

*Christ Church New
Southgate & Friern Barnet*

7 May 2023

Welcome

Song: 1 Crown him with many crowns,
the Lamb upon his throne.
Hark! how the heavenly anthem drowns
all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing
of him who died for thee,
and hail him as thy matchless king
through all eternity.

2 Crown him the Lord of life,
who triumphed o'er the grave,
and rose victorious in the strife
for those he came to save;
his glories now we sing
who died and rose on high,
who died eternal life to bring,
and lives that death may die.

3 Crown him the Lord of love;
behold his hands and side,
rich wounds, yet visible above,
in beauty glorified;
no angels in the sky
can fully bear that sight,
but downward bends their burning eye
at mysteries so bright.

4 Crown him the Lord of years,
the potentate of time,
creator of the rolling spheres,
ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail!
for thou hast died for me;
thy praise shall never, never fail
throughout eternity.

Song: Psalm 145, How Great
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

Reading: 1 Peter 2.4-10 by Robert Mapara

⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone—
rejected by humans but chosen by God and
precious to him— ⁵ you also, like living
stones, are being built into a spiritual
house^[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering
spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God

through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.”^[b]

⁷ Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,
“The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone,”^[c]

⁸ and,
“A stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”^[d]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

A prayer of confession

Merciful God,
by your calling we are made holy,
yet we know that we do not live up to this
holy calling.
Forgive us our harsh words and thoughtless
acts.
Forgive us our forgetfulness and pride.
Forgive us our short-sightedness and failure
to act.
Forgive us and have mercy on us.

> *silence when we can confess our shortcomings in
the past week.*

Here are words we can trust:
Christ Jesus came and lived among us,
revealing the truth of God’s love and grace.
Those who had no hope, he called by name.
To those who had lost their way he said
‘Follow me’;

To us, who wait on God’s mercy, he says:
‘You are forgiven’.

Let us learn to forgive ourselves and one
another
that we might live the gift of God’s grace!
Amen.

Song: My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
And I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus name

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil

*Christ alone, cornerstone
Weak made strong in the Savior's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all*

His oath, His covenant, His blood
Support me in the 'whelming flood
When all around my soul gives way
He then is all my hope and stay
He then is all my hope and stay

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh, may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless, stand before the throne

All age activity: Duplo prayers

Song: Worthy of every song we could ever
sing
Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring
Worthy of every breath we could ever
breathe
We live for You, oh, we live for You

Jesus, the Name above every other name
Jesus, the only One who could ever save
Worthy of every breath we could ever

breathe
We live for You, we live for You

Holy, there is no one like You
There is none beside You
Open up my eyes in wonder
And show me who You are
And fill me with Your heart
And lead me in Your love to those around
me

And I will build my life upon Your love
It is a firm foundation
And I will put my trust in You alone
And I will not be shaken

Sermon: What is the full name of this church? Christ Church New Southgate and Friern Barnet Baptist/URC. What does our long church name mean? It was chosen as a name in 1991 when two churches merged together into a local ecumenical partnership. One church was called New Southgate Baptist Church which was on Grove Road and Christ Church Congregational (Friern Barnet) which was the original church on this site. Congregational churches merged with the presbyterian church in England to make the United Reformed Church. So what is interesting about a long church name? I'd like us to think about the place name and its significance today and what the denominational names of Baptist and Congregational might mean.

For the last two weeks, you have graciously allowed me to take study leave to work on my doctoral thesis. My thesis title is – how do Baptists discern the mind of Christ at the Church meeting. I chose to look at the topic in a qualitative research model, so I observed 4 local churches at their church meeting and then interviewed 3 people from each church. In the methodology chapter of the thesis, I begin by trying to anonymise the sample churches included in the thesis. It was only

when I thought about writing up my findings, I realised that pretty much all Baptist churches are named just like New Southgate Baptist church was, named exactly after the place where it was. New Southgate Baptist church was ... in New Southgate. Where is would you find Potters Bar Baptist, Potters Bar. Where would you find Colchester Baptist, Colchester. So, I named the sample churches after pioneering women ministers from the Baptist church. But this naming of churches tells us something doesn't it? It tells us about how the Baptist church is formed. And it also tells us about how the congregational and the URC are formed. And it all links to 1 Peter 2

4 you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house^[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

⁹But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.

Baptist and all other congregational churches believe that the church is gathered together by Christ and recognises each Christian as part of a holy priesthood v4, and a royal priesthood v9, made to declare the goodness of God as the people of God v10.

What is the significance of priesthood in 1 Peter?

Most churches believe that certain people are called to be priests or ministers, to take on a specific pastoral leadership role in a specific place to lead the people of God. Just as some of us are ministers, there are junior church teachers, website managers, communion servers, bible readers etc etc.

But this holy and royal priesthood is talking about something different, it is talking about what the church is.

In England there are two streams of churches. The Church of England who now has King Charles as its head. And all the others who do not. The Church of England provides 26 bishops who sit in the house of lords as the lords spiritual, no other church does this nor has the right to do this.

The Church of England is the state church for England. It was created by Henry VIII in 1534 for his own marital and political purposes. At a similar time as the Church of England was being formed, reformation changes the European Christian religious landscape forever. The reformation starts with Martin Luther in Germany and his demands for change or reform of the church in 1517. He asks for a review of indulgences (expensive tickets to heaven), papal authority and recognises that all Christians are part of the priesthood of all believers. It is out of this history that the Baptist church in 1608 and the congregational church in 1550 come.

What is the priesthood of all believers? It is the idea found here in 1 Peter 2.9 that all Christians have authority to speak to God directly because of Jesus saving act on the cross. It recognises that all Christians have the Holy Spirit living in their hearts – what a life giving presence he is to our lives, and because of this we do not need a priest to pray for us. All Christians can pray directly to God.

This looks forward to Revelation 5.9-15 where every tribe and nation are called to be a kingdom of priests serving God. In 1 Peter 2, Peter writes to the early church calling Christians to be: ⁵like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.’ (1 Peter 2.5 NRSV)

Lumpkin argues that the early Baptists took seriously this view of priesthood indicated by its use in the ‘influential and formative’ (p. 152) 1644 confession of faith as a key principle guiding the Baptist church:

That all beleevvers are a holy and ¹sanctified people, | and that sanctification is a spirituall grace of the new | Covenant, and the effect of the love of God, manifested | to the soule, whereby the believer is in truth and rea- | litie separated, both in soule and body, from all sinne and | dead works, through the blood of the everlasting Co- | venant , wherby he also preseth after a heavnly and | Evangelical perfection, in obedience to all the Com- | mands, which Christ as head and King in this new Co- | venant has prescribed to him.

¹1 Cor.1.1 & 1 Pet. 2.9

(1644, reproduced Lumpkin, 1959, p. 164)

The 1644 London Confession speaks of a view of the church as a gathered body of people where each person is valued and is sanctified through Christ. It calls a church to recognise the power and ability of all believers to be holy by grace. Historically Baptists held the ‘theological conviction that Christ could and would make his will and mind known to his faithful ones gathered at his call and by his grace. So came the idea and practice of the church meeting, the church gathered together by Christ the Lord’ (Haymes, Gouldbourne & Cross, p. 51). The priesthood of all believers is a distinctive part of Baptist churches and congregational practice typically expressed in discernment processes at the Church Meeting.

So what does this mean? It means that our name is significant, even though its long. It reminds that our church is directly related to

our community. We are a church of the people for the people. We are a church that pays for everything we do ourselves. We are a church that has been gathered in the name of Jesus and so called by him to be good news to our neighbours.

1 Peter is a letter to the scattered Christians in Turkey who are facing persecution. They don't have a church building; they meet in each other's houses. They don't have protection from the state, they are hounded by the state. For some of us that has been a reality of being a Christian in a hostile country. Peter writes to this church in Turkey and to every church today saying be encouraged – you are living stones. Don't be jealous of big buildings, institutions and fancy temples, you are part of a new kind of building that is made of living stones. Both the foundation and capstone of that building are Christ. Christ who came to serve and love us, and calls us to do likewise. Jesus calls us, all of us, to be active in his Kingdom building.

Did you notice that end verse 10, ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God. Here Peter is reminding the church in Turkey that although they came from different backgrounds – some Jewish, some not Jewish, they all now are the the people of God. If you have ever felt left out, if you have ever thought you are no use to the church, please think again. For the God who loves you, saves you and wants you to shine his light in this world, is calling you his people. These people, are my people says God. And my people can always talk to me, always come to me, always be in my presence for they are part of the kingdom of God.

What does the name of this church mean? It means that we uphold these verses from 1 Peter 2 and in our church practice believe that all of us can discern the mind of Christ at the church meeting, can build the church up as

living stones and can all glorify Christ who brings light to our world.

Song: The God who laid the earth's foundations,
the God who's Lord of every nation,
the God who tends each generation
is here.

The God who left his throne so glorious,
the God who walked the road before us,
the God who rose from death victorious
is here, is here.

Hallelujah, he is here.

Hallelujah, our God is here.

The God who makes his home inside us,
the God who teaches and inspires us,
the God who leads and guards and guides
us
is here, is here.

He is here,

he is here.

Communion

Prayers for the world

A Coronation Prayer for King Charles III

Our Father in heaven,
We pray today for our new King Charles III.
Grant him your peace as he commits himself
again to your service.

Give him strength and perseverance as he
promises to serve us all as King.

May he know you are walking with him day
by day. Help him to fulfil his vows and
promises.

May he follow the example of Jesus – the
ultimate King of Kings.

God bless the King.

Amen.

Song: 1 The Church's one foundation
is Jesus Christ, her Lord;
she is his new creation
by water and the Word.
From heav'n he came and sought her
to be his holy bride;
with his own blood he bought her,
and for her life he died.

2 Elect from ev'ry nation,
yet one o'er all the earth;
her charter of salvation:
one Lord, one faith, one birth.
One holy name she blesses,
partakes one holy food,
and to one hope she presses,
with ev'ry grace endued.

3 The Church shall never perish.
Her dear Lord to defend,
to guide, sustain, and cherish,
is with her to the end.
Tho' there be those that hate her
and strive to see her fail,
against both foe and traitor
she ever shall prevail.

4 Tho' with a scornful wonder
the world sees her oppressed,
by schisms rent asunder,
by heresies distressed,
yet saints their watch are keeping;
their cry goes up, "How long?"
and soon the night of weeping
shall be the morn of song.

5 'Mid toil and tribulation
and tumult of her war
she waits the consummation
of peace forevermore
till with the vision glorious
her longing eyes are blest,
and the great Church victorious
shall be the Church at rest.

(based on (1 Peter 2.2-10)

Lord Jesus,
foundation stone,
Lord and Saviour:
bless those who are foundation stones,
bearing the weight of responsibility
and other people's trust and vulnerability.
Bless those who are stones below our eye
line,
Those who do the little jobs,
the unfashionable jobs,
but who keep the wall secure.
Bless those who are the capping stones
sitting on the top for all to see,
the gifted ones,
the ones that get the attention.
Bless the misshapen stones
that fit in between the others,
plugging the gaps,
the ones that can get looked down on.
And bless those who pass by the temple
as yet unaware of your love for
them. **Amen.**

A prayer of blessing