

28.06.2020 Christ Church, Friern Barnet

### Opening prayer

Almighty God,  
To whom all hearts are open,  
All desires known,  
And from whom no secrets are hidden:  
Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts  
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,  
That we may perfectly love you,  
And worthily magnify your holy Name  
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### Psalm 89: 1-4, & 15-18. GNT Translation.

O LORD, I will always sing of your  
constant love; I will proclaim your  
faithfulness forever.

**I know that your love will last for all  
time, that your faithfulness is as  
permanent as the sky.**

You said, "I have made a covenant with  
the man I chose; I have promised my  
servant David,

**'A descendant of yours will always be  
king; I will preserve your dynasty  
forever.'**"

How happy are the people who worship  
you with songs, who live in the light of  
your kindness!

**Because of you they rejoice all day  
long, and they praise you for your  
goodness.**

You give us great victories; in your love  
you make us triumphant.

**You, O LORD, chose our protector;  
you, the Holy God of Israel, gave us  
our king.**

### Hymn – Love divine, all love excelling

#### Prayer of confession

**God of mercy and forgiveness.  
We confess that we live in a world in  
which many are hungry,  
sad, hurt and suffer from injustice.  
We confess that we do not always do  
what is right.**

### **We ask your forgiveness, claim your love and mercy**

May the God of mercy who forgives all  
our sins through Jesus Christ,  
strengthen us in all goodness by the  
power of the Holy Spirit and  
keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**

### The Lord's prayer

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.  
**Amen.**

### Bible reading: Matthew 10: 40-42

#### Sermon

##### Let us pray

Lord, open our hearts and minds by the  
power of your Holy Spirit, so we may hear  
word with joy. **Amen.**

Welcome is a simple word used in many  
parts of the world. I found on the internet  
138 ways to say 'Welcome' but I guess there  
will be plenty more ways, considering over  
7,000 languages are spoken in the world  
according to the World atlas.com.

In some languages you can pick up the  
Welcome sound readily. In Norway for  
example it is 'Velkommen' whilst in other  
languages the sound is totally different. In  
France it is Bienvenue, In Spain it is  
Bienvenida, in Hebrew it is Baruch haba and  
in Yoruba it is 'E Kaabo'.

If five people say welcome at the same time in these languages to a friend or family member, the common thing we will probably pick up are the joy in their voices and the loving expressions on their faces despite not understanding the language.

Amidst the easing of the lockdown after this devastating pandemic, it had been good to see the welcoming joy and loving faces of grandparents seeing their newly born grandchildren for the first time weeks after they had been born.

It had also been good to see the joy and happy faces of Hetty and Bella as they welcome back their mum, an NHS nurse, after nine weeks away from them, while she worked on the frontline during the health crisis.

In a way these various welcome and joy should comfort and reassure us that no matter how bleak our situation may be, Jesus loves us and His light will always shine through any bleakness.

In the passage we have just read, Jesus talked about the importance of 'Welcome'. He says "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. The sentence could easily be limited to His twelve disciples as it was His disciples he had been talking to in most of Mathew 10.

To clarify the welcome Jesus was talking about is not limited to the disciples, Jesus broke it down to help us understand He wants us to welcome all.

He used the word messengers which one can sort of limit to the Church ministers and missionaries who follow in the disciple's footsteps, spreading the good news of Jesus.

He went on to say we should welcome good people. The passage finished with 'whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my followers will receive a

reward.' Meaning we must welcome everyone, even where we don't perceive the person as good.

Jesus used the word 'Welcome' six times in the short passage to emphasise the importance of welcome to Him. He promised us a share in the reward of any messenger and good person we welcome. As well a reward for the least of His followers.

Jesus mentioned 'Reward' three times in the short passage to assure us none of our good deeds is in vain. That blessings will flow from God when we show love and generosity to others.

What has touched every one of us during this pandemic is the kindness and help many had willing and joyfully rendered to others. The government had been unbelievably generous to many. Many of the homeless were provided with shelter and food. Charitable organisations all did what they could.

The church appeared more welcoming and visible with her numerous online, television and radio worship. Which encouraged many non-church attendees to join Sunday worship.

All these meaningful activities by individuals, church, communities and the government in my opinion were various ways all were welcome during this pandemic.

The various deeds would hopefully have helped in a small way to stabilize or improve the mental, emotional, physical and financial health of many, amidst the sadness and horror of the pandemic.

No wonder Jesus asks us to welcome all and not just those that fit the bill. Jesus knows that a meaningful, generous welcome goes deep. It could make or break the person.

As we slowly enter the new normal after this pandemic lock down many are anxious, grieving or sad. We must try not to use this as an excuse to stop welcoming all. Jesus is

our Comforter, our Sustainer and our Protector. He loves us. He will help us through our situation.

Let us build on what we have started by permanently putting aside our biases on gender, race, colour, creed, age disability or sexual orientation. To always try and see everyone with the loving eyes of Jesus that loves and welcomes all. This is the best way to break down barriers.

Tensions, mistrust and chaos either within the church, the community or the society can only be prevented when we genuinely welcome all, allow all to develop their talents and to reach their optimal potential.

The reward for welcoming all by a church, a community or a society are growth, peace and prosperity.

What more, apart from the blessings from God when we try to welcome all, there is also an eternal reward from Jesus. A Crown of glory and Crown of life.

### **Let us pray**

Loving God, we thank you for your Word. Open the eyes of our heart so we can see all with your welcoming, loving eyes. This we ask in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### **Prayer of thanksgiving and intercession**

Dear Lord God

#### **We pray for the church.**

We ask you to bless all Christian ministers throughout the country. Please give them the right words to communicate to believers and those searching for answers during uncertain times. Encourage all believers to communicate your lifegiving message of outrageous welcome and constant love.

#### **We pray for the world and its leaders.**

Please give all leaders of countries and communities wisdom and courage to speak out and act against injustice. Create a groundswell of people working for tolerance and peace throughout the world.

Help us humans protect our endangered environment and communities. Protect and strengthen indigenous tribes and people without power or influence. Please gather unusual, powerful and unexpected allies to work on their behalf.

Help us all to respect and protect our biodiversity and take its active care and protection very seriously. Prick our consciences to feed native wildlife, remove litter and debris from our woods and parkland, create wildlife corridors and plant flowers for bees and pollinating insects. Help us find space and food for all of your creatures to have a home to thrive in.

#### **We pray for our own country.**

Please bless Queen Elizabeth and thank you for her steadfast Christian witness to our nation.

We ask you to continue providing experts to give sound guidance and wisdom to Boris Johnson and his cabinet as they continue to steer our country through the COVID19 pandemic.

We ask you to reduce infection rates in our country and help the scientists in their search for a vaccine and better treatments for those who are infected with the virus. Restore our weary medical teams to full health and energy levels.

We ask you to help the speedy restoration of our economy and ask for the vulnerable and the younger generation to be protected during the recovery. Help our leaders reassess what matters and what needs to be

prioritised in the future. Give our young people a good and certain future.

### **We pray for our society.**

We ask that the Black Lives Matter campaign can achieve positive change peacefully. Please help our society find peaceful resolutions to injustice caused by racism, poverty, power, politics, social status, educational attainment, sexism, and ageism.

We ask you to help adults and children trapped inside homes experiencing domestic violence during the lockdown. Please send the Holy Spirit to give courage and practical means of escape to those suffering, prevent the worst bullying and physical intimidation. Please enable funding to be increased for services which provide solutions to those living in fear and facing violence.

### **We pray for Christchurch**

We thank you for our minister, Revd Ruth Moriarty, and ask you to bless her richly throughout her mission at Christchurch. Please send your Holy Spirit to help her guide us spiritually through the pandemic and beyond. Please encourage her and let your work in our community be evident to her every day.

Thank you for the deacons and everyone who gives time to Christchurch.

We pray for the family of Joyce Percy who died on Monday and ask that you send peace to her children, Karen, Steve and Gary as they mourn her passing. We place Peter Griffiths and everyone who has lost someone they cared about and ask for peace and resilience for them at their time of grieving.

Please bless anyone who is sick in Christchurch. Please be with each of them and help the medical teams find solutions to their sickness. Please restore them to full health swiftly.

Please bring comfort to those who are lonely and isolated and reassure everyone that this uncertain time will pass and we will see each other again to worship at Christchurch.

All these we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord & Saviour.

**Amen**

### **The Grace Prayer.**

**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.**

**Book link for children– ‘All are welcome’  
by Alexandra Penfold.**

<https://youtu.be/rFvbOAvWTYA>

**Song - Open the eyes of my heart Lord –  
Michael W. Smith**

<https://youtu.be/idQ1n3cdgfo>