

Fleet URC & Beacon Hill URC

You are invited to join in the words in bold type throughout the service

Opening music: Will you come and follow me (Kelvingrove)
https://www.smallchurchmusic.com/Song_Display-New.php?SID=1161

Call to worship

Raise your voices in response to God's goodness.

We praise you, O Lord, for all the blessings you have given us.

Lift your hearts in sweet surrender to God's mercy.

We thank you, O Lord, for hearing the prayers of our hearts.

God is good; Praise be to God!

The love and mercy of God never fails. AMEN.

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/8218/new-worship-connection-june-18-2017>

Prayers of adoration, confession and Lord's prayer

The glory is yours, God, Creator,

life breather,

giver of such a good creation,

full of beauty, sustaining our life.

We give thanks to you,

for our life, our relationships, our loves and our hope,

for your image obscured but still visible in humankind.

The glory is yours, God, Renewer,

making all things new.

We give thanks to you for the living promise of New Jerusalem,

for new heaven and new earth,

for relationships recreated, for the broken mended and tears wiped away.

The glory is yours, God, in Jesus Christ,

crucified and raised.

We give thanks to you for new life already begun,

for the promise alive and your image made clear,

for all that is, now being changed by love's victory.

Peter Trow

Forgive us, for the wasted moment spent selfishly or just filling time; for the hurtful moments caused by our words or actions;

for the thoughtless moments lacking in love;

for the destructive moments when we let our anger rip;

for the missed moments frozen by hesitation and doubt.

Help us now and every moment to try to live as Jesus lived, fully present, fully human, full of love.

Terry Oakley

God, we praise you for your love

For the assurance of your forgiveness, And the promise of wholeness.

Amen

Jan Berry

These things we ask in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who taught us when we pray, to say: Our Father...

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom,

the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever.

Amen.

[Hymn](#)

Love divine, all loves excelling,

Sung by The Cambridge Singers, City of London Sinfonia, Conductor John Rutter. Organ John Scott
(*Tune: Hyfrydol*)

1. Love divine, all loves excelling,
joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling;
all thy faithful mercies crown!

Jesus thou art all compassion,
pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation;
enter every trembling heart.

2. Come, Almighty to deliver,
let us all thy life receive;
suddenly return and never,
never more thy temples leave.
Thee we would be always blessing,
serve thee as thy hosts above,
pray and praise thee without ceasing,
glory in thy perfect love.

3. Finish, then, thy new creation;
pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation
perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory,
till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee,
lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Reading

Matthew 9: 35 – 10: 8

read by Moira Bamfield

And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; pray therefore the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

And he called to him his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal every disease and every infirmity.

The names of the twelve disciples are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James, the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; |Simon from Canaan, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him.

These twelve disciples Jesus sent out, charging them, "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, but rather go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And preach as you go, saying, "Thy kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons. You received without pay, give without pay."

Meditation

Great compassion

In a world of deep desperation,
how shall we speak of your great compassion?
How shall we reach out to touch your healing cloak?

In a world where too many die young,
how shall we bring new hope and life?
How shall we see each human being with your gracious eyes?

In a world drowning in words and ideas,
facts and opinions, spin and slander,
how shall we show you as the shepherd king,
seeking out the lost, binding up their wounds,
carrying them on your shoulders,
leading them to safety?

Lord, call your people to action,
to the hard work of harvesting,
the costly business of mending lives,
opening eyes, touching wounds,
pointing to your kingdom,
where the harassed find help,
the lost find hope,
the sick find love.

Copyright: Terry Hinks

Praying the Way 2018

Reading:

Romans 5: 1 – 8

read by Moray Henderson

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,
²through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope
of sharing the glory of God. ³And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that
suffering produces endurance, ⁴and endurance produces character, and character produces hope,

⁵and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷Indeed, rarely will anyone die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person someone might actually dare to die. ⁸But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Reflection

I hope you will forgive me if I consider a theme for this time of reflection that focuses mainly on just one verse. It's been an introspective week! I'd like to share my thoughts with you on the verse in the Matthew reading that spoke strongly to me and transfixed me when I read it:

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus most certainly drew large crowds because of his teaching, preaching, and healing. Anyone who tours the countryside as Jesus was doing and saying all that he did would obviously draw a crowd. But rather than thinking how wonderful it was that all those people were coming in crowds to hear and see him, he stood back and he saw the problems those people coming to see and hear him were experiencing every day. He saw harassed, and helpless people.

And it made me think of what he did not do – he didn't look at the crowds, the individuals gathering to see and hear him & only think about what they were doing badly or wrong; he didn't show disappointment or mock them. No, he looked on them with compassion. He completely focused on those others & cared about and for them.

And it made me stop and think and consider how hard it can be to see situations and people in the world and not bring learned or deeply embedded beliefs & biases to the surface, no matter how open minded I think I am. If I looked at that crowd of people Jesus looked upon that day, would I have even a chance of seeing them as compassionately as he did?

In prayer and reflection this week I have come to recognise that what has sparked this train of thought is the reaction to the death of George Floyd and seeing the crowds of people protesting in America and the UK. I've had to pause and wrestle with my feelings, really debate with myself whether stereotypes, hidden biases and dare I say, prejudice, have affected my varying responses to the protests by groups that Jesus would certainly have looked at with compassion and recognised that they represent harassed and helpless people in a different time and a different place. How can one verse leap off the page and do that? Perhaps because that is what walking with Jesus does.

I do believe the compassion of Jesus is the crucial point of this passage. It is a turning point. In the verse before, Matthew summarized what had been happening. In the one after, he is indicating what is to come. What came before and what is to come all hinges on the compassion of Jesus. It is out of his compassion that Jesus demonstrates the work he expects of his disciples. The point that Matthew is making in this passage is the importance of having a heart of compassion.

Compassion - it's a strange word, isn't it? I think I've confused or misused it at times in the past, thinking of it more as pity, which has quite negative connotations in its daily use these days, almost a sentiment that degrades a person, a sense of feeling sorry for people.

But these last few weeks I've come to understand better what real compassion is: even the way it sounds as you say it has a deep sense of emotion, of warmth and feeling, that strikes a chord in my heart. To allow yourself to find a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another person or people who are stricken by misfortune, as well as a strong desire to support them, without judgement. Am I very compassionate when it is convenient or almost impossible not to be or can I be truly moved to compassion as Christ was moved to compassion? That's challenging for me; potentially for each of us.

Prayers of Intercession & concern

Lord, we bring to you today some of the ordinary, unspectacular things which have been happening around us this week, but which have affected people deeply.

We bring to you today all those who have been victims of crime this week, and feel angry or afraid.

Lord, in you we trust **we look to you for help**

We bring to you all those who have had major arguments this week and don't know how to get back to safety.

Lord, in you we trust **we look to you for help**

We bring to you today all those who have had bad news this week and don't know how they will cope.

Lord, in you we trust **we look to you for help**

We bring to you today all those who have tried very hard to do something this week but have not been able to achieve it.

Lord, in you we trust **we look to you for help**

We bring to you today our family and our friends, and ask for your blessing on them, wherever they are, and whatever they need.

Lord, in you we trust **we look to you for help**

We bring to you today our own concerns, our hopes and fears, our plans and problems, and in a silent moment we tell you what they are and why they matter to us.....

Lord, in you we trust **we look to you for help**

Amen

Closing Prayer & Blessing

Lift your hearts to heaven
and receive the eternal gift of peace

Keep your feet on the ground
and walk with those who need God's love

Rejoice this day !

You are loved by God
You are held by God

You are blessed by God

Today and for evermore

© Rachel Poolman

The blessing of God Father, Son and Holy Spirit Be with you.

Receive gladly God's blessing

And let it spill over into the lives of those you meet.

Amen