

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

4 June 2023

Welcome

Song: All creatures of our God and king
Lift up your voices and with us sing
Alleluia, alleluia
Thou burning with golden beam
Thou silver moon with softer gleam
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

Thou rushing wind that art so strong
Ye clouds that sail in heaven a long
Alleluia, alleluia
Thou rising morn in praise rejoice
Ye light of evening find a voice
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

Thou flowing water pure and clear
Make music for thy Lord to hear
Alleluia, alleluia
Thou fire so masterful and bright
That gives to man both warmth and light
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,

Prayer

We journey with you, O God,
because you have proved yourself to us,
revealed yourself to us,
made yourself known to us.
You have drawn us to yourself.
Thanks be to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Our journey with you is adventure,
It is yearning, striving and seeking,
It is letting go and picking up,
It is trusting and following,
It is being and doing.
And in all of this you are with us on the

journey.

Thanks be to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

You are balm to our fears,
the glue that holds us to yourself in our
times of uncertainty.
You are the Father/parent who offers us
sustenance.

You are the Son who lived and died and
lives with us and among us.
You are the Holy Spirit who sets us on fire,
who burns within us.

**Thanks be to you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Song: You were the Word at the beginning
One with God the Lord Most High
Your hidden glory in creation
Now revealed in You our Christ

What a beautiful Name it is
What a beautiful Name it is
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a beautiful Name it is
Nothing compares to this
What a beautiful Name it is
The Name of Jesus

You didn't want heaven without us
So Jesus You brought heaven down
My sin was great Your love was greater
What could separate us now

What a wonderful Name it is
What a wonderful Name it is
The Name of Jesus Christ my King
What a wonderful Name it is
Nothing compares to this
What a wonderful Name it is
The Name of Jesus
What a wonderful Name it is
The Name of Jesus

Death could not hold You
The veil tore before You

You silence the boast of sin and grave
The heavens are roaring
The praise of Your glory
For You are raised to life again
You have no rival
You have no equal
Now and forever God You reign
Yours is the kingdom
Yours is the glory
Yours is the Name above all names

Reading: Isaiah 40.12-17, 27-31

- ¹² Can anyone measure the ocean by handfuls
or measure the sky with his hands?
Can anyone hold the soil of the earth in a cup
or weigh the mountains and hills on scales?
¹³ Can anyone tell the Lord what to do?
Who can teach him or give him advice?
¹⁴ With whom does God consult
in order to know and understand
and to learn how things should be done?
¹⁵ To the Lord the nations are nothing,
no more than a drop of water;
the distant islands are as light as dust.
¹⁶ All the animals in the forests of Lebanon
are not enough for a sacrifice to our God,
and its trees are too few to kindle the fire.
¹⁷ The nations are nothing at all to him.

Israel, why then do you complain
that the Lord doesn't know your troubles
or care if you suffer injustice?
²⁸ Don't you know? Haven't you heard?
The Lord is the everlasting God;
he created all the world.
He never grows tired or weary.
No one understands his thoughts.
²⁹ He strengthens those who are weak and tired.
³⁰ Even those who are young grow weak;
young people can fall exhausted.
³¹ But those who trust in the Lord for help
will find their strength renewed.
They will rise on wings like eagles;

they will run and not get weary;
they will walk and not grow weak.

Song: I'm gonna jump up and down
Gonna spin right around
I'm gonna praise Your name forever
I'm gonna shout out loud!
Gonna deafen the crowd
I'm gonna send my praise to heaven

I will run this race and I will never stop
I'll follow Jesus 'til the day I drop
I can do all things through Christ who
strengthens me
(Christ who strengthens me)
When you've got such a lot
When you've got not a lot
What?
Be happy!

Sermon: God renews our strength

I recently heard an interview with Ronnie O'Sullivan. Ronnie is the world number 1 snooker player. O'Sullivan began playing snooker at age 7, won his first tournament at age 9, and went onto win the British Under-16 Championship at age 13. At 17 he beat Stephen Henry at the UK championship to become the youngest ever winner of a ranking snooker match. However, Ronnie's life then took a turn for the worse when his father who ran a chain of adult industry shops in Soho was jailed for murder, and then his mother for tax evasion. At 21 he was left in charge of his 8-year-old sister. He said: things didn't go well. O'Sullivan spiralled into drug and alcohol abuse, depression and violence.

Do you hear the pain in his story? Do you hear his abandonment by his family through crime? Without any steady ground O'Sullivan became weary and tired and unable to cope. As his family life – even as illicit as it was – was taken away, the rug was pulled from under his feet. Instead of reaching for anything useful, he found solace in self-

destruction, short term happiness in a bottle, pill and a clenched fist to vent anger with.

In Isaiah 40, we encounter a beleaguered, weary people of God. Swept from their homes by the Babylonians and scratching out a new existence along the Euphrates River, everything that had assured the people of God that the Lord was with them had been shaken. Now living as captives and exiles, the Jewish people were scattered and weary. They believed themselves to be hidden from God's presence and disregarded. Forced from their homes and religious practices, there was a creeping shame that some were beginning to assimilate to other religions and fall away from the Lord.

And yet in this biblical crisis, in crisis that people like Ronnie O Sullivan faced and in every crisis that we face today, hear these words from the Lord: those who trust in the Lord for help will find their strength renewed. God is in the business of giving strength to those who are in crisis, who are weary, tired and burn out. God wants to give you the gift of his strength. Why? 2 Corinthians 12.9 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'

Today is Trinity Sunday, a day when we pay attention to Father, Son and Holy Spirit active and present in this world. Take a look at this picture. It's Rublev's famous icon, an imagined painting of what it would be like to sit down for a meal with the trinity.



(Image: wiki)

And take a look at this one, what is different?



(Image: Kelly Latimore)

Quite a lot huh? Old to modern, male to female, white skin to black and brown skin. But notice afresh that in each painting there is a space at the table. It is deliberate that there is a gap at this meal, and it is a space for us. The power of the creator of the world, the son of God and the Holy Spirit do not need humanity, doesn't need you or me but chooses to open the divine presence to humanity for God's power is made perfect in weakness. God offers a chair at this table because he wants to give us power, he wants to renew us, he wants to give us strength. God wants to give away his power and might to the weak and vulnerable because then it becomes perfect.

When we come to God in weakness and in crisis, he wants to renew our strength. He wants to give power to our elbow; he wants to transform us from people who are struggling to stand to mighty awesome eagles. Do you not know? Have you not heard that God is a god of new starts, total transformation, of resurrection of new life and power in his name again, again and again. In every crisis, God is the answer. For every pain and hurt, God's power is the answer. For

every person whose life has been turned upside down, God's power is the answer, and he wants to give it to you. He wants to give you power, to change how you see the situation, to allow you to rise up like an eagle and see the reality of the crisis for what it is. God wants to give you strength when you need to run so that you are not faint, you are not weary and that you too can hope and trust in the lord of hosts. For it is the same lord who created the galaxies who knows our pain and yearns to help us. God has left a space for you to join at the table and be changed by the divine love of the lord.

When I heard Ronnie's interview, my ears pricked up when I heard him mention Hainault Forest. Hainault forest is a huge open space near to where I grew up in Essex, it's a place for ordinary walks on ordinary days, and a place where Ronnie now runs to try and clear his mind.

Just as God created the galaxies, stars, mountains and the wonders of the world, he also set in motion the humble buttercup, daisies and even an ordinary housefly. Did you not know, have you not heard, that God is just as keen to help us in the ordinary times, for in these times he renews us to walk and not become weak. God's renewal is the only answer in crisis, but its also the only answer to a happy ordinary life, to the times when we need to walk and not run.

The argument that Isaiah gives to the weary people of God is poetry. He reminds them and us that God is the creator of the world, universe and beyond and so if he can manage that – he can help us too. What is required of us? To hope in God.

There are days when hoping in God is all we can do, dark and difficult days when every aspect of our life seems to be in shadow and other days where life can seem dull and unimportant. There have been times over the last 40 years where the redevelopment of our

church has been in crisis and others when it is stuck in dull bureaucracy. For each of these times, our call as a church is to hope in God. Haven't you heard? The lord is the everlasting God. The Creator of the universe knows about our church in New Southgate, he knows about the paperwork sitting on someone's desk at Whitehall getting nearer to the top of the pile, he knows each building company that will tender for the work, and he knows each of our frustrations with our building, he knows we are waiting. In our waiting as individuals and as a church God wants to renew our strength. He wants to transform any crisis we have and every ordinary day and to call us again to hope in him.

To each of us, with every concern that we have God offers us a place at the divine table, and seeks to renew us and give us strength, power and might in God's name alone.

Song: How delightful is your dwelling
O Almighty Sovereign Lord
Place of peace, where all my longings
Are fulfilled, my soul restored
Every fibre of my being
Living God, calls out to you
Come revive me with your presence
And with hope my life renew

This is where the tiny sparrow
Near your altar finds her rest
In a corner here the swallow
For her young prepares a nest
So with all who find contentment
In your house, my God, my King
May I also know your favour
And your praise for ever sing

Blessed are all the pilgrim-hearted
Strengthened, so that as they go
Arid land becomes a garden
Where refreshing rivers flow
On from strength to strength they journey
And at last arrive in heaven:

As we follow in their footsteps
May your grace to us be given

One day in your house is better
Than a thousand spent elsewhere
Earth can offer no attraction
Like the joy of serving there
Sun to guide and shield to guard us
Where your blessing is assured
By your mercy keep us faithful
As we trust in you, O Lord

Communion

Prayers for the world

Song: Everlasting
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait
upon the Lord
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait
upon the Lord

*Our God, You reign forever
Our hope, our strong Deliverer
You are the everlasting God
The everlasting God
You do not faint
You won't grow weary*

Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait
upon the Lord
Strength will rise as we wait upon the Lord
We will wait upon the Lord, we will wait
upon the Lord

You're the defender of the weak
You comfort those in need
You lift us up on the wings
Like eagles

Blessing