

23rd January 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:

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.

Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness!
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me!

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Great is Thy faithfulness ...

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Great is Thy faithfulness ...

Read Hebrews 11:7-19

The sermon given by Rev. Howard Wright: Faith Enables.

We have begun our new series, aiming to, inspire courage and faith and dispel fear. We are in a society of high anxiety – but we have good news.

Last week we saw that we all put our faith in something, but Christian faith is: Confidence and assurance in the power and love of God, and of his good future for us. We heard the quote: ‘Fear is letting your circumstances come between you and God. Faith is letting God get between you and your circumstances.’

This week we want to see how faith enables, and is seen in, action. Read James 2:14-24. We see faith in action from our heroes of faith?

Noah was willing to risk reputation. He built a boat miles from the sea, and before it started raining – crazy. But he was not concerned about what others thought about him, but feared failing to be ready for what God had warned him about. He took being ready for God and his judgement as more important than this worlds norms and pleasures, and he work hard to be ready for God.

Are we ready for Jesus’ return and judgement? Read Philippians 3:17-20. Are we ready for Jesus’ return and judgment? It is crazy not to be – so exercise faith, build the boat, risk your reputation and commit to Christ and his ways, seek first the Kingdom of God.

Abraham was willing to risk his securities and home comforts. God says, go and Abraham goes. Abraham is not anxious about home; he is not investing in earthly treasures. Home, we are told, is where you heart is. Read Matthew 6:19-21.

‘During World War II, housing was in short supply. A lady with good intentions expressed sympathy to a little girl whose family did not live in a house. She said, ‘It’s too bad your family doesn’t have a home.’ The five-year-old replied, ‘We have a home. We just don’t have a house to put it in’. Read again Hebrews 11:13-16. We know this world is not ours. God has set eternity in our hearts, and we long for the world to be fixed, for all things to be well. And it will be, God has fixed it and is fixing it and we’re invited to be part of this.

So, where is your future invested? Where is your home? Exercise faith today, invest in God's glorious future – be bold take risks, step out in faith for God and his Kingdom.

Sarah was willing to hope when all hope was gone. 'Can God do the impossible?' the angel Gabriel asks Mary in the Christmas story. 'Nothing is impossible with God.' And Mary, like Sarah and all the heroes of faith, took God at his word.

God can do the impossible and wants the best for us. Read Romans 8:28. Sarah continued to hope. Can you continue to hope and believe that God will answer your prayers with good – maybe the miracle we long for, or maybe an answer that's even better for us. Let's be people putting our faith into action – praying, listening and believing in God's promises.

Abraham was willing to risk all for the promise. Read again Hebrews 11:17-19. Jim Elliott said, 'He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.'

What are you hanging on to that needs to be laid on the altar for God? It might be your reputation, your earthly securities, your selfish ambition, your dreams, and your treasures. Read Romans 12:1-2 and Matthew 6:33.

What could deeper faith enable in your life?

1. A more confident prayer life, believing in the promises of God.
2. A greater commitment to sharing your faith with others.
3. A bolder investment of time, gifts, and possessions to the work of God's Kingdom.
4. A courageous change of direction in an area of life, or in life itself – recognising the future calling of God.
5. A determination to live with thanksgiving, trust, and hope despite personal circumstances – knowing that we are not there yet.

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.' Hebrews 12:1.

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 after Epiphany: Almighty God, whose Son revealed in signs and miracles the wonder of your saving presence, renew your people with your heavenly grace, and in all our weakness sustain us by your mighty power; 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, COGS, 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, 9.30am & 7pm and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is available the week after the service.

- 1-Service Sunday: There will be a 11am service on 30th January.
- Coffee & Questions: 26th January at 11am, Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 8th February. Messy Church: 13th February.
- Tea and Chat: 16th February at 2pm, Church Hall.