

# 27th 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.



**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:**

Crown him with many crowns,  
the Lamb upon his throne.  
Hark! how the heavenly anthem  
drowns  
all music but its own.

Awake, my soul, and sing  
of him who died for thee,  
and hail him as thy matchless king  
through all eternity.

Crown him the Lord of life,  
who triumphed o'er the grave,  
and rose victorious in the strife  
for those he came to save;  
his glories now we sing  
who died and rose on high,  
who died eternal life to bring,  
and lives that death may die.

Crown him the Lord of love;  
behold his hands and side,  
rich wounds, yet visible above,  
in beauty glorified;  
no angels in the sky  
can fully bear that sight,  
but downward bends their burning  
eye  
at mysteries so bright.

Crown him the Lord of years,  
the potentate of time,  
creator of the rolling spheres,  
ineffably sublime.  
All hail, Redeemer, hail!  
for thou hast died for me;  
thy praise shall never, never fail  
throughout eternity.

## **Read Colossians 3:12-17 and Luke 2:25-38**

### **The sermon given by Rev. Howard Wright: Mothering Sunday**

Today's readings work in tandem. Luke tells us the story of Jesus being taken to the temple by Mary and Joseph, and Colossians gives us principles to both understand the actions of characters in this story, and to encourage our own subsequent response.

Mary with Joseph takes Jesus to the temple in accordance with the law. They did the right thing and didn't claim special exemption – though they might have argued they had every right too. In Colossians we are challenged to set our hearts and minds above with Christ (3:1-2); and further, that this leads us to clothe ourselves with Godly behaviour.

These right 'clothes' led us to reflect God's character in all we do, and not only Mary and Joseph, in their humility, but Anna and Simeon, chose to wear the right kind of clothes – they chose this Godly behaviour.

Mary and Joseph demonstrate humility in choosing to submit to the law of the day. There is a gentleness in their actions and a desire to express their thankfulness for their child. In our rights orientated world, how might we live in humility, gentleness, and thankfulness? Balancing being neither pushy nor rude, with not allowing others to bully us.

Mary chooses to hang to onto God patiently despite the waiting. There has been waiting for the child's birth and another thirty-three days for the time of purification, there'll be another thirty-three years before the cross and resurrection and thirty of those are waiting for Jesus to go public. In the meanwhile, she pondered all these things in her heart (Luke 2:19).

Likewise, Simeon and Anna both wait, and appear to wait patiently and joyfully for God to fulfil his promise. We don't know that Simeon was old, there has always been an assumption he is old. But what do know is that because he has met the Messiah/Christ, he is now able to live the rest of his days in peace. Assuming we have met Jesus, how much are we able to know this peace? There is much to unsettle us in the world, but Christ offers us supernatural peace – See John 14:27 and John 16:33.

Mary and Joseph, and Simeon and Anna choose to let the message or word of Christ dwell in them richly (Colossians 3:16). Mary and Joseph must have been good examples to Jesus, and Simeon and Anna, demonstrate an extraordinary commitment to the Good News. They chose to live and speak in the likeness of God (Colossians 3:17).

Mary is both blessed and warned by Simeon about the destiny of Jesus. We are all 'destined' and we all have responsibilities regarding the destiny of the next generations. How we live and speak – whether this is accordance with the Gospel and our status as children of God will impact the future generations.

This is why we are investing in our parenting for faith course. Mums, Dads and Grandparents have, as the baptism service reminds us, the primary responsibility in demonstrating Jesus, making disciples of our children. But we share this collectively as a church. There's the African saying, 'it takes a village to raise a child.' And so, we invest in children's and youth work. Our children's ministry need support – we'd like to start another evening disciple making group but lack the team. Our family ministry is superb, but we need others who can help us with practical setting up or conversations at our tots' ministries and Messy Church. And we're in the joyful situation, in our collaboration with Alton, of being close to having too many young people – we need more team members for Sunday evening. It may be that you would be able to choose to join us!

Simeon's words to Mary are of blessing but also predicting great cost. The Christian life will include both these things and Jesus makes this clear. Can we choose to be clothed as Mary, Joseph, Simeon, and Anna were, and more besides. As we say in church, and Colossians reminds us, we are to choose to take on the family likeness and join in the family business. And we do all this in the name of Jesus – giving thanks to God the Father.

**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: Mothering Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent:** *God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; 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 Praise: 3<sup>rd</sup> April at 3pm, in Church.
- Tea and Chat: 20<sup>th</sup> April at 2pm, Church Hall.
- Coffee & Questions: 27<sup>th</sup> April at 11am, Church Hall.
- COGS Tots: 2<sup>nd</sup> Mondays. COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: 10<sup>th</sup> April.