

15 November 2020, 11am
*Christ Church New Southgate
& Friern Barnet*

Please join with us to read this service together either in printed form, whatapp or via the youtube link on our website www.christchurchnsfb.org

Each person in the church is assigned a deacon who will call you to see if you are alright in these times and to pray for you. Please feel free to call Ruth too if you wish – only happy to help! 020 8368 8157

Welcome

Based on Lamentations 3.21-26

In days when we may feel afflicted
In times when we feel lost
In moments of bitterness and trouble

Yet this we call to mind
And therefore we have hope

Because of the Lord's great love and mercy
We are not consumed
His compassion never fails
His mercies are new every morning
Great is his faithfulness
Let us hope in God
Let us wait on God
Let us seek God together

Hymn: Praise my soul

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to His feet thy tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like thee His praise should sing?
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise the everlasting King.

2 Father-like He tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame He knows;
in His hands He gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Widely as His mercy flows.

3 Angels, help us to adore Him;
ye behold Him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before Him;
dwellers all in time and space.
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise Him! Praise Him!
Praise with us the God of grace.

Reading: Luke 6.27-36 by Meg Takahashi
Witriol

Love for Enemies

²⁷ "But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. ²⁹ If anyone hits you on one cheek, let him hit the other one too; if someone takes your coat, let him have your shirt as well. ³⁰ Give to everyone who asks you for something, and when someone takes what is yours, do not ask for it back. ³¹ Do for others just what you want them to do for you.

³² "If you love only the people who love you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners love those who love them! ³³ And if you do good only to those who do good to you, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners do that! ³⁴ And if you lend only to those from whom you hope to get it back, why should you receive a blessing? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount! ³⁵ No! Love your enemies and do good to them; lend and expect nothing back. You will then have a great reward, and you will be children of the Most High God. For he is good to the ungrateful and the

wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.

All age activity: Memory verse cube

Make a paper dice cube from our website link and play rolling numbers 1-6 to learn the verse – Love your enemies and pray for those who treat you badly. Matt 5.44

Confession

Psalm 51:1-4a, 10-12, 15

O God: **Create in me a clean heart.**

Have mercy on me O God in your great kindness:
in the fullness of your mercy blot out my offences.

Wash away all my guilt:
and cleanse me from my sin.

O God: **Create in me a clean heart.**

For I acknowledge my faults:
and my sin is always before me.
Against you only have I sinned
and done evil in your sight.

O God: **Create in me a clean heart.**

Create in me a clean heart O God:
and renew a right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence:
do not take your holy spirit from me.

O God: **Create in me a clean heart.**

Give me the joy of your help again:
and strengthen me with a willing spirit.
O Lord open my lips:
and my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

O God: **Create in me a clean heart.**

Assurance of mercy

The truth is this: God's love and mercy are never-ending. God knows us in our inward being; God cleanses us from our sins and shortcomings, and restores to us the joy of salvation.

Sermon

I'm a bit of a geek when it comes to church architecture, I love it. I'm always keen to know why particular items, shapes, colours, have been used to decorate a church. I visited a large mosque in Birmingham as part of my training for ministry at college. At the mosque they had 4 clocks on the wall. I asked what do these clocks symbolise? The imman rolled his eyes and said – 'People give them to the mosque, we don't know what to do with them, so we just stick them on the wall.' Believe you me, that happens in churches just as much.

Some religious architecture is not significant, but some is deeply important.

Have you ever been into a Salvation Army cord building? They have very little in the way of decoration. Most congregational churches reflect a theology of word and spirit where a sermon and hearing God speak are the most important parts of worship. So the buildings reflect this desire to seek to encounter God without any distractions of art or decoration.

However, in every Salvation army place of worship there is one distinctive feature. Normally at the front of chairs, near where the preacher would stand is a bench. It's called the mercy seat.

I asked one of my Salvation Army friends what it was for, she said: 'to remind people of God's mercy but it's a bit dusty.'



Source:

<https://pastorsponderings.org/2014/11/07/dear-salvation-army-healing-a-broken-mercy-seat/>

The mercy seat is the place where people can sit if they want to become a Christian or want prayer for a special item. It's not a magic chair, you can't sit in it and ask for anything you like, nor will it fly you to faraway places.

Other mercy seats appear in Anglican churches, these are called misericords:



Source:

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misericord>

The idea of a mercy seat is found as a symbol in the Old Testament. If you look to Exodus 25 you will find a description of the ark of the covenant. The ark of the covenant is where the tablets of stone recording the

10 commandments were kept and then carried with the people of God wherever they went. The mercy seat and ark were kept in the most holy part of the temple, the one surrounded by the temple curtain. The mercy seat was only used by the high priest on one day of the year – the day of atonement. Here the priest would sprinkle blood from an animal sacrifice on the seat as a symbol of an atonement for sin for the people of God. He would pray for God's mercy at the mercy seat.

When Jesus died on the cross, that same curtain surrounding the mercy seat was the one that ripped in two. As Jesus died and rose again, he opens wide the way for all of us to receive God's mercy at any time and all the time. Hear this from Hebrews 10, in the message translation:

As a priest, Christ made a single sacrifice for sins, and that was it! Then he sat down right beside God and waited for his enemies to cave in. It was a perfect sacrifice by a perfect person to perfect some very imperfect people. By that single offering, he did everything that needed to be done for everyone who takes part in the purifying process. The Holy Spirit confirms this:

This new plan I'm making with Israel isn't going to be written on paper, isn't going to be chiseled in stone; This time "I'm writing out the plan in them, carving it on the lining of their hearts."

He concludes,

I'll forever wipe the slate clean of their sins.

Once sins are taken care of for good, there's no longer any need to offer sacrifices for them.

19-21 So, friends, we can now—without hesitation—walk right up to God, into "the Holy Place." Jesus has cleared the way by the blood of his sacrifice, acting as our priest

before God. The “curtain” into God’s presence is his body.

When was the last time mercy crossed our minds? Be merciful, just as your father is merciful.

How well do we know God’s mercy? Do we recognise that none of us can earn our way into God’s good book or need to? Each of us who seek God, require God’s mercy. God’s mercy is a tender and guiding assurance that we are acceptable to God because of Jesus’ death and resurrection alone.

How often do we think that we ought to be self-sufficient? How often do we believe that a Christian life, is about doing good, behaving ourselves and conforming to a ‘religious’ way? How well do you know God’s mercy? God, in his mercy, accepts us – faults and wayward manners included, and asks us to follow him. And here comes the crunch, he asks us to also be merciful.

Here in the sermon on the plain, Luke records Jesus calling the crowd to love your enemies. I have been rather struck throughout the US Presidential election just how difficult this is. How easy is it for Trump supporters to listen and love Biden supporters and how easy is it for Biden supporters to love Trump supporters? How easy is it to love those who curse you? Who ill treat you? How easy is it to love those who borrow a baking tray and never ever give it back? Even in these things, Jesus – Jesus himself calls us to love and to be merciful.

Do you know that God loves you? Do you know in your soul that he always offers us mercy? If that’s important to us – and it is, then let us practice what Jesus preached – let us do likewise. Let us learn and practice how

to be merciful. Let us be merciful to our families when they wind us up the wrong way, to our colleagues when they pick holes in our work, when someone forgets, when someone fails us, when someone attacks us. Let us be merciful as God is merciful. Let us as followers of Jesus have a constant reminder of mercy and let it not gather dust.

Response

Loving God we thank you that you go before us

You forgive us

Because of your tender mercy

Because of your unending love

Creating God thank you that you cause the sun to rise

To shine on those living in darkness

And in the shadow of death

May your overflowing mercy

Guide our feet into the path of peace.

May we be merciful just as you are merciful.

Communion

We gather at tables,
of different sizes and shapes,
used for various reasons
over the weeks and months.

Ordinary tables laid with something to eat
and something to drink.

Each table tells a story
today the story it will tell
is the story of 2000 years of history
where God’s people
have gathered to remember
the first night that Jesus shared
this meal with his disciples.

So walk in faith to this table,
to be reminded that we are not alone.
Walk in faith to this meal, you and I
to be nourished for the journey ahead.

For some of us are fresh
and others weary,
all of us aware of our failings

Lord we are sorry for the times
**when we have not wanted
to walk with you
but hidden instead.**

Lord we are sorry for the times
**when walking by has been easier
than stopping to help.**

Lord we are sorry for choosing paths
**that lead away from you
and your goodness.
Help us Lord to follow and put our hope
in you.**

Sharing the peace in sign language

Peace – make a figure of eight
Be – a letter b shape
With you – open your hands out

We remember

It was the night of the Passover:
Jesus and his friends
were sharing supper together.
While they were eating,
Jesus took bread, gave thanks,
broke it and gave it to them saying
‘Take this and eat. This is my body.’
He took the cup of wine
and after giving thanks
passed it among them
saying as they drank
‘this is my blood of the covenant.
It is poured out for you
and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
I will not drink again until the day comes
when I drink with you in my father’s
Kingdom.

Prayer of thanksgiving

Gracious God, we give thanks
for all you have given us.
offering rest for the weary,
strength for the weak
and hope for the hopeless.

We thank you for this meal that speaks
of healing and nourishment
found in your love.

We thank you for this bread and this wine
on different tables, on different plates
in different cups, in different places,
all symbols of your body broken
and your blood shed for us.

We sit together, yet dispersed
and we praise you Lord. Amen

We share

And so we gather at the table,
with bread and wine,
scattered yet together to remember:

**Though we eat from many loaves,
we remember that in Christ,
we, though many, form one body
and each belongs to all the others.**

Take your bread, break it and eat it.
This is Jesus’ body, which is broken for you.

**Though we drink from many cups,
we remember that in Christ,
we, though many, form one body
and each belongs to all the others.**

Take you wine, hold it and drink.
This is Jesus’ blood shed for you.
He offers you forgiveness,
calls you his own and restores your soul.

We journey

Lord Jesus you have put your life
into our hands,
now we put our lives into yours.
Take us, renew and remake us.
What we have been is past,
what we shall be,
through you, still awaits us.
Lead us on and make our story, your story.

Intercession for the world

A prayer for putting on a face mask – Rev
Richard Bott, Moderator of Presbyterian
Church of Canada

Creator God
As I prepare to go
Into the world
Help me to see
The sacramental nature
Of wearing this cloth.
Let it be a tangible
And visible way of living
Love for my neighbours
As I love myself.

Christ Jesus,
Since my lips will be covered
Uncover my heart
That people would see
My smile in the crinkles
Around my eyes.
Since my voice
May be muffled
Help me to speak clearly
Not only with my words
But with my actions.

Holy Spirit
As the elastic touches my ears
Remind me to listen carefully
And caringly to all those I meet.
May this simple piece of cloth
Be a shield and a banner
And may each breath that it holds
Be filled with your love.
In your name and in that love
We pray. Amen

Going to love and serve

From where we are to where you need us
Jesus now lead on.

From the security of what we know
to the adventure of what you will reveal
Jesus now lead on.

To refashion the fabric of the world
until it resembles
the shape of your Kingdom
Jesus now lead on.

Because good things have been prepared
for those who love God
Jesus now lead on.

May we walk joyfully with Jesus
May we walk closely with his Spirit
May we walk humbly with our God.
Amen

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Images of misericord found at
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misericord>
Mercy seat
[https://pastorsponderings.org/2014/11/07/
/dear-salvation-army-healing-a-broken-
mercy-seat/](https://pastorsponderings.org/2014/11/07/dear-salvation-army-healing-a-broken-mercy-seat/)