



Church Alive

Worship

For Sunday 16th August



Welcome to our Church Alive service. Whilst we are not all together in church, we are together in spirit. We have tried to adapt our normal service from screen to paper and have provided links to music where possible if you would like to sing. *A big thank you to Debbie Thomson for recording the songs for us. These can be found on our YouTube channel with the links under the title – just hover and click on it*

Today in our Gospel story we will hear a Canaanite woman come and seek out Jesus asking Him to heal her daughter. Initially it looks like she will be ignored, yet she is determined. As she is getting on their nerves the disciples ask Jesus to send her away. It must have taken great courage to persist, even beg, not for herself but for mercy for her ill child. When someone ignores us, tells us to go away without taking any notice of how we are feeling, how does it feel?

Finally, because of her evident strong faith Jesus reacts and the child is healed.

Sometimes, however strong our faith we can struggle and feel forgotten: this event shows Jesus reaches out to all people and does not confine His care and love to one group more than to another. It also teaches us never to give up calling out to Him in our need, for He will give us an answer.

Opening Song: Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us

<https://youtu.be/a9lXB3vS-jc>

Lord Jesus Christ, You have come to us
You are one with us, Mary's Son.
Cleansing our souls from all their sin
Pouring Your love and goodness in
Jesus our love for You we sing,
Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ now and every day
Teach us how to pray, Son of God.
You have commanded us to do
This In remembrance Lord of You
Into our lives, Your power breaks through,
Living Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us
Born as one with us, Mary's Son.
Led out to die on Calvary,
risen from death to set us free,
living Lord Jesus help us see
You are Lord.

Lord Jesus Christ, I would come to You
Live my life for You, Son of God.
All Your commands I know are true,
Your many gifts will make me new,
Into my life, Your power breaks through,
Living Lord;



Thanksgiving What would you like to say thank you to God for today and this week?

Take a moment to say thank you now.

Opening Prayer: *If you are able, and it is safe to do so, light a candle at this point*

Lord, we light this candle,
to remind us that you are the light of the world.
As we gather together in spirit, make our voices
ready to sing your praise;
our hearts open to receive your love
and our minds alive to your Spirit.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.



We seek God's healing and forgiveness:

Lord God, I'm sorry for the times I fail to recognise the needs of others and only think of myself.
Father forgive.

I'm sorry for the times I fail to trust in you and cease to persevere in prayer.
Father forgive.

Lord, I pray that you will forgive my times of prejudice and when I am dismissive to those in need, teach me to help bring others to you at all times.
Amen.

We hear words assuring us of God's forgiveness:

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins,
and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Bible Reading - Matthew 15: 21-28 'Jesus and the Canaanite woman'

²¹ Jesus left that place and went off to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. ²² A Canaanite woman who lived in that region came to him. "Son of David!" she cried out. "Have mercy on me, sir! My daughter has a demon and is in a terrible condition."

²³ But Jesus did not say a word to her. His disciples came to him and begged him, "Send her away! She is following us and making all this noise!"

²⁴ Then Jesus replied, "I have been sent only to the lost sheep of the people of Israel."

²⁵ At this the woman came and fell at his feet. "Help me, sir!" she said.

²⁶ Jesus answered, "It isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

²⁷ "That's true, sir," she answered, "but even the dogs eat the leftovers that fall from their masters' table."

²⁸ So Jesus answered her, "You are a woman of great faith! What you want will be done for you." And at that very moment her daughter was healed.

Introducing the Theme & Learning Spaces by Bethea Alexander

Not being able to break out into our learning spaces, here are a few thoughts about the theme for today. For young people you can use the Children's and Youth sheets that are being sent out separately.

When you read this passage what was your first thought? Were you a little shocked when you noticed how Jesus responds to the woman? What Jesus does here is shocking but not, perhaps, in the way we first perceive it.

Jesus is walking with his disciples when a female, who is not Jewish, speaks to him. Culturally* it was (and in some places still is) inappropriate for male and female strangers to speak to each other. Combine this with the fact that (at this point) the disciples see Jesus as exclusively belonging to the Jews, and you can hear their outrage.

Is there anything in our culture that the disciples outrage reminds you of?

Jesus engages the woman in conversation in front of his disciples and he holds up a mirror to their prejudice through his choice of words. He breaks cultural barriers by speaking to the woman, thus he honours her, even before he has healed her daughter. The back and forth of their conversation showcases her faith and intelligence (Jesus does this on purpose). And so she moves in the perception of the disciples from a hated other, to an example of great faith to be lauded and to go down in history. Then her faith is justified by Jesus granting her request.

Are there situations today where Jesus may be challenging us to let go of our prejudices? How might we make opportunities to connect kindly with people who we see as completely different to us?

(*I'm pulling the cultural perspective here out from "Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes" by K Bailey)

All age creative



Compare the Bible story with modern life experience of those who seem different, think about people you know who have obvious differences.
e.g. from another country, speaks a different language, uses a mobility aid.

What is it like to listen and try to understand from another person's perspective?

Draw a picture or write a prayer to say thank you to God for making people so diverse and that there is much we can learn from one another.

Picture Reflection – prepared by Brenda



Listen and understand: **Matthew 15: 21-28**

- Spend a few minutes with the image...
- Imagine you are the dog. How do you feel?
- Recall when have you experienced life from the viewpoint of an outsider?
- Who would be placed as outsiders in our society today?
- How can we, as a church community, commit to listening to those who are 'outsiders'?
- What would we gain by listening and befriending 'outsiders'?

Song: Jesus Christ is waiting

<https://youtu.be/s5Fb9dAAgu0>

Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the streets;
No one is his neighbour, all alone he eats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am lonely too.
Make me, friend or stranger, fit to wait on you

Jesus Christ is raging, raging in the streets,
Where injustice spirals and real hope retreats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I am angry too.
In the Kingdom's causes let me rage with you.

Jesus Christ is healing, healing in the streets;
Curing those who suffer, touching those he greets.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I have pity too.
Let my care be active, healing just like you.

Jesus Christ is dancing, dancing in the streets,
Where each sign of hatred He, with love, defeats.
Listen, Lord Jesus, I should triumph too.
On suspicion's graveyard let me dance with you.

Jesus Christ is calling, calling in the streets,
"Who will join my journey? I will guide their feet."
Listen, Lord Jesus, let my fears be few.
Walk one step before me; I will follow you.

O Lord, Hear Our Prayers: *Here are a few suggested topics for you to pray about. If you have specific prayers you would like included in future weeks then do send them to Linda and she will add them in.*

We pray for....

God's world: We pray for places where intentional and accidental misuse of resources, uprising and violence have led to brokenness, injustice and inequality, especially praying for the people of Lebanon and the Middle East.

Our communities: We pray for this parish of West End, Townhill and Harefield. For the communities where we live, play, and work. Jesus cared for people of different ethnicities and cultures, may we be open-hearted in our attitudes, thoughts and speech, so sharing Jesus' inclusive love with all.

God's church: We pray for the global Church, for all who witness and worship in Jesus' name: Bless this Your church of St James', draw others to come and see and know You. Grant Vicky and family refreshment and fun on their holiday, and through our own lives may we be ready to step out in service and mission.

All who are sick: We offer prayers for all who are struggling with frailty and illness. Lord of life, bless with peace of body and mind everyone who calls on Your name, and send Your mercy on all whose earthly life is drawing to a close.

For those who have died: may they rest in peace and rise in glory.
Comfort those who mourn and all unable to attend funerals to say their farewells because of the restrictions in place, not forgetting all whose world has changed immeasurably following the death of a loved one.

Thanksgiving: Lord, we give thanks that You are always there for us and never send us away. Strengthen our faith, teach us to be patient and yet persistent in discovering Your will for our lives, grant us Your comfort and hope for the future.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

We say 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 for ever. **Amen**

Song: In Christ Alone My Hope is Found
<https://youtu.be/jzOxLP1wyy4>

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here, in the love of Christ, I stand.

In Christ alone, who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones he came to save
'Til on that cross, as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin, on him, was laid
Here, in the death of Christ, I live.

There in the ground, his body lay
Light of the world, by darkness, slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave, he rose again
And as he stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am his and he is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Could ever pluck me from his hand
'Til he returns or calls me home
Here, in the power of Christ, I stand.

Sending out prayer: [say together]

**We go out today, renewed and strengthened in faith
Ready to serve you, Lord,
And find you in the people we meet.
We go out to follow you, and our hearts.
Lead us, good Lord.
May we go out with Your blessing, Lord,
Ever ready to share Your message of Good News
Amen**

The Peace:

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord
In the name of Christ, Amen.