

## **Worship @ Home**

Christchurch 21<sup>st</sup> February 2021

**Worship Leader: Mr Chris Ffinch**

**Reader: Anne Blackman**

**Musicians: Steve Cook; Caroline Cook and Mike Crowley**

**Technician: Tony Edmonds**

### ***Call to worship***

Come together to be God's people.  
Come together and be yourselves.  
Bring to God your joys and your struggles.  
Bring to God your hopes and your fears.  
Come together to be God's people,  
and let us worship the living God.

### ***Opening Prayers***

Loving, faithful God,  
your love is absolute,  
your promises binding.  
We look up after a shower of rain,  
marvelling at the colourful  
beauty of your rainbow –  
a reminder of your promise  
and faithfulness to all generations.  
Wherever we happen to be –  
wilderness, mountain or valley bottom –  
your Holy Spirit is with us.  
We adore you, loving, faithful God.  
**Amen.**

***Song – Seek ye first (STF 254)***

We will now hear our first song today, seek ye first the kingdom of God, which I have chosen, because it reflects our reading from 1 Peter chapter 3 about seeking the kingdom of God and the unrighteous becoming the righteous.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God  
And His righteousness;  
And all these things shall be added unto you.  
Allelu Alleluia!

Seek ye first the kingdom of God  
Al-le-lu-ia  
And His righteousness;  
Al-le-lu-ia  
And all these things shall be added unto you.  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Allelu Alleluia!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Seek, and ye shall find.  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Knock, and the door shall be opened unto you.  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Allelu Alleluia!

We shall not live by bread alone,  
Al-le-lu-ia  
But by every word  
Al-le-lu-ia  
That proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Allelu Alleluia!

Al-le-lu-ia  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Al-le-lu-ia  
Allelu Alleluia!

We will now have our first reading from 1 Peter chapter 3 verses 18-22, thank you Anne.

***Reading 1 Peter 3. 18-22***

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

***Song – Lord Christ, we praise your sacrifice (STF 359)***

I chose this song, because it leads us through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross and ends with us asking God to prepare ourselves so that we may be a sacrifice of love for the world today.

Lord Christ, we praise your sacrifice,  
your life in love so freely given.  
For those who took your life away  
you prayed: that they might be forgiven;  
and there, in helplessness arrayed,  
God's power was perfectly displayed.

Once helpless in your mother's arms,  
dependent on her mercy then;  
at last, by choice, in other hands,  
you were as helpless once again;  
and, at their mercy, crucified,  
you claimed your victory and died.

Though helpless and rejected then,  
you're now as risen Lord acclaimed;  
for ever by your sacrifice  
is God's eternal love proclaimed:  
the love which, dying, brings to birth  
new life and hope for all on earth.

So, living Lord, prepare us now  
your willing helplessness to share;  
to give ourselves in sacrifice  
to overcome the world's despair;  
in love to give ourselves away  
and claim your victory today.

We will now have our second reading today from Mark chapter 1  
verses 9-15, thank you again Anne.

***Reading – Mark 1. 9-15***

At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." At once the Spirit sent him out into the wilderness, and he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. He was with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!”

### ***Reflection***

‘Hello! Who are you?’ I wonder how we would reply to that question? I guess that depends on who is asking us, but in general what would we say? Maybe we’d find it easier to answer, ‘What do you do?’ Or ‘Where do you come from?’ But more importantly do our answers to those questions define us, do they really reflect the wonderfully unique and special people that we are? And do we know that we are special?

In the Gospel reading from Mark today, we heard how Jesus truly realised who he was. Jesus is baptised by John, just like everyone else was, however as Jesus comes up from the water, he hears a voice, God’s voice and he says ‘you are my son, the beloved.’ And Mark says that then Jesus ‘immediately’ went into the wilderness where he could discover what that meant for him. At this point we tend to think about the three temptations, but Mark doesn’t even detail them, he just simply says that Jesus was tempted during his 40 days amongst the animals and that ‘angels waited on him’. In the bible ‘angels waiting on him’ is a way of talking about the presence of God, that God was with him.

In a similar way God was with Noah and his family, that Peter is reflecting on in 1 Peter chapter 3. Here Peter is giving a Christian reflection on Jewish scripture. He says that God washed away the sins of the world through the flood, saving only eight people, he says that it is this water that symbolises the baptism that now saves us also. A baptism that is ‘not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God’.

What's truly amazing is, that baptism marks a living hope through 'the resurrection of Jesus Christ', that we are all beloved and God is with us, for as Peter says, Jesus has gone into heaven and is seated at God's right hand with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him. So that through baptism we, like Noah and his family and like Jesus, we are beloved and valued sons and daughters of God too. When we are in the wilderness, whatever that feels like, in our lives for us, angels wait on us. God is with us. As we begin Lent this year, think about who we are? Not our names or what we do or where we come from, but who we truly are to God and what it means to be God's much-loved children.

### ***Prayers of Intercession***

Dear God,  
we pray for those who don't like themselves very much;  
may they hear you say:  
You are my beloved, I am pleased with you.

We pray for those who feel as if they don't belong anywhere;  
may they hear you say:  
You are my beloved, I am pleased with you.

We pray for one another, that in our sad moments  
we may hear you say:  
You are my beloved, I am pleased with you.

**Amen.**

### ***Song – Yes and Amen by Chris Tomlin***

I have chosen this song, because as it says in the chorus all of God's promises are 'yes and amen.'

### ***Closing Prayer***

We thank you, faithful Lord,  
for your patience, provision and power;  
for your tenderness, trust and triumph;  
for your security and strength;  
for your compassion and wisdom.

We thank you, Lord, that through your grace and mercy,  
the blessings of faith,  
and your covenant love,  
you equip, teach and guide us  
as we traverse today's world,  
ever mindful of your steadfast love.

**Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

May the Lord bless you and keep you,  
may his face shine upon you.  
And may the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
the grace of Jesus Christ  
and the love of God  
be with us all evermore.

**Amen.**