

## Worship at Home Service Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2023 with Revd Ian Forsyth

### Call to worship and gathering prayer:

Call to worship God welcomes you. God receives you with joy today. Come and receive from God all that you need and rejoice that you are one of God's beloved. **Amen**

Living God, we thank you for your kindness towards us. Give us grateful hearts, and direct us in ways we can share your kindness.

**Amen**

**StF 611** – Brother, sister, let me be your servant.

Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace, to let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey and companions on the road; we are here to help each other, walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you, in the night-time of your fear; I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you; I will share your joy and sorrow, till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven, we shall find such harmony, born of all we've known together, of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, sister let me serve you, let me be as Christ to you; pray that I may have the grace, to let you be my servant too.

### Bible readings

Psalms 89.1-4, 15-18; Romans 6.12-23; Matthew 10.40-42

### Prayers of thanksgiving

God, in your Son our Lord, you extend your welcome to all nations.

You are the universal God. Christ Jesus, you opened the kingdom of God to all, even those excluded by deed or creed from sacred rites and places. Holy Spirit, your indwelling is a welcome that embraces us in belonging. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in word and deed,

trinity of welcome in realms above and below, we thank and praise you for the everlasting arms outstretched to welcome us, to enfold us, to catch us when we fall; and for the heart that overflows with love and acceptance. Help us to see others with your eyes, to love with your heart, and to welcome with your arms, in your holy name. **Amen.**

### Prayers of intercession

We pray for those on the fringes of society; for those who feel rejected; for those who are overlooked; for those whom others avoid. May they know they are welcome in your kingdom.

**May they know the welcome of your love.**

We pray for those who are lonely. May they know they are welcome in your kingdom.

**May they know the welcome of your love.**

We pray for those in prison; especially those kept in isolation. May they know they are welcome in your kingdom.

**May they know the welcome of your love.**

We pray for children excluded from school; for their families and those with responsibility for their education. May they know they are welcome in your kingdom.

**May they know the welcome of your love.**

Loving God, as you welcome us, may we welcome others with warmth and steadfast love. **Amen. The Lord's Prayer**

### Time to reflect:

What the world needs now?

What does the world need now? Just recently I have been sorting out my old record collection before we moved house a few weeks ago, and I was reminded of the lyrics of a song.

*What the world needs now is love, sweet love  
It's the only thing that there's just too little of  
What the world needs now is love, sweet love  
No not just for some, but for everyone.*

So, what does the world need right now? This is a question for us to reflect on today, think about what would your answer be?

In the Bible Matthew 10 40-42 says "We are intimately linked in this harvest work. Anyone who accepts what you do, accepts me,

the One who sent you. Anyone who accepts what I do accepts my Father, who sent me. Accepting a messenger of God is as good as being God's messenger. Accepting someone's help is as good as giving someone help. This is a large work I've called you into, but don't be overwhelmed by it. It's best to start small. Give a cool cup of water to someone who is thirsty, for instance. The smallest act of giving or receiving makes you a true apprentice. You won't lose out on a thing."

There are people in our churches and communities who are lonely or isolated and would appreciate contact from people in the Church. How do people know we are Christians particularly those who do not attend Church? The answer John gives is this. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples." Through our love and acts of kindness for others we can share Jesus.

Some twenty years ago I offered to help someone move house. After finishing up and saying our goodbyes, he said you will get your reward in heaven. I was happy to help him move house, but it was lovely to be thanked. In Matthew 25 v 40 Jesus says, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!' These verses in Matthew hints at the reward for us in heaven as we are His followers and trust in Him.

Recently I thanked someone for all they did, and their reaction was quite surprising as they said they had never been thanked in all their lives. Many people live in isolation and become lonely. Some churches are opening their doors inviting people in for cake and a conversation and they have realised that people appreciate the opportunity to talk to others. People who attend an activity at Church from different backgrounds feel they are being listened to and helped in ways they had not experienced before. These Churches have taken a step of faith and been willing to cast their net on the other side to try something new.

These verses come at the end of the 'Sermon of the Mount' where Jesus is sending out his disciples and followers to carry out acts of kindness to all they meet.

The reference to offering cold water was seen as a very kind gesture in the east then, to give someone a cup of cold water is to serve that person, as God would have us do.

I can remember in a previous Church we had someone come into the church and explain they could not pay their electricity bill, as a church we offered a small amount of money to help them out. This person became very emotional and said he had never come into a church and been helped in such a practical way. On another occasion just recently, I spoke to someone who had attended a Methodist Church in Northampton and because of the welcome he said he wanted to make this church his home having only been here for two weeks, having moved to be near his grandchildren.

We can all show kindness to others, even giving the smallest gift, given with the right motive, does not go unnoticed.

### **StF 563 – O Jesus I have promised.**

O Jesus, I have promised, to serve thee to the end; Be thou forever near me, My Master and my friend;

I shall not fear the battle, If thou art by my side,

Nor wander from the pathway, if thou wilt be my guide.

O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near: I see the sights that dazzle, The tempting sounds I hear.

My foes are ever near me, around me and within; But, Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.

O let me hear thee speaking, in accents clear and still, Above the storms of passion, The murmurs of self-will. O speak to reassure me, To hasten or control; O speak, and make me listen, Thou guardian of my soul.

O Jesus, thou hast promised, to all who follow thee, that where thou art in glory, There shall thy servant be. And, Jesus, I have promised, to serve thee to the end; O give me grace to follow, My Master and my friend.

### **Closing Prayer for all ages:**

Father God, you have promised to give us the things that we need. Help us to be generous to everyone we meet, so people will know of your kindness. **Amen.**