

24th September, 2023

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:

In the Name of Jesus
Every knee shall bow,
Every tongue confess Him
King of glory now;
'Tis the Father's pleasure
We should call Him Lord,
Who from the beginning
Was the Mighty Word.

At His voice creation
Sprang at once to sight:
All the angel faces,
All the hosts of light,
Thrones and dominations,
Stars upon their way,
All the heavenly orders,
In their great array.

Humbled for a season,
To receive a Name
From the lips of sinners
Unto whom He came,
Faithfully He bore it
Spotless to the last,
Brought it back victorious,
When from death He passed;

Name Him, brothers, name Him,
With love strong as death,
But with awe and wonder,
And with bated breath;
He is God the Saviour,
He is Christ the Lord,
Ever to be worshiped,
Trusted, and adored.

In your hearts enthrone Him;
There let Him subdue
All that is not holy,
All that is not true;
Crown Him as your Captain
In temptation's hour;
Let His will enfold you
In its light and power.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus
Shall return again,
With His Father's glory,
With His angel train;
For all wreaths of empire
Meet upon His brow,
And our hearts confess Him
King of glory now.

The Sermon by Andy Walters.

Read Romans 3:21-31 & Matthew 20:1-16: Generous Jesus

This is a contractor's parable. Myself and my colleagues would've spent the following day in the pub, shooting pool and turning up with an hour to go the following day in the hope of being paid for a full day's pay. That was once my best understanding, a worldly way of thinking. The question to me is the true value of the denarius and who the rich landowner represents. For me, the landowner is God, the father, the son and the Holy Spirit. The denarius is the gift by grace the opportunity to have a relationship through the Holy Spirit and through Jesus Christ.

Many throughout time have rejected this gift and they see as the world sees and complains that one denarius for one hour's work is totally unfair. Investigative journalists, lawyers and intellectuals like Josh McDowell have set out to prove the gospels wrong. Many have met with Jesus and have had to turn their books around, with Josh McDowell changing his to become "Evidence for the Resurrection" and the sequel "More Evidence for the Resurrection". Meeting Jesus changes lives.

The disciples in the upper room after three years with Jesus and all of his ministries that they witnessed and the explanations we can read that Jesus gave these men and women were in a mess. They hadn't yet met the resurrected Jesus and his spirit. Two of them decided to go home and return to their normal life. They leave and walk to Emmaus, which is a seven mile hike from Jerusalem. On their journey, Jesus met up with them and explained all of the prophecy of the Old Testament being fulfilled in the days that had just passed after the crucifixion and the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We read this in Luke 24:13. Their meeting with Jesus changed their lives and they ran straight back to meet the others in the upper room.

Jesus died the worst death for us, heartbreaking for his father. As John puts it in 3:16, for God so loved the world that he gave his only son so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Wow, that's amazing. Jesus changes lives. Look up at the night sky and look at a star. That star started its journey to us before dinosaurs lived and it continues past us forever. A glimpse of an eternal lifespan. So what are we to do with this generous Jesus? Who wants to meet Jesus? Many of us rather like our car, for me it's our campervan. Loads of family fun. Do I tuck the Jesus that I've met in a cupboard in the van and bring him out on Sundays? Or shall I put him in the middle, between the kids on the back seat? That would've

been handy when they were young. Maybe I will allow him in the passenger seat. But it's best I put him in the driver's seat and follow him when he turns right down the road of generosity. Follow him when he turns left down the road of obedience. Follow him straight down the road of relationship. Come meet Jesus and be changed, because this is one of his gifts that we read in John 14:27:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” I had a black family day a few weeks ago, I had to take my son to A&E. We had a long wait in pain, anxiety and stress. I opened my bible on my phone and a reading popped up from Psalm 94:18-19. “When I said my foot is slipping, your love O’LORD supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.” Another generous gift given. All that is required is belief, faith and trust and then hope is ours. Worthy! Many don't feel worthy, I hear on the street and in life “I'm not good enough.” Especially from ex-servicemen when I'm out street pastoring, who I sometimes hear say they're not good enough because of what they've done. Well, look at this £10 note. Shiny and new. After it's been in my pocket, it's dirty and creased. It may have ketchup on it, if it's been at the game. Well, it's worth the same no matter how dirty and creased. We are like the £10 note, worth just as much as the new one because we are made new in relationship with Christ Jesus. I can imagine that when Christopher Wren finished St Paul's Cathedral he returned home to East Knoyle. He could've seen the first house he'd designed for a family who could've fallen on hard times. The house is a wreck, roof leaking, shutters crooked, floors rotten and damp. He pops to the local estate agent and buys it back. He completely restores the house with new oak flooring, new-fangled single-glazed windows and a new modern flushing WC. A complete makeover fit for a king.

This is just as Christ Jesus has done for us. He restores and rebuilds our souls. He's made it possible with the only man-made thing in heaven; the scars on his hands, feet and side. Some of us may like to recommit, ask again for him to come afresh into our lives and relieve our burdens, anxieties and share in our joy. Matthew 11:28-29: “Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Take my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle, humble in heart and you will find rest in your soul.”

In summary, the true wages from the rich landowner is the opportunity to come and be in a relationship. To receive peace and to carry burden. To help and give us hope when we feel we're slipping.

A prayer: Heavenly father, we thank you for the sacrifice you made through your son Jesus Christ. We know we are not worthy and we are sorry for our creases, our dirtiness and our need of restoration. But by your extraordinary grace, we who believe in your son now ask that his spirit be poured out into our lives. We ask that the door be opened and your son come through and sits, eats, and drinks with us forever more. Amen.

Collect: Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity: *O Lord, we beseech you mercifully to hear the prayers of your people who call upon you; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil them; 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, 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).

The Notices: We are now holding services in the building on Sundays at 8am and 9.30am, and are live streaming the 9.30 service. This Paper Service will continue for the moment and is generally available the week after the service.

- Tea and Chat & Bowls: Wed. Oct. 18th at 2pm, Church Hall and Church.
- Coffee and Questions: Wed. 27th Sept & Oct 25th at 11am, in Church Hall.
- Tea and Praise, for Harvest: Sunday October 1st at 3pm in Church.
- COGS Tots: 2nd Mondays.
- COGS Tinytots: Monday mornings.
- Messy Church: Second Sundays of the month.