Worship - Sunday 1st November 2020

Calling Us to Encourage

Good morning everyone, and welcome to worship with the churches of Fleet URC and Beacon Hill URC. My name is Ruth Dillon and I am the minister of Fleet URC and Beacon Hill URC and I shall be leading us in worship. You are all most welcome.

Today we shall be having a live Zoom service, and this will be recorded then uploaded to YouTube and also on Twilio.

We shall also be having our monthly communion service. Please make sure you have your bread and wine ready at the appropriate point in the service.

I know I have often suggested that we are all Saints in the making; however today is the day that the churches celebrate All Saints’ Day, when we remember those who have gone before us, especially in faith. Today’s service will also confirm our discipleship calling, that is to urge and encourage people whose faith may be faltering through illness, grief, unemployment, addiction… in fact the list is endless. We are privileged to welcome Nigel Poole to this service and we shall be chatting about his role in the chaplaincy at Frimley Hospital and at Aldershot Medical centre, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.

Our opening words this morning are taken from Psalm 43:

*Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause*

 *against an ungodly people:*

*from those who are deceitful and*

*unjust deliver me!*

*For you are the God in whom I take refuge.*

*why have you cast me off?*

*Why must I walk about mournfully because of the oppression of the enemy?*

*O send out your light and your truth;*

*let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.*

*Then I will go to the altar of God,*

*to God my exceeding joy;*

*and I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.*

*Why are you cast down,*

*O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?*

*Hope in God;*

*for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.*

Let us pause and put aside the distraction of the moment,

To be still before our God

To abide in the shadow of God

To be with the God in whom we trust.

**Opening music** Organ Music

 Nessie Black, Fleet URC

**Call to worship**

Leader We are gathered here today around your Word.
 God, your Word lives:

 it breathes, it encourages, it pleads.
 It urges us towards love and greater love.

**All As we listen to your Word today,
 may we hear the words in our hearts
 that call us towards love of other,**

 **self and stranger.**

Leader Your Word is an invitation towards an ever greater

 hospitality.
**All And so, we stand, supported in the living Word**

 **that always welcomes. Amen**.

**Prayers of Adoration, confession and Lord’s Prayer**

Now let us come to God in Prayer and Praise this morning, but also come seeking God’s forgiveness for things that we may or may not have done this week.

Mysterious God,

who transcends time and space,

we know that in coming towards you,
you came towards us first.

So we join together and say

**May your Holy name be praised.**

You called us by name,
bringing us deeper into you, into community, into love.

Through Jesus who is our Christ and Redeemer

Our discipleship flourishes as we learn to love,

to encourage and befriend your people

So we join together and say

**May your Holy name be praised**

We thank you for the gift of your presence,
your mystery, your faithfulness, your abundant love for us.

God of justice,
for Justice is your name,

in the midst of our praise,

and recognising that you call us by our names,

names that give identity and purpose

We have often left justice at the door –
preferring words to action.

Preferring compliancy to compassion

Preferring laziness to loving.

O God, we have done wrong.
May we pick up justice,
and hold it in our hands as we turn back to you.

*In the silence Lord, we bring our own private prayers before you, seeking your words of encouragement and forgiveness*

*Silence*

God in whom we live and move and have our being,

Your tenderness and mercy surrounding us,

and making us whole again -

restored, forgiven and free.

In your sight we are new creations,

full of potential and vessels of love.

Let us be

the action you desire,

the wisdom you crave for

And the faithfulness you deserve.

You say to each one of us, *your sins are truly forgiven,*

yet you also say these words, *come now and follow me.*

And now let us say the prayer that Jesus taught his friends to say

**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.**

**Readings** Now we shall hear today’s readings, from Colin and Liz who attend Fleet URC. The readings are both from the New Testament **Matthew 23: 1-12 and 1 Thessalonians 2:9-13.**

**Matthew 23: 1-12**

**1** Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, **2** "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; **3** therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. **4** They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. **5** They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. **6** They love to have the place of honour at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, **7** and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi.

**8** But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students. **9** And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father—the one in heaven. **10** Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah. **11** The greatest among you will be your servant. **12** All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

**1 Thessalonians 2:9-13**

**9** You remember our labour and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. **10** You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers.

**11** As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, **12** urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory. **13** We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers.

**Reflection …….. Calling us to urge and encourage.**

Informal Interview with Nigel Poole, Chaplain at Frimley Hospital and at Aldershot Medical centre…….

Questions Nigel and I will be considering:

* What role has the ‘chaplaincy’ played during the coronavirus pandemic?
* How does the ‘chaplaincy’ encourage people in their time of anxiety and despair?
* Where have you encountered God during the coronavirus pandemic?

**Prayer (said together)**

**God who made us all –
who made us all unique,
unrepeatable, brilliant and brave –
help us to be brave when we’re tired,
and help us to be kind when we’re lazy.
Help us to do things for each other,
so that we can remind each other
of the brilliant ways you made us.
Amen.**

**Hymn: Brother, sister let me serve you**

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.  ©Words and music Richard Gillard

**Communion**  *Invitation*

Come, just as you are - to this table.

For this is the table of Promise.

Where lives that are full of broken promises and hurt

Are restored by Gods promise of commitment.

Come, just as you are - to this table

For this is the table of Hope

Where lives that are full of desperation and sorrow

Are restored by God’s promise of Hope

Come, just you are - to this table

For this is the table of Love

Where lives that only know fear and hatred

Can be moulded and restored by God’s promise of Love

Come, just as you are - to this table

All who are seeking God’s promise of

love, hope and restoration

 Come, just as you are.

*Communion Story*

Jesus was the guest at many tables.

He dined with the hurting, the doubters

the strong and the weak;

Yet he always broke bread and shared a meal with them.

At one meal in particular,

he broke the bread, and said

*“This is my body. It is broken for you*

*Do this to remember me”*

Then he took a cup of wine and said

 “*This is the new relationship with God*

 *made possible because of my death*

 *Drink this all of you, to remember me”*

**Prayers of intercession**

*As we recall the Lord’s table we are mindful of the pain and difficulties in our world today.*

*We pray for God’s people*

*and bring our concerns to God*.

There is also a response. When I say

‘Lord in your mercy’, can you respond by saying

**hear our prayer.**

Today, we pray for all who feel isolated.
for people who feel lonely

For people who are needing to feel loved.

Lord in your mercy … **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all who feel disappointed

People who have experienced hospital cancellations,

People whose trust has been manipulated

People whose persistent questions

have been answered by silence.

Lord in your mercy.. **hear our prayer.**

We pray for people who yearn to be accepted

People who face rejection

People who face abuse

People who face suffering
**Lord in your mercy hear our prayer. Amen.**

*In the silence we offer our own private prayers to you.*

Jesus Christ, you live in us today.

Guard us and heal us with your balm of Gilead.

Restore us and strengthen your people we pray

In Jesus name, **Amen**

**Communion** *Thanksgiving*

God of Promise

We acknowledge your presence in our lives

God of Hope

We prepare our hearts for new experiences

God of Love

We thank you for your love shown to us in Jesus Christ

Gracious God,

Whose love created our world

We bring you our gratitude and praise

Voices strong, and hearts full of love for you.

And you have prepared a table for us

A feast - full of promise, hope and love.

A feast - full of forgiveness, healing and blessing

We thank you for the continuing promise of love and truth.

We thank you for this moment in time and space

We thank you for our freedom to worship.

God of Promise

Send your Holy Spirit upon these gifts

Be with us as we eat this bread and drink this wine.

Enable us to truly believe in your promise

of Hope for all humanity.

Where Justice is the lifeline of Hope;

Hope is discovered through Love

And Love is the binding covenant we have with you.

Here is the Promise of God

Seen in the gracious gift of Jesus

Here is the Love of God

Seen in bread broken and wine shared.

Here is the Hope of God

 Seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ ©Ruth Dillon 2006

**Closing prayer**

May the Grace of God enrich you.
May the Love of Jesus love enfold you.
May the Dynamic Spirit lift you with hope and promise,
**until the time approaches when we see you face to face.**

**Blessing**

**May the blessing of God that is truly beyond all human understanding be with us now and forever more. Amen**

**Closing music Organ Music Nessie Black, Fleet URC**

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