

Sunday 27th September 2020

Today's worship has been prepared by Ann Burgoyne

God is with us and we will praise him,
God is with us and we will worship him,
God is with us and we will trust in him,
God is with us and although we are apart,
we will worship him together and give him the glory Amen

Suggested hymn All my hope on God is founded

Watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3LCGh02Vew>

Prayer

Loving God,

creator of all that is, all that was, and all that will be, we come to worship you and offer to you our praise and thanksgiving. For the beauty of our world from tiny microbe to magnificent mountain, for the diversity of life, we praise you. We are in awe of the gift you have given to us. You have provided for our every need. We praise you for your great love that has searched us out and enriched our lives. A love that knows no end and is constant through joy and sorrow, hope and fear, light and darkness, greatly you have blessed us and joyfully we worship you. As we praise you we know how much we have to be thankful for and how much we need to give our thanks for all that we have. Our lives are blessed with family and friends and your love surrounds us on all sides so no matter what we can be sure of your presence around and within us. We thank you for Jesus and the message of your love which he came to give all humankind, we thank you for the holy spirit who helps and guides us. Loving God we thank you for this opportunity to bring you our worship through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

The Lord's prayer

Readings

Psalm 25 v1-9

Philippians 2 v1-13

Reflection

Paul tells the Philippians to "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit and to look not to your own interests but to the interests of others"

It is often difficult to put others before yourself, especially if it is at some cost to yourself. But is it a bad thing to put others needs before our own? Does this include the needs of our planet too? We are all aware of the horrors of sweatshops and the workers whose lives mean little or nothing to those in control and the damage done to our planet in the rush to produce cheaper and cheaper clothing and goods but do we always stop to think about it when we are buying our latest bargain or throw away clothing. What does this say about us and our attitude to others?

Looking to others needs is a bit like sharing out a cake. When we are children, we watch carefully to see that no-one gets a bigger bit than us. As adults we should look to make sure no-one goes without even if that means a smaller piece for ourselves. Putting others needs first is not easy and there is a difference between needs and wants. I suspect we would all want to be a little better off but do we need more than we already have?

Paul tells us that Jesus of his own free will gave up all he had, how might we put aside our own wants in order to serve another's need? I don't think this has to be grand gestures of giving up all we have but rather taking time to consider what we are doing and how this might affect others, Buying that extra item to put in the food bank, taking time to talk to the stranger who is lost in a new town. Keeping in touch with those who are struggling to cope in these "different" times.

Psalm 25 tell us that God leads the humble in what is right and teaches them his way. In Philippians 2 13 Paul tell us God is at work in us. If we put our own needs and

ego first there is no room for anyone else's needs. It's not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less. We are all God's children and although we have a long way to go before we are truly one nation over all the earth God is at work in us and will help us.

Over the last few months as the pandemic has taken its toll on everyone, we have witnessed, and heard reported many acts of kindness where people who would not normally go out of their way to help others have gone above and beyond to help those who are in need. God is at work in us and will help us. Amen.

Suggested hymn Brother, sister let me serve you

Watch at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttW9oQ-yiuU>

To ponder

One day a professor asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. He handed out the question paper, with the text facing down as usual. Once he had handed them all out, he asked his students to turn the page and begin. To everyone's surprise, there were no questions, just a black dot in the centre of the page. The professor then said, I want you to write what you see there. The students confused, got started on this inexplicable task. At the end of the test the professor read each one of them aloud in front of all the students. All of them with no exceptions, described the black dot, trying to explain its position in the middle of the sheet. After all had been read, the classroom was silent, then the professor began to explain. I am not going to grade you on this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. No one wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot and the same happens in our lives. We always focus on the dark spots. Our life is a gift given to us by God with love and care, and we always have reasons to celebrate. However, we insist on focusing on the dark spots. The health issues that bother us, the lack of money, the complicated relationships with a family member, the disappointment with a friend etc. The dark spots, he continued, are very small compared to everything we have in our lives, but they are the ones that pollute our minds. Take your eyes away from the black spots in your life enjoy each one of your blessings, each moment that life gives you. Be happy and live life positively.

Prayer

Loving God

So often we want to pray for others.

But sometimes, God, we don't know how.

We can't remember names or numbers; other issues weigh heavily on our hearts.

Thank goodness, God, that you know what we mean when we pray.

So, we bring in this moment those names and faces, images and desires for others that pop in and out of our minds throughout the day:

the old lady at the bus stop who needed a hand up the step;

the young mum at the checkout trying to contain her four kids;

the chap up the road who's lost his dog and is calling for him;

the teachers struggling to understand the needs of those in their class;

the doctors who wants to give us more time but who simply can't;

the young families who can't make ends meet;

those without work, who can't find new jobs;

those helping people to find work, knowing it is an uphill struggle;

those with mental health issues and seeking help,

or who are afraid and ashamed to seek help,

or who are ignored and can't get help.

So, loving God, for all these people and countless others, we offer our prayers.

We know you do not need reminding,

but you do need willing workers – even us –

to help them know your love and have their needs met.

Loving God we pray for ourselves that we may have the courage to put others before ourselves. In the knowledge that you are with us showing us the way teaching us your ways through the example of Jesus in who's name we pray **Amen**.

Our offering to God

As we continue to worship apart but together, we pledge our commitment to sharing in the work of our church through our continued offering and by exploring new ways of living generously, and may we know your blessing on all we do. Amen

Blessing

May the blessing that is the knowledge of God, source of all being, the love of God discovered through Jesus and the inspiration of the Spirit which binds us together be with us on our journey this day and every day. Amen.