

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

12 March 2023

Welcome

Reading: Psalm 95

¹Come, let us praise the Lord!

**Let us sing for joy to God, who
protects us!**

²Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and sing joyful songs of praise.

³For the Lord is a mighty God,
a mighty king over all the gods.

⁴He rules over the whole earth,
**from the deepest caves to the highest
hills.**

⁵He rules over the sea, which he made;
**the land also, which he himself
formed.**

⁶Come, let us bow down and worship him;
**let us kneel before the Lord, our
Maker!**

Song: Give thanks to the Lord, our God and
King

His love endures forever

For He is good, He is above all things

His love endures forever

Sing praise, sing praise

With a mighty hand and outstretched arm

His love endures forever

For the life that's been reborn

His love endures forever

Sing praise, sing praise

Sing praise, sing praise

Forever, God is faithful

Forever, God is strong

Forever, God is with us

Forever

From the rising to the setting sun

His love endures forever

And by the grace of God, we will carry on

His love endures forever

Song: I'll bless Your name, O God, each day
that I awake

From dawn to setting sun, Your greatness

I'll proclaim

Your glory far exceeds all human thought

So with each breath I'll bless Your name, O
God

Your name will be revered by children yet to
come

As generations sing of wonders You have
done

Your strong and mighty deeds are always
near

O God Most High, Your name will be
revered

How great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!

How great is the Lord our God

How great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!

Your gracious hand provides for all who live
and breathe

Your mercy runs to find the helpless and the
weak

When we call out to You, You hear our cries
And all our needs Your gracious hand
provides

Forever without end, creation will rejoice
When works of wicked men, You finally
destroy

Your power we'll proclaim till Christ
descends

And You will reign forever without end

Prayer

Come, all who are thirsty for the living God;
come and be refreshed,
come and be sustained.

Come and be blessed.

Amen

Song: 1 All who are thirsty, come to the Lord,
all who are hungry, feed on his word;
buy without paying food without price,
eat with thanksgiving God's sacrifice.

2 Why spend your money, yet have no bread;
why work for nothing? Trust God instead!
He will provide you richest of food:
come to the waters, drink what is good.
All who are thirsty come...

3 Call on God's mercy while he is near,
turn from your evil, come without fear;
ask him for pardon, grace will abound!
This is the moment he can be found.
All who are thirsty come...

4 Where once were briars, flowers will grow,
where lives were barren, rivers will flow:
praise to our Saviour, grace and renown
ours is the blessing, his be the crown!
All who are thirsty come...

Prayer

We praise you, Lord Jesus,
that when we make mistakes,
the waters of your understanding cleanse us;
when we are tired, the waters of your
strength refresh us;
when we are unsure, the waters of your
words direct us;
when we are afraid, the waters of your love
protect us;
when we are alone, the waters of your
presence surround us.
We thank you, Lord Jesus,
we thank you.
Amen.

Reading: Exodus 17.1-7

17 The whole Israelite community left the desert of Sin, moving from one place to another at the command of the Lord. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water there to drink. ²They complained to Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses answered, "Why are you complaining? Why are you putting the Lord to the test?"

³ But the people were very thirsty and continued to complain to Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us out of Egypt? To kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?"

⁴ Moses prayed earnestly to the Lord and said, "What can I do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

⁵ The Lord said to Moses, "Take some of the leaders of Israel with you, and go on ahead of the people. Take along the stick with which you struck the Nile. ⁶ I will stand before you on a rock at Mount Sinai. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." Moses did so in the presence of the leaders of Israel.

⁷ The place was named Massah and Meribah,^[a] because the Israelites complained and put the Lord to the test when they asked, "Is the Lord with us or not?"

Reading: Psalm 95

Listen today to what he says:

⁸ "Don't be stubborn, as your ancestors were at Meribah,

as they were that day in the desert at Massah.

⁹ There they put me to the test and tried me, although they had seen what I did for

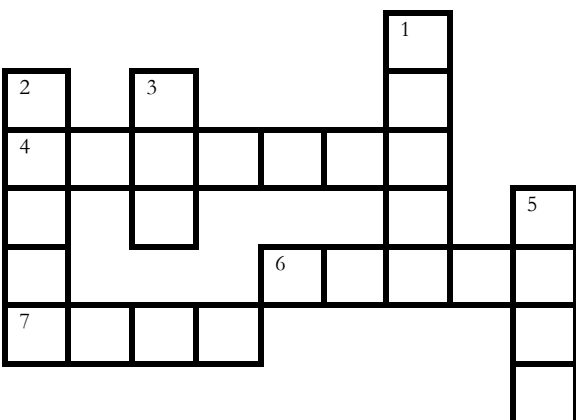
them.

A prayer of confession

Forgive us, Lord,
 when we lose sight of all you have done
 and cry out from hearts that are resentful
 and ungrateful.
 Restore our relationship with you and with
 one another,
 that we may not give up,
 or make the journey harder for others,
 but honestly acknowledge our faults
 and faithfully receive your forgiveness.
 For Christ's sake.
 Amen.

Song: I am a friend of God
 I am a friend of God
 I am a friend of God He calls me friend
 Who am I that You are mindful of me
 That You hear me when I call
 Is it true that You are thinking of me
 How You love me it's amazing

I am a friend of God
 I am a friend of God
 I am a friend of God
 He calls me friend



Cross word: *Water from the rock*

Down

- 1/ Which country did God save his people from? V3
- 2/ What did Moses hit the rock with? V6
- 3/ Name the desert the Israelites left? V1
- 5/ What did Moses do when the people complained? V4

Across

- 4/ How did they feel? V3
- 6/ What did God give the people? V6
- 7/ What does this mean? God is ...

Sermon: Moses' stick: a journey with God

Aboriginal people in Australia tell stories using pictures like this, where dots mean people, c shapes mean sitting down and discussing and so on. These pictures tell a story, and they help people to remember a story. Another way aboriginal people tell a story is by creating a journey stick. If walking from one place to another, a storyteller would pick up leaves or berries on the way and attach them to the stick with string, or they might carve a shape of a river and create a sort of map along the stick. When I was growing up and we went on a big trip, I used to be encouraged by my parents to write a holiday diary. I'd write down what we did, stick in tickets from train journeys and maybe draw a picture of something we saw. A journey stick is a bit like a journey diary.

In our reading today, there are lots of things happening - Moses trying to lead, the people being very grumpy and very thirsty, and a sudden provision of water from God from a rock. In the middle of all of this is a stick. A stick belonging to Moses which is going to help tell our story today.

Moses began life as a shy man with a stammer, he couldn't speak well and yet he was called by God to go and ask Pharaoh to let his people go. As a sign that it really was him that God wanted to go, God asks Moses in Exodus 4, drop the stick in your hand. Moses did and it turned into a snake. He picked it up again and it turned back to wood. He kept the stick and uses it throughout his life. The first part of the story of this stick is the calling of God. God spoke to Moses, and Moses listened.

Take your picture of an ear, place it on your stick and wind it around your stick using string. As you do so, think about the time God first called you? When did God call you and you listened? When did you decide to follow the Lord? Or maybe God is calling you now and you do not want to listen? Think about how God might be speaking to you and how you are hearing him speak.

In our text for today we heard the people complaining that they had been rescued from Egypt. In Egypt the people were slaves. This is the second time that Moses stick is seen on his journey, the stick is used in Exodus 14.6 to part the waters, so all the people walk through the red sea on dry ground.

This part of the story reminds us of the God who saves us. God loves us so he saves us. Take your picture of a heart and wind it around your stick using string. God created the world and created all of us. God used Moses to lead his people out of slavery into freedom. God sent Jesus to lead everyone out of sadness into joy, out of darkness into light, out of sin and into freedom. God sent Jesus to save us because he loves us. How has God saved you?

We can think of our own spiritual life in terms of a journey stick, God has called each one of us to be his friend. God calls each of us to follow him and hopefully we listen to him. He calls us because he loves us, he calls us because he wants us to turn away from being naughty and follow his way and be kind. Just as God is kind, we are kind to others.

Sometimes on our journey we can know we have been called, we can feel God's love and be totally free in him. We can end up very grumpy just like the Israelites for it seems that we cannot find a perfect oasis, we cannot find a stream to drink from and we end up spiritually and physically thirsty. And yet, just under our feet is a different resource. Water was present in that rock for 1000s of years before the Israelites came along. From the gift of god's creation came an unexpected blessing, water in the wilderness, water in the desert. It wasn't an obvious place for blessing but blessing it was. All of God's blessings are a gift to us. Wind on your last picture, a gift.

The water in the story was a gift to the people. So what does this stick tell us? God called his people and called Moses to lead. God saved his people from Egypt and God provided water for his people even in the desert. How has God called you, saved you and provided for you? It seems to me that this story speaks to us as a church too, this stick journey is all about a people on the road, in the wilderness, trying to reach the promised land. The wilderness had become a state of mind for the people of God.

I wonder what God will show us as we journey towards redevelopment, with all sorts of marks and experiences on our way. The God who led Moses, leads us as individuals and as a church on a journey for he calls us, loves us, provides for us and gives us resources we never thought possible along the way.

Song: Faithful one, so unchanging
Ageless one, you are my rock of peace
Lord of all I depend on you
I call out to you, again and again
I call out to you, again and again

You are my rock in times of trouble
You lift me up when I fall down
All through the storm
Your love is, the anchor
My hope is in You alone

Prayers for the world

We pray for all those who cry out for water
to drink today.

For those in places of violence,
we pray for the outpouring of peace.

For those in places of poverty,
**we pray for the outpouring of
abundance.**

For those in places of wealth,
we pray for the outpouring of generosity.

For those in places of despair,
we pray for the outpouring of hope.

For those in places of sickness,
we pray for the outpouring of healing.

In all places, Lord, we pray for the
outpouring of life,
in all its fullness.

Amen.

Song: May the mind of Christ, my Saviour,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and say.

May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,

That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me,
As the waters fill the sea;
Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

Blessing