

# Christ Church New Southgate & Friern Barnet

## 16 January 2022

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*Welcome*

Song: Our God Is A Great Big God

*Reading: Psalm 36*

<sup>5</sup>Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,  
**your faithfulness to the skies.**

<sup>6</sup>Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,

**your justice like the great deep.**  
**You, Lord, preserve both people and animals.**

<sup>7</sup>How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!

**People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.**

<sup>8</sup>They feast on the abundance of your house;

**you give them drink from your river of delights.**

<sup>9</sup>For with you is the fountain of life;  
**in your light we see light.**

<sup>10</sup>***ALL: Continue your love to those who know you,***

***your righteousness to the upright in heart.***

Prayer

Song: All who are thirsty

*Reading: 1 Corinthians 12.4-6 NRSV*

<sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

*All age activity*

What gifts can you spot around the church? Let us celebrate our gifts to build each other up as Christ's body.

*Song: This little light of mine*

*Exploring scripture*

Re-read Psalm 36. Look for God's light, seek his questions, and for his leading in this scripture. Pray and reflect on what God is prompting you to do.

*Sermon: In your light we see light*

Psalm 36 talks of two ways to live – one where you cannot see and the second where we see God's light in community.

The psalms were written thousands of years ago, and yet don't these descriptions seem very apt for this week even? There is no fear of God before their eyes. In their own eyes they flatter themselves too much to detect sin. Last week we have heard politicians saying: I wasn't there, and if I was there, I didn't break any covid rules. This week we heard: I was there, but it was a work party. Or from royalty: 'you see the problem with that accusation is that I do not sweat.' We hear these silver-tongued explanations all the time. The words of their mouths are deceitful, and they fail to act wisely or do good.

Sin isn't a popular word now but is the biblical word for acting wrongly. We act wrongly when we are not looking towards God but towards our self. We are sinful when we act or plot in evil ways and when we do not reject what is wrong. And the psalmist promises that those who act in evil ways will be judged, will not be able to rise. This way of life is one full of darkness because they cannot see God.

And less we start to feel smug about how decent we are, each of us can fall into the

same trap. When we forget God and look to ourselves for the answers, when our words tear others, when our words are not honest, when we fail to act wisely – it is as if we have closed our eyes to God’s light and can only see the backs of our own eyes. This is life where we cannot see, we cannot see right from wrong, good from bad, lies from the truth. This life leads to destruction.

But there is another way. There is a way of light that God calls us to: in your light, we see light. In our second reading we were thinking about the gifts that God gives us by his Spirit. The gifts are wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, discernment, speaking, tongues, interpreting tongues. Each of the gifts that God gives help us to explore his character and draw us closer together as a community.

The beautiful thing about the gifts of the Spirit is that they are to be shared for the benefit of the church. Every person who seeks Jesus is given a gift to share with the church, to build up others and to bless the congregation. The sheer variety of gifts and fruits of the spirit mean that each of us can help the other to know the God of v5-9. The God whose love is so wide you can’t get round it, so high you can’t get over it, so low you can’t get under it – oh wonderful love.

This love of God is so precious. And it is knowing the extent of God’s love that should help us to see God’s light together. God’s love is one that is faithful, it doesn’t wain. His righteousness does not fade, and his justice is perfect. God offers each of us safety and refuge under his wings, and an abundant life. God is not second rate or budget no frills, but he is extravagant in love. A sign of his light is joy, love, and a full life.

It is this exciting life with God, a god of new wine, true living water and bread that satisfies that can shape our sight. This life together with God and with God’s people raises our sight to the goodness that God can bring.

This life together is a church of people who looking to God first, seek his light above all else, fix and change where it is required and shine brightly for his glory.

Turn our eyes towards you Lord, draw us ever closer to you. My prayer is that our life as church would be set with our eyes on God, looking for his light and life for in your light we see light.

### *Prayer*

Perfect Light of revelation,  
as you shone in the life of Jesus,  
whose epiphany we celebrate,  
so shine in us and through us,  
that we may become beacons of truth and  
compassion,  
enlightening all creation with deeds of justice  
and mercy. Amen.

### *Song: I cast my mind to Calvary*

#### *Communion*

Lord, You have always given bread for the  
coming day; and though we are poor,  
**today we believe.**

Lord, You have always given strength for  
the coming day; and though we are weak,  
**today we believe.**

Lord, You have always given peace for the  
coming day; and though of anxious heart,  
**today we believe.**

Lord, You have always kept us safe in trials  
and now, tried as we are,  
**today we believe.**

Lord, You have always marked the road for  
the coming day; and though it may be  
hidden, **today we believe.**

Lord, You have always lightened this

darkness of ours; and though shadows are here, **today we believe.**

Lord, You have always spoken when time was ripe; and though you be silent now, **today we believe.**

Share bread and wine together

*Intercession led by Anthea Denham*

Song: Be thou my vision

*Blessing*

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. Amen.