

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

14 May 2023

Welcome

SONG: All creatures of our God and King
Lift up your voice and with us sing
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Thou, burning sun with golden beam
Thou, silver moon with softer gleam
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

VERSE 2

Let all things their Creator bless
And worship Him in humbleness
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Praise, praise the Father, praise the Son
And praise the Spirit, Three-in-One
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

VERSE 3

All the redeemed washed by His blood
Come and rejoice in His great love
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Christ has defeated every sin
Cast all your burdens now on Him
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

VERSE 4

He shall return in pow'r to reign
Heaven and earth will join to say
O praise Him! Alleluia!
Then who shall fall on bended knee?
All creatures of our God and King
O praise Him! O praise Him!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Prayer

Clap your hands, all you peoples.
Shout to God with songs of joy.
God has gone up with a shout.
Sing praises to the most high.
God is ruler over all the Earth.
We worship God with all our heart.

Song: Let all creation sing before the Lord
and every nation of the earth rejoice,
let all the trees lift a shout of joy
for the Lord is King.

Let the deep waters of the sea resound,
let every mountain, every hill sing out,
let all the fields make a joyful sound
for the Lord is King.

Mighty river, barren desert,
howling wind and stormy weather,
every canyon every valley,
sing your praise and give him glory.
Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

Every star and constellation,
every wonder in the heavens,
silver moon and supernova,
sing a shining hallelujah!
Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

Honey bees and weeping willows,
grizzly bears and armadillos,
every narwhal and sea otter,
every son and every daughter.
Nature proclaims the glory of our God,
nature proclaims his name.

La la la la la la - All the earth, praise the
Lord

La la la la la la - All the earth, praise the
Lord

Prayer

Creator God, you have planted the seed of
love

in our hearts, in our souls, in our lives.
We long for the brightness of your presence
drawing ever closer to you
and to one another,
as we join with your people
at all times
in all places
to worship and to serve.
We confess
those frequent times
when we have been stony ground,
too hard to value the tiny seed,
the generous smile,
the heartfelt word.

[Women] You grow us into community.
[Men] You grow us into community.
[All] You grow us into community.

We confess
those frequent times
when we have been stony ground,
too hard to see beyond our selfish desires
and for tacitly accepting
a world that smothers the dreams of those
with less power and wealth.

Creator God, once again, you have planted
the seed of love
in our hearts, in our souls, in our lives.
We draw near today
in the knowledge that your forgiveness
waters the seed
and nurtures us with the power of your
Spirit
to grow, to flourish
and to bear the fruit of your justice
now and forevermore.
Amen

Song: I'm gonna trust
I'm gonna trust in God
I'm gonna trust in Jesus
Without shame and without fear
I'm gonna fix my eyes
On the hope of glory
For His day is drawing near

VERSE 2

How great is the love of God
How steady is His hand
To guide me through this world
And though I am weak in Him I stand
And you will hear me say today
In faith I'm gonna trust in God

VERSE 3

Now when the cares of life
Seem overwhelming
And my heart is sinking down
I'm gonna lift my hands
To the One who'll help me
To the One who holds my crown

Memory verse reading: Matthew 13.31-32

³¹ Jesus told them another parable: "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field. ³² It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches."

Christian Aid Week

Today we are celebrating the work of Christian Aid. This year the key message from Christian Aid is about how little seeds make a difference.

VIDEO: Esther's Pigeon Pea Bread: Christian Aid

Prayer

God, our Farmer
You plant the seed
You water the seed
You nourish the seed
You value the widow's mite
You value Esther's peas

You value what we bring today
What we bring today
Is already yours
Accept these, our offerings
And use them to help dreams come true In
this community
Through this church
And in your world
Through Christian Aid.
Amen.

VIDEO: Climate Change and Racial Justice video.

Questions to consider

Who is most affected by climate change?
How are racial justice and climate change
connected?
What is the impact in Bangladesh for young
people?
David Attenborough says it is our moral
duty to help, how can we help?

Memory verse check

Sermon: Who understands this parable?
What does it mean? Jesus used parables to
make us think. Jesus used parable to help us
to question what we know, how we know it
and what this all might mean about God.
Jesus was pretty good at education, before
any critical thinking became fashionable, he
knew he couldn't just tell us the answer, each
of us have to think about our faith. So today
you are not hearing the answer, the only
answer to what does this parable mean, but
one. All of us have homework this week, one
to raise awareness and money for Christian
Aid. But second is to keep thinking about this
parable of the mustard seed. What does it
mean?

What does the kingdom of heaven mean? It
means how God works in the world. When
we see the kingdom of heaven, we see God's
presence. So God's presence is like when a
man plants a tiny seed in a field.

Does it mean that the kingdom of heaven is
small? Yes, and the kingdom can seem
insignificant and vulnerable, and yet will
grow. In Esther's story, her life and her
family's life has been transformed by a new
small crop that doesn't need much rain.
Brilliant, it's amazing and truly joyful.

But there is more. For God does not do small
forever, God is the God of resurrection. God
is the God of total transformation. How does
God do this in this parable?

Mustard seeds were rarely deliberately sown
by farmers. Their presence in the local
ecosystem was often a result of their tiny
seeds becoming mixed in with those of
planned crops. So, as the mustard seed
germinates, sprouts and grow, they emerge as
an unpredictable and invasive presence in the
land. Their hidden presence disrupts, changes
the field.

As Theodor J Wardlaw says, church often
expects the kingdom to grow in neat rows,
like soybeans, lavender or grapes: what comes
up is exactly what was planned. But the
parable suggests that tidy rows that reflect
and normalise the systems of the current
unjust world can be disrupted and
transformed. The kingdom of justice and joy
can erupt through the carefully cultivated
landscape of a world wounded by the
deliberate actions of the privileged. As such
seeds grow, loved and nurtured by those who
'align with heaven's intent', they challenge not
only the powers that be, but also risk
disturbing the liturgical, ethical and doctrinal
seeds so often sown in rows of certainty by
the church.

Christian Aid's campaign seeks to hold to
account the biggest carbon polluters, calling
for their profits to repair what's been lost and
damaged in so many communities around the
world. By joining the campaign, each one of
us can help create change in the dry lands of

Zimbabwe, the hurricane wreckage of Haiti, the flooded fields of Pakistan and the failing crops of Nicaragua. There is shelter for justice in the branches of such trees.

The idea that those who have caused the climate crisis should pay up to support communities like Esther's should not be controversial. But these decisions sit with powerful people who have prioritised profit over people for too long. Together, united by hope, we can help challenge the status quo and speak truth to power.

The mustard seed changes the field. No longer is the field just for the farmers intent, no longer is the field just to make him money. It is now a place where all the birds of the world can find safety and nest. This is a picture of restoration and resurrection brought about by the kingdom. Through unusual ways, God will bring change to our world, through small things like pigeon peas and big things like governments changing policy and to total transformation when justice, peace and joy will exist forever on earth.

Our job now is to think about how we can disrupt the world for his glory? How can we make positive changes? What does this parable mean for us today?

Prayer

Song: God, the maker of the heavens,
and the planet that we share,
show us how to live, like Jesus,
lives of gratitude and care.

Make us mindful of the footprints
from the lives that we pursue.
Make us partners in your mission:
you are making all things new.

God, the gardener of Eden,
teach us how to tend this earth,

learning from the changing seasons,
times of fallow and new birth.

Lord have mercy when we're careless,
rich resources we misuse.

Use our hands to heal creation:
you are making all things new.

God of labour and vocation,
Lord of science, trade and art,
take our efforts and our passions
make them mirrors of your heart.

Every habitat and creature
loved and valued, God, by you.
May our lives reveal your Kingdom:
you are making all things new.
You are making all things new.
you are making all things new,
all things renewed.

Prayer for Christian Aid Week

God, gardener of Eden, who flung stars into
space and nurtures the tiniest plant,
lift our hopes and dreams
above the loss and damage of our suffering
planet, that we might share
your long-dreamed vision
which values the pea as much as the plant,
fill us with your life-giving hope
and inspire us with your creative Spirit now,
and in the age to come

Prayers for the world

Song: Sing a hymn to God's great glory,
just and holy all his ways.
Let us tell redemption's story
singing songs of thankful praise.
God, who long ago created
music to inspire the heart,
lifts our souls, that stimulated
we may play our joyful part.

Sing a hymn of Christ's salvation,
our Messiah, Servant, Priest;
building us a true foundation,
giving us a holy feast.
He who lived and died for others
from his virgin mother's womb
now unites us, sisters, brothers,
through his conquest of the tomb.

Sing a hymn, in which shall feature
all the Spirit's living power;
animating every creature
day by day and hour by hour.
Sing, oh sing, in rhythm's motion
joining music, words and beat;
till the tongue and mind's devotion
in exultant worship meet.

Sing forever, all creation,
to the Trinity above.
Let the church in every nation
join in bonds of holy love.
Music of the highest order,
instruments and voices blend,
overcoming all disorder:
Songs of praise shall never end.

Blessing

Go into the world
working together for change
so that everyone can thrive
and share life in its fullness.
And in all we do
let us show the love of Jesus.
Let us treat everyone with dignity.