

20th March, 2022

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 set out below.



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:

Take my life and let it be
consecrated, Lord, to thee.

Take my moments and my days;
let them flow in endless praise,
let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love.

Take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee,
swift and beautiful for thee.

Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King.

Take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee,
filled with messages from thee.

Take my silver and my gold;
not a mite would I withhold.

Take my intellect and use
every power as thou shalt choose,
every power as thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it thine;
it shall be no longer mine.

Take my heart it is thine own;
it shall be thy royal throne,
it shall be thy royal throne.

Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store.

Take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee,
ever, only, all for thee.

Read James 2:14-26 and Luke 6:43-45

The sermon given by Rev. Jonathan Rooke: Faith is Seen.

James tells us that Christians need to be able to have an answer for anyone who asks us about our faith and we need to let our actions speak of our faith.

Dead faith or living faith.

James makes a bold statement. What good is it if you say you have faith but you have no works? Knowing about God is not enough to support a living faith. Saying we believe there is a God is not enough. Telling someone I feel for your pain and I will pray for you, God bless you and go on your way is a way of avoiding active faith. James says that evidence of a growing faith is actions motivated by a response to God.

We need to look two ways. The first way is to look towards the source of our faith and feed on it.

Christian faith is a habit, a pattern of behaving that is settled on God. It is not a vague hope and optimistic feeling that everything will be alright in a near or distant future we can't yet see. Faith is connected to something outside of our own achievement or ability. It is not something that we get by trying hard. Faith is a gift, something outside of ourselves that is poured into us from beyond ourselves. Faith in God is something solid that we can stand on and settle on and gives us a deep confidence amidst the ups and downs of life. Faith is something we receive when we open up to God who is outside of our control and our own resources. Faith is facing ourselves in a God-direction - if you like- looking out towards a future good, a good that is difficult, but possible because of God who generously pours himself into us. (R. Williams)

Faith, then, is a gift. God shares himself with us and opens up all sorts of possibilities because we are united with him. Faith is something that sustains us, and holds us and encourages us. Before looking in the direction of the works we will do in the world, we first need to spend time looking

towards, and receiving, the faith that will animate those works; that will inspire and breathe life into the works of faith.

Our first work of faith, perhaps, should be to open ourselves up to the presence of God. Allow ourselves to interact with him. Listen, talk to him. Ask questions. Listen for his replies. Spend time with Jesus. Then we are available to ask and discern what is the work that God wants us to do and how we should go about it.

Look towards the works that are inspired by faith.

James is very clear that faith without works is dead. Accepting the invitation from God to rest in his presence will show us what works he wants us to do.

Our works of faith are actions in which we collaborate with God. We cooperate with Jesus. They are the result of a relationship that has been opened up by first paying intentional attention to God and deliberately listening to him. James says, if you want to know what Faith is, look at the life of a faithful person. It's true isn't it? We can think of people in our lives who have inspired us and shown us by their lives what Faith is like and what the Christian life is all about.

James says look at the life of Abraham. That is genuine faith. That is obedience and unquestioning faith in a God of love. Look at Rahab the prostitute. See what she does. Her genuine faith reaches out in potentially costly compassion to people at risk.

Jesus demonstrates how works of faith are informed by our response to a loving God. Some people call that response our relationship with God. We are called to be people who serve and who act. We have received all that we have as a gift from God. We respond to God's love by giving it away, and sharing that love in our Christian service to others.

This week, can we make time to look towards the source of our faith, take time to breathe God in and let him do work in us? Then, can we listen and discern what works of faith he wants us to do? And then try our best to do them?

Prayers: *Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.* (Philippians 4:4-6)



- Pray for this day, and the coming week.
- Pray for justice, mercy, peace, and hope.
- Pray for individuals, for neighbours, for family and friends.
- Pray for the Church.

Collect: Third Sunday of Lent: *Almighty God, whose most dear Son went not up to joy but first he suffered pain, and entered not into glory before he was crucified: mercifully grant that we, walking in the way of the cross, may find it none other than the way of life and peace; 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 for ever. 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: 20th April at 2pm, Church Hall.
- Coffee & Questions: 23rd March, 27th April at 11am, Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3rd April at 3pm, in Church.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: 10th April.