

28th January, 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.



The Good
Shepherd
Four Marks

Responding to God's Love

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:

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on thy side;
bear patiently the cross of grief or pain.
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
in every change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul; thy best, thy heav'nly
Friend
through thorny ways leads to a joyful
end.

Be still, my soul; thy God doth
undertake
to guide the future as He has the past.
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing
shake;
all now mysterious shall be bright at
last.

Be still, my soul; the waves and winds
still know
His voice who ruled them while He
dwelt below.

Be still, my soul; when dearest friends
depart,
and all is darkened in the veil of tears,
then shalt thou better know His love,
His heart,
who comes to soothe thy sorrow and
thy fears.

Be still, my soul; thy Jesus can repay
from His own fullness all He takes
away.

Be still, my soul; the hour is hast'ning
on
when we shall be forever with the
Lord,
when disappointment, grief, and fear
are gone,
sorrow forgot, love's purest joys
restored.

Be still, my soul; when change and
tears are past,
all safe and blessed we shall meet at
last.

The Sermon by Rev Roy Lewis

Read Nehemiah 3:1-14 and Luke 10:1-12 – Together

The last three Sundays we have been led through the first chapters of the book of Nehemiah. We have heard the context of the exile to Babylon of the Jewish people and all that they forfeited.

Much of the Old Testament is structured around this momentous event, and then the miraculous return of the people to their land, and particularly to Jerusalem to see the desecrated Temple rebuilt and restored and the walls of the city repaired, Together they met, heard the teaching of the Law of God; joined in His praise and worship and celebrated this great restoration.

It is not difficult for us to contextualise these happenings with our experience of recent years – the pandemic and lockdown(s). What a time that was and among many other hardship and deprivations, “Church” could not meet together. No public worship; prayer; fellowship, nor celebrating the sacraments of baptisms or Holy Communion. Then churches of our nation, along with many other nations were closed – no entry allowed.

We had not been deported to another land as had the Israelites, but our “Temple”, God’s people meeting together had been taken away from us.

Where are we now? We are in the position of rebuilding all that was taken away and of which we had been robbed.

The challenge facing us has been, and still is, great, and so this book of Nehemiah is vital reading and learning for us.

What can we discover specifically from chapter three?

1. Nehemiah great leader though he was could not do it alone.
2. The people – all of them needed to rally around, support, and with Nehemiah, build what was broken.
3. Some who should have known better refused to join in v 5.
4. Artisan craftspeople were engaged in major construction work with which they were unfamiliar and for which they had not been trained.

5. Both men and women were involved.
6. Many of them were engaged in work close to their homes.
7. Priests from other regions joined in to help.

For me, this is the key: -

BUILDING TOGETHER BY BEING TOGETHER!

Church attendance statistics tell us that although attendance in the UK is slowly recovering, the levels of already-low church attendance in 2019 have still not been achieved.

For many people, a fear of being together with the added risk of infection has been a significant factor. For others it appears they got out of the habit of going to church. An alternative provided through internet has been a good resource, and in many ways more convenient and for some preferable.

BUT it is NOT real church which is God's people being together.

“Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together” Hebrews 10:25

It is a huge challenge, but together we can rebuild what was broken down.

So, for those of us who are able, let us become available and –

BUILDING TOGETHER BY BEING TOGETHER!

The Third Sunday before Lent: Almighty God, who alone can bring order to the unruly wills and passions of sinful humanity: give your people grace so to love what you command and to desire what you promise, that, among the many changes of this world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; 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.**

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, 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).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat: Feb 21st at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: Feb 21st at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: Feb 28th at 10.30am in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: TBA.
- Four Marks & Medstead Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday.
- COGS Tots and Tinytots are on Mondays.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.