help us to let other people off and move on.

Keep us from bad stuff.

You're in charge!

You're strong and powerful and always there.

Forever!

Amen.

And now let us sing: **I the Lord of Sea and Sky**

I, the Lord of sea and sky,

I have heard My people cry.

All who dwell in dark and sin,

My hand will save.

I who made the stars of night,
I will make their darkness bright.
Who will bear My light to them?
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart

I, the Lord of snow and rain,
I have born my peoples pain.
I have wept for love of them, They turn away.

I will break their hearts of stone,
Give them hearts for love alone.
I will speak My word to them,

Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart.

I, the Lord of wind and flame,
I will tend the poor and lame.
I will set a feast for them,
My hand will save
Finest bread I will provide,
Till their hearts be satisfied.
I will give My life to them,
Whom shall I send?

Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord?
I have heard You calling in the night.
I will go Lord, if You lead me.
I will hold Your people in my heart

A mediation based on Mark 9 verses 27 to 38:

As I look back on our journey, I remember Caesarea Philippi as a group of villages straddling the hilltops. Jesus brought us from Tyre to walk above the olive groves out to the fields of sheep, where the eye could look across great distances, and dwell on the expanse of the valleys and mountains. He was expansive in his questions. 'Who,' he asked, almost meditatively, 'do people say I am?' We looked at one another. It was a question we had heard many times on the edges of crowds. We answered him as they did:

'John the Baptist, reincarnated.'

Elijah, returned from heaven.'

‘Any one of the prophets!’

There was a pause, as Jesus considered our answers. He cocked his head on one side, and a smile played around his mouth. ‘You’ve been listening to gossip,’ he said. ‘Alright...when you hear those speculations, who do **you** say I am?’

... He looked right at us. There was an embarrassed silence, which grew until the beating of my heart and the stirring in my chest grew too loud to ignore. I blurted out what we had talked about among ourselves, ‘You are the Messiah.’ The smile reached Jesus’ eyes. And we walked on. There was nothing more to be said as that thought, finally articulated, rolled around in our minds and hearts. Messiah. Messiah. Then Jesus told us to stop overthinking and concentrate on a place to stay for the night.

Later that evening, as we sat watching the fire burn low, Jesus returned to the subject. Messiahs don't always come in triumph. Had we thought that maybe God had another plan in mind? Had we considered that the path ahead might not end in glory, but in suffering, rejection, torture and death? There would be glory, but not in the way we expected. It would come on the third day, when death would be conquered for ever.

It was late. In my defence, I was tired and confused. I took Jesus aside. This was no sales pitch. Who would want to follow Jesus if the stakes were so high? But Jesus was angry. He sent me to bed with a flea in my ear, calling me some rude names. But the next morning, he settled down with the people who crowded around him, so that he could unpick the familiar story of the Messiah and reweave the story of salvation in his own way.

‘If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it.’ Jesus carried on talking for a long time – riddles that we didn’t understand until much later. What I understood him to mean was, that if we live life as we please, our lives will soon be over and that’s it; but if we live to please God, we gain everlasting life.

Then he looked straight at me. He was a prophet of course, as well as Messiah. He said, ‘Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.’ That prophecy was to come true in time to come. I was ashamed of him. I denied him three times. I repented...on the beach, when Jesus challenged me, oh so gently, so lovingly. He was not ashamed of me. Never. He forgave me and gave me a new commission: to feed his sheep.

At this point in our usual service we would be taking up an offertory, which means giving our gifts to God. As I mentioned earlier, if you would like to give to the work of the church please talk to Rev. Naomi or Keith or you can let me know and I will put you in touch with the right person.

Action:

- Immediately after Peter identifies Jesus as Messiah, Jesus speaks of those who would follow him, denying themselves and taking up their cross.
- Think about something you would find hard to deny yourself or to give up. Maybe it is a type of food, or a tv programme, maybe it’s something else entirely, think carefully about giving this thing up. Now say with me: ‘Lord, you call us to deny ourselves to follow you. We are thinking about whatever we find hard to give up. Help us to be true to our calling.’

We are asked as individuals to follow Jesus, but doing so also commits us to work for change in the world around us – a path that sometimes involves conflict. How might we as a church community bring change to the society in which we live? We have the chance to help with a litter pick soon. Is this something you could get involved with? We have a new art club started and a new children's club. There are plans for work to be done to this building, please remember to keep these things in your prayers so that God is at the centre of everything we do.

Words that matter:

Words can be very powerful in helping people to change the way they think and act, in particular positive words. Let's share some examples of words that you have found especially encouraging, loving, meaningful, healing – or even life-transforming. (To be written on a board – poster style, headed words that matter). If you would like to continue to add to this poster in the coming weeks, I will put it up somewhere where we can do this.

Prayer:

God, help us to know when to speak,

(shout) **Yes, God!**

and when we need to be more gentle.

(whisper) **Yes, God.**

Help us remember that our words are very powerful things,

and that we need to use them carefully.

Amen!

Our prayers for others:

Loving God,

You know the thoughts we have for those we love and know, who need your love, your healing hand, your forgiveness, we think of them now and hold them in our hearts in your presence. (Pause)

We bring to you those who have been wounded by words.

They may be words from the past,

hurtful and unnecessary.

They may be words in the present,

a constant reminder of hate or anger,

hurting the hearts of those who receive them.

They may be words not yet said but imagined,

fears about what labels may be pressed upon them,

when it becomes hard to believe in anything different.

We pray, too, for those who have particular authority,

whose words carry more weight, who have a wide audience.

Give them extraordinary wisdom,

knowing when to speak and when not to speak,

not rushing to give opinions or judge,

but always to consider and reflect

before making statements that can alter the lives of others.

In a world full of voices,

so ready to judge or to praise,

so willing to speak without thinking,

forgive us O God, and help us

to use words to heal, not to harm.

In Jesus' name.

Amen.

Rachel and Sandy take a risk!

Our last song this morning is **King of Kings**:

King of kings, majesty,
God of Heaven living in me,
gentle Saviour, closest friend,
strong deliverer, beginning and end,
all within me falls at your throne.

Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.

Earth and Heaven worship you,
love eternal, faithful and true,
who bought the nations, ransomed souls,
brought this sinner near to your throne;
all within me cries out in praise.

Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.

Your majesty, I can but bow,
I lay my all before you now.
In royal robes I don't deserve
I live to serve your majesty.

I live to serve your majesty.....

Sending out prayer:

Loving God,

Thankyou for your words of wisdom,

Help each one of us to remember at least one thing we have heard or thought during this service today.

May we go out into your world, ready to serve you in any way that we can,

Ready to be your hands, your ears, your lips in our community.

Let's all do the Grace together, follow me for the actions:

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen! (raise hands together on the Amen)