

## Full order of service for Sunday July 25<sup>th</sup> at Christchurch

### **Call to worship based on Psalm 145**

The Lord is faithful in all his words  
and gracious in all his deeds.

The Lord upholds all who are falling  
and raises up all who are bowed down.

The Lord is just in all his ways  
and kind in all his doings.

The Lord is near to all who call on him.  
to all who call on him in truth.

Welcome to everyone who is joining us for this service, whether on livestream at this moment in time, or later in the week on DVD or in a written order of this service. I am Christine, a local preacher in the North Herts Circuit and a member here at Christchurch, Hitchin. I would like to thank Steve and ... for providing the music, David for reading our scripture passages and Tony who is looking after the technical side of things.

Later we will hear today in our New Testament reading, of the love and power of our generous God displayed in Christ. Our first song written by John Bell and Graham Maule tells us of this.

### **STF 101**

Before the world began,  
one Word was there;  
grounded in God he was,  
rooted in care;  
by him all things were made,  
in him was love displayed,  
through him God spoke and said  
'I am for you.'

Life found in him its source,  
death found its end;  
light found in him its course,  
darkness its friend.

For neither death nor doubt  
nor darkness and put out  
the glow of God, the shout,  
'I am for you.'

The Word was in the world  
which from him came;  
unrecognised he was,  
unknown by name;  
one with all humankind,  
with the unloved aligned,  
convincing sight and mind,  
'I am for you.'

All who received the Word  
by God were blessed;  
sisters and brother they  
of earth's fond guest.  
So did the Word of grace  
proclaim in time and space  
and with a human face,  
'I am for you.'

*John L Bell and Graham Maule*

### **Prayers of Approach, Praise and Confession**

So let us come to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in prayer  
Lord we come as a community of hope  
to hear your words of encouragement.  
We come as a community in need  
to receive your healing.  
We come as a community of faith

to receive your abundance.

We come as a community ready to receive your word.

We come as a community, willing to share what we have, in your name.

For you are a generous God, a God of love and power.

Praise be to you, our God, maker of heaven and earth  
the very breath of life within us.

Praise be to you our God, redeemer of the world,  
the very hope within us.

Praise be to you our God,  
giver of life, flame of inspiration, lighting our way,  
guiding our lives.

Praise be to you, one God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Gracious God, forgive us when we take for granted  
all that we have been entrusted and blessed with.

When we fail to acknowledge that we that we have more left over than others have to begin with,  
forgive us and change our hearts

that we may become a people who give generously ,  
share abundantly and live simply to your glory.

We ask this in Jesus' name knowing that we are forgiven and cherished and loved. Amen

### **Background to the readings**

Our Old Testament reading is part of the story of Elisha, a prophet of God. He, like his predecessor Elijah, lived at a time of political instability and survival was tough. The story ends a series of accounts of Elisha's miraculous power to overcome these difficulties and offer people the food and health they need.

And our New Testament reading is John's account of the feeding of the 5000 , a story found in all four gospels. John follows this by another miraculous happening - Jesus walking on the water of Lake Galilee. God, in Christ, showing himself as a generous God of love but also of power over the elements.

## **Old Testament reading**

### **2 Kings 4: 42-44**

A man came from Baal-shalishah, bringing food from the first fruits to the man of God: twenty loaves of barley and fresh ears of grain in his sack. Elisha said, 'Give it to the people and let them eat.' But his servant said, 'How can I set this before a hundred people?' So he repeated, 'Give it to the people and let them eat, for thus says the Lord, 'They shall eat and have some left.' He set it before them, they ate and had some left, according to the word of the Lord.

## **New Testament Reading**

### **John 6:1- 21**

#### **Feeding the five thousand**

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming towards him, Jesus said to Philip, 'Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?' He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him 'Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.' One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, 'There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?' Jesus said, 'Make the people sit down.' Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, 'Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.' So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, 'This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.'

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

#### **Jesus Walks on the Water**

When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, got into a boat, and started across the lake to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The lake became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the lake and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.' Then they wanted to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land towards which they were going.

## Reflection – A generous God of love and power

### STF 124

For the fruits of all creation,  
thanks be to God;  
for the gifts to every nation,  
thanks be to God;  
for the ploughing, sowing, reaping,  
silent growth while we are sleeping,  
future needs in earth's safe keeping  
thanks be to God.

In the just reward of labour,  
God's will is done;  
in the help we give our neighbour,  
God's will is done;  
in our world –wide task of caring  
for the hungry and despairing,  
in the harvest we are sharing,  
God's will is done.

For the harvest of the Spirit,  
thanks be to God;  
for the good we all inherit,  
thanks be to God;  
for the wonders that astound us,  
for the truths that still confound us,  
most of all, that love has found us,  
thanks be to God.

*Fred Pratt Green*

## **Prayers for the people**

In our prayers for the people of God's world after each sentence I will leave a time of silence for you to offer up your own personal prayer, something that may have spoken to you from the news this week, a face or words you have seen or heard or a situation nearer to home which you want to lift to God.

Lord as you met the needs of the five thousand so we pray of those in need today:

For those in need of food and water – we pray abundance.....

For those in need of healing - we pray courage.....

For those in need of peace - we pray reconciliation.....

For those in need of encouragement – we pray hope.....

For those in need of freedom – we pray release.....

For those in need of companionship - we pray friendship .....

For those in need of courage – we pray opportunity .....

For those in need of forgiveness – we pray mercy .....

For those in need of your love - we pray blessing.....

For ourselves – that we may trust your promises.....

Help us to know that you stay close to us through all circumstances

And so grant us the courage and the confidence to proclaim the gospel of your truth and love and power in our words and our actions.

We ask these prayer spoken aloud and spoken in our hearts in the gracious name of your Son Jesus Christ 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.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,

now and for ever. Amen

### **Final prayer and blessing**

As the multitude came seeking Jesus, we too have gathered here today.

As people were fed,

We too have received nourishment.

As Jesus calmed the fears of his disciples

we, too can face this day with confidence that God is with us.

Fed by Christ, empowered by the Spirit,

loved by God, go in assurance. Go in peace.

Go to serve God in this place and time. Amen

### **MP 859**

I want to serve the purpose of God in my generation.

I want to serve the purpose of God while I am alive.

I want to give my life for something that'll last for ever:

Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will.

*What is on Your heart?*

*Show me what to do.*

*Let me know Your will,*

*and I will follow You.*

I want to build with silver and gold in my generation.

I want to build with silver and gold while I am alive.

I want to give my life for something that'll last for ever :

Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will.

*What is on Your heart.....*

I want to see the kingdom of God in my generation.

I want to see the kingdom of God while I am alive.

I want to give my life for something that'll last for ever :

Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will.

*What is on Your heart.....*

I want to see the Lord come again in my generation.

I want to see the Lord come again while I am alive.

I want to give my life for something that'll last for ever:

Oh, I delight, I delight to do Your will.

*What is on Your heart.....*

*Mark Altrogge*