

14th July, 2024

The paper-version Service



To Begin: Find a Bible and a comfortable place. If safe, light a candle and read prayerfully through the service. If you have access to worship music, choose a song and listen to it as you begin or read, or even sing, the song from this Sunday's

Service.

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.**

Song:

What a friend we have in Jesus,
all our sins and griefs to bear!

What a privilege to carry
everything to God in prayer!

O what peace we often forfeit,

O what needless pain we bear,

all because we do not carry
everything to God in prayer!

Have we trials and temptations?

Is there trouble anywhere?

We should never be discouraged;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

Can we find a friend so faithful
who will all our sorrows share?

Jesus knows our every weakness;
take it to the Lord in prayer!

Are we weak and heavy laden,
cumbered with a load of care?

Precious Saviour, still our refuge--
take it to the Lord in prayer!

Do your friends despise, forsake
you?

Take it to the Lord in prayer!

In his arms he'll take and shield you;
you will find a solace there.

The Sermon by Rev. Howard Wright

Read Philippians 3:15-21 and John 17:6-19 – Modelling Jesus

A sign of a Christian Church is devotion to the apostles teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer. In our teaching series, as we've now made formal our partnership in the Gospel, we've been studying Philippians, a small but important part of the apostles teaching.

In our reading today, we are challenged to grow up. To reach maturity. A failure to thrive is serious for children and for all of us. Kids are cute and we might say, 'I wish they didn't grow up', but we'd be very worried if they didn't.

Children need a model, or maybe, they will find a model. Parents are our first place for a model. Which is terrifying for parents as we hear our children repeating our phrases! And copying our moves.

Thank God for the many good parents and teachers and for our Kids Church team who seek to model, good values, attitudes, and behaviours. For many today's role models are 'influencers' found on Instagram and TikTok.

How might we be a positive influence on others? We read in chapter 2 of Philippians, '...have the same mindset as Christ Jesus...'. Paul then describes what Jesus was like, and he offers himself as a role model to us. '*...the apostolic example he (Paul) has set is normative for Christians.*' Alec Motyer. This is not just for the fanatics, the keenies, but for us all. How do we find out more about what Jesus was like? We need to eat well.

We all need to eat healthily, otherwise we put ourselves at risk, so how much more important for children. We know what's important for kids, and ourselves, a good balance of protein, carbs, good fats, vitamins, and minerals – lots of veg, including grains and pulses, and fruit, etc. This all contribute to good physical and mental health

But what's important for us to grow spiritually? Once again, it's the apostles teaching, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayer.

Jesus quoting the Old Testament said, '*Man cannot live on bread alone*' (Luke 4:4) and the verse continues, '*but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*' (Deuteronomy 8:3). We need time reading God's word the Bible, his love letters to us.

We need fellowship, time to be with God's family, which is, our family, and this includes sharing the family meal of bread and wine – a little taste of the feast of

heaven. Fellowship, as Timothy has reminded us, is about partnership, working together for each other and for God's purposes.

Any relationship depends upon communication, and our communication, prayer, with God is vital to our health and wellbeing.

There is the saying, 'You become what you eat,' and maybe also, what you watch, or think! In our reading we read about appetites – things we hunger and thirst for – things we feed on.

Some are condemned by their appetites – *'Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, ...'* (v.19) All of us hunger, the things we hunger for might not be bad in themselves – food, sexual pleasure, accumulation of stuff, experiences, power, and pleasure – but they can become gods which we try to possess or which possess us.

What do we hold onto; what holds onto us? These things will rob us of glory – it's a narrow gate we enter, if we're carrying other stuff we won't get through (Matthew 7:13-14)! This growing up is a serious business, this is about where we belong.

We are born into family, into a nation and citizenship. For many of us into British citizenship, widely regarded as a privilege. But when a group of us travelled to Karamoja in 2008, we went without British protection – the advice was, it was too dangerous, you're on your own!

As Christians we are born 'again' into God's family, we are children of the King, princesses and princes of the Kingdom of God, and citizens of Heaven – and God never abandons us – quite the contrary!

The people of Philippi were immensely proud of being a Roman Colony, and being therefore citizens of Rome. As a Roman colony, Philippi enjoyed great privilege, but also great responsibility. Philippi was to be like a little Rome, reflecting Rome's culture and values, giving people a flavour of the great city.

As citizens of Heaven we have great privilege, but it comes with great responsibility, to reflect the nature of God, to grow in Christian maturity, showing the love of God in all we do.

We will all grow, but we grow in one of two directions. We can grow in following Jesus. Eating well, finding good role models, and living as children of the King, citizens of Heaven. Or we risk being led by our own appetites and facing destruction. Which growth will we pursue?

7th Sunday after Trinity: Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things: graft in our hearts the love of your name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of your great mercy keep us in the same; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **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 forever. Amen.*

Blessing to be declared over yourselves, St Andrews and The Good Shepherd, the communities around us and our whole nation. 'The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.' (Numbers 6:24-26 NIV).

At the Church of the Good Shepherd

- Tea and Chat: July 17th at 2pm in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Bowls: July 17th at 2pm in the Church.
- Coffee and Questions: July 24th at 10.30am in the Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise: 3pm Sunday, TBA
- The Community Cupboard, 2:45pm every Thursday in Church.

For Further information:

This paper and all parish details are on the website at
<https://www.parishofmedsteadandfourmarks.co.uk>