

Christ Church 17 October 2021, Day for Eradication of Poverty. Written service circulated to all.

Welcome to this special service on the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty at the end of Challenge Poverty Week. Today's worship will include Communion. I am very pleased to welcome Ruth Millard from Church Action on Poverty who will speak to us later.

Our Bible reading today speaks to us of an invitation to a meal. And in the Lord's Supper we are all invited to share in a very special meal, so we start worship with an

Invitation to Worship:

You have all been invited at this time to this special place

We don't just want an invitation We want to be welcomed

You are offered a special welcome to this place at this time

We don't just want a welcome We want to have a voice

Welcome to this place where there will be time for listening

We don't just want a voice We want to be heard

Welcome to this friendly space where your story will be heard

We don't just want to be heard We want to be believed

Welcome to this time and place where no-one's truth is denied

We don't just want to be believed We want to be trusted

Welcome to this place and time where your words are accepted

We don't just want to be trusted We want to be loved

Welcome to this time and place where God's love embraces everyone

We don't just want to be loved We want to know we belong

Welcome, and we pray you will feel you belong among us at all times

Richard Becher

Hymn Great God, your love has called us here, R&S 339

Great God, your love has called us here

as we, by love, for love were made.

Your living likeness still we bear,

though marred, dishonoured, disobeyed.

We come, with all our heart and mind

your call to hear, your love to find.

We come with self-inflicted pains

of broken trust and chosen wrong,

half-free, half-bound by inner chains,

by social forces swept along,

by powers and systems close confined,

yet seeking hope for humankind.

Great God, in Christ you call our name

and then receive us as your own,

not through some merit, right or claim,

but by your gracious love alone.

We strain to glimpse your mercy seat

and find you kneeling at our feet.

Then take the towel, and break the bread,

and humble us, and call us friends.

Suffer and serve till all are fed,

and show how grandly love intends

to work till all creation sings,

to fill all worlds, to crown all things.

Great God, in Christ you set us free

your life to live, your joy to share.

Give us your Spirit's liberty

to turn from guilt and dull despair

and offer all that faith can do

while love is making all things new.

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Opening prayer inspired by Luke 14:7-14

Hospitable God, you invite us to a banquet
where the last may be first,
and the humble and the mighty trade places.
Let us share your abundance with no fear of scarcity;
let us greet strangers as angels you have sent!
Send your Spirit now
so that we may find a place at your table
and welcome others with radical hospitality.
In the name of Jesus, Guest at all our tables, we pray. Amen.

~ written by Rev. Christopher Ney, United Church of Christ

Prayer of Confession The URC Prayer Handbook p62

“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”
(Mk 10:45)

Offertory

You are reminded to send in your gifts for the work of the church.
God, receive these gifts by your grace.
Multiply and use them through the power of the Holy Spirit
to accomplish Christ’s work of love in the world. **Amen.**

Introduction – Sandy

Today we are talking about poverty, which is a word that means not having enough food/money/ things to be able to live well. If you remember a few weeks ago, I promised the children we would make some dens as part of our harvest celebrations. This is because the first harvest celebrations people made shelters to remind them of the time when God looked after them after they escaped from slavery in Egypt. Today, making shelters is fun, but it can also remind us of people who have escaped from bad situations in their countries and have had to take shelter or refuge in tents and camps. We call these people refugees. They will often have had to leave all their belongings and set out on foot with only the things they can carry and so they are very poor and need our help. These are some of the people we might think about when we think of challenging poverty. (Shows photo of some Mexican refugees on the border with America by Barbara Zandoval on Unsplash)

So, let’s make our dens. I have here some tarpaulins, some pegs, some canes. Etc. I think we’ll have two groups and see who can make the best den. We only have a little time from when I set off this timer to make them. So, if this group has these items (Gives out items to make dens but with much more given to one group). If you’re watching from home, perhaps you could make your own den? (Den making begins at back of church?) How did we get on? Did we manage to make 2 dens? Things work out much better when we share the things we have and work together. Jesus taught us about sharing and thinking of those who don’t have as much as us when he was invited to a wedding feast in Luke chapter 14. In verses 12 to 14 it says (paraphrased); “Then he turned to his host, “When you put on a big party,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbours. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, people with disabilities, and those who can’t work. Then when you receive eternal life, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”

Now let’s sing; Go tell it on the mountain

*Chorus: Go tell it on the mountain,
 Over the hills and everywhere;
 Go tell it on the mountain
 That Jesus is his name.*

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He possessed no riches,
no home to lay his head;
He saw the needs of others
And cared for them instead.

Chorus

He reached out and touched them,
The blind, the deaf, the lame;
He spoke and listened gladly
To anyone who came.

Chorus

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Let's talk to God now before our Sunday Club goes out:
Dear generous God, Help us to be more like you,
To see people as you see people,
To care for them as you do
And to share what we can with others.
Be with our young people as they go into their group to learn more about you. Amen.

Bible readings: Mark 10:42-45 (from today's lectionary)

Luke 14:7-14 (chosen by today's speaker) If you are following the service at home,
you may like to continue reading up to verse 24)

Reflection by Ruth Millard from Church Action on Poverty. This will include a short video, which hopefully you can watch here (if you are online):

(https://player.vimeo.com/external/568517032.hd.mp4?s=049a790524a69121f1315740c2a164b8ce2ec04a&profile_id=175&download=1)

Hymn Christian Love, written for the 2020 Racial Justice Sunday © John Campbell
Tune 'Ode to Joy'

Christian love is not romantic,
not soft-focussed, twee or sweet,
Christian love's not 'likes', nor dating,
far more real than text or tweet.
Christian love means life-long struggle;
lived-out kindness ev'rywhere.
Christian love must echo Jesus:
selfless, soulful, steeped in prayer.

Christian love respects the other,
seeks to understand, not judge;
takes delight in mutual learning
doesn't force and doesn't fudge.
Christian love's an arduous journey,
finding self by giving all;
serving, sharing, helping, caring;
full response to Jesus' call.

Christian love cries out for justice
wheresoever it's denied;
joins the struggle, makes the protest,
stays the course, eyes open wide.
Christian love rejects what's racist,
sexist, ageist, prejudiced,
turns against each nurtured bias,
learning daily to resist.

Christian love is learned from Jesus,
walks his way and bears his cross;
self-surrenders, like our Saviour;
gains much more than what is lost.
Christian love is so persistent,
it outlasts all other things;
by its hope, its faith, its struggle,
it's the song all heaven sings!

Lord's Supper

The peace of Christ be always with you
And also with you

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Let us celebrate this joyful feast.
People will come from east and west and north and south,
and sit at table in the kingdom of God.

God is here.

Her Spirit is with us.

Blessed be the names of Love.

They touch our hearts with grace.

We open our hands in thanks.

Our song is one of welcome.

We thank you, Holy God,

For being a fool in the eyes of the world.

We thank you for abandoning control,
for creating a universe, new and strange.

We thank you for nurturing life, diverse, evolving, surprising and strange.

We thank you for calling a people who did not walk straight or know their limits.

We thank you for different bodies and desires

for different ways of thinking and speaking

for different ways of belonging and believing.

May our thanks cut a path through dividing walls to free the Spirit's song:

Holy, holy, holy One

God of life and love.

The world overflows with your glory.

One came who upset the rules:

who accepted the grace of the outsider,

who looked for wisdom in those who did not count,

who took his food in the company of the rejected.

One came who walked a strange path:

who did not think anyone was unclean,

who did not look for scapegoats

who refused to put a price on anyone's head.

The tables of the moneychangers he threw over.

The tables of liberation he threw open.

On the night before he gave himself up,

He ate and drank to the end of slavery.

He took the bread and broke it, and said:

'This is my body. Do this to remember me'.

He took the wine and poured it, and said:

'This is my blood. Do this to remember me.'

May the Spirit of creation take these earthly things and show us in their brokenness,
the life-giving plenty, the end of all poverty, the body and blood of Christ.

This is the mystery of faith:

Christ took the form of a slave

Christ took the cross of shame

Christ gives the free gift of life.

Into our hands he delivers himself, Jesus, the Victim, the Excluded One,
who is now a sign of hope for all.

So we celebrate this event of love; this rising from death,
unpredictable and full of wonder.

We pray that we will be a community defined by what it is open to
not by what it fears; by the excess of its love not the walls along its borders.

May our prayer be welcome to you, the God who is in all, and with all and for all. **Amen**

(Inclusive Church liturgy)

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On the night when he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is broken for you. Do this is remembrance of me. In the same way he took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Sharing of bread and wine

Prayer after communion

Most gracious God, we thank you for what you have given us.
You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service.
Now we give ourselves to you, and ask that our daily living
may be part of the life of your kingdom,
and that our love may be your love
reaching out into the life of the world, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Prayers of intercession

Gracious God, we pray today with all those living in poverty. We pray especially for those in our own country who will suffer greatly due to the reduction in Universal Credit and for those who will feel most the rise in fuel and food prices.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer

We pray for unity and equality and an end to discrimination and prejudice of all kind. Help us to truly remember that in Christ we are all one.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who go hungry and for the people who help them, through volunteering at foodbanks, by donating food and money, or by speaking out and raising awareness of issues.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for scientists, for doctors, nurses, porters and cleaners, carers and their families, as they continue to care for our health and wellbeing and we pray for the NHS.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for world leaders and democratic systems. Let them not be abused and help us not to be overtaken by apathy and despair when it seems that democracy is flawed. We pray particularly today for journalists who risk their lives to bring us the truth and for world leaders in the run-up to the COP26 conference that they will take the decisions and actions needed to halt climate change.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all who feel lonely and sad. For those who may not have family or who for whatever reason are unable to see family or friends.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.

We pray for all those who are ill and those who care for them; for those awaiting test results or treatment, for the dying and those who mourn, and we think particularly of the Kittle family with the funeral of Theresa on Tuesday. May your infinite love and grace surround them and bring them peace, in Jesus' name. **Amen**

The Lord's Prayer

Hymn Now let us from this table rise - R&S 463

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Now let us from this table rise
renewed in body, mind, and soul;
with Christ we die and rise again,
his selfless love has made us whole.

To fill each human house with love,
it is sacrament of care;
the work that Christ began to do
we humbly pledge ourselves to share.

With minds alert, upheld by grace,
to spread the Word in speech and deed
we follow in the steps of Christ,
at one with all in hope and need.

Then grant us grace, Companion-God,
to choose again the pilgrim way,
and help us to accept with joy
the challenge of tomorrow's day.

Fred Kaan, © Stainer & Bell Ltd

Blessing

May God bless us with anger at injustice, oppression and exploitation of people,
so that we will work for justice, equity and peace.

May God bless us with tears to shed for those who suffer from pain, rejection, starvation and war,
so that we will reach out to comfort them and change their pain to joy.

And may God bless us with the foolishness to think that we can make a difference in the world,
so that we will do the things which others tell you cannot be done.

And the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be with us all now and ever more. Amen

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