



Church Alive Worship for Sunday 23rd 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*

Taking the twelve disciples a long way north, Jesus wants to know if they have understood who he is yet. In the shadow of empire, they declare him to be king, and he assures them that this confession will help them break the grip of that empire on them and others.

Opening Song: Open The Eyes of My Heart Lord
https://youtu.be/N4_hEtENvfw

Open the eyes of my heart, Lord
Open the eyes of my heart
I want to see You
I want to see You *Repeat*

*To see You high and lifted up
Shinin' in the light of Your glory
Pour out Your power and love
As we sing holy, holy, holy*

Repeat through again and then verse twice only



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

We come to God as one from whom no secrets are hidden, to ask for his forgiveness and peace.

Lord, thank you that you are always ready to forgive us when we trust you enough to confess our sins to you, even when we feel we don't deserve it.

Lord have mercy.

Forgive us for the times when just because other people's stories are different to ours we don't always want to believe it, when we only live our own story, not seeing the bigger picture.

Christ have mercy

Forgive us for the times we see you as less than the Son of God, and our whole outlook on life needs a good dose of your love and understanding.

Lord have mercy

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 16:13-20, **Peter's Declaration about Jesus**, Good News Translation (GNT).

¹³ Jesus went to the territory near the town of Caesarea Philippi, where he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

¹⁴ "Some say John the Baptist," they answered. "Others say Elijah, while others say Jeremiah or some other prophet."

¹⁵ "What about you?" he asked them. "Who do you say I am?"

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

¹⁷ "Good for you, Simon son of John!" answered Jesus. "For this truth did not come to you from any human being, but it was given to you directly by my Father in heaven. ¹⁸ And so I tell you, Peter: you are a rock, and on this rock foundation I will build my church, and not even death will ever be able to overcome it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of heaven; what you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and what you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven."

²⁰ Then Jesus ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

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

Jesus was taking his disciples to the city of Caesarea Philippi, the seat of the Roman rule in that part of the world. Politically, Caesar was recognised as 'Lord' of the Roman Empire and Philip, Herod the Great's son was the local puppet king who had built the city.

What happened on that road to Caesarea Philippi was a turning point in Jesus' ministry - he knew that from then on he would be looking towards Jerusalem. It was important that his friends understood who he really was in order that they could be prepared for what was ahead.

Peter's declaration that Jesus was the Messiah would be a blessing for them all, but it would also carry the responsibility of building the Church for the future.

What secular empires today seek our allegiance?

What do people say about Jesus in our world today?

How would we respond to the question, 'Who is Jesus'?

All Age Creative – The Rock – to help remember that Jesus is the rock we can build our lives on



You will need: a rock, felt tip pens.

Choose a rock or stone from your garden, and decorate it (you could include a reference to Matthew 16.18 as a reminder). Finish with a brief spoken prayer, asking Jesus to help you all live in a way that shows you trust him. You might like to use this one:

Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity to bring my prayers and concerns to you. Please bless me and help me to remember that you are the solid rock we can build our lives on. Amen.

Now leave your stone somewhere you will see it often, to remind you to trust Jesus and live by his story.

Picture Reflection – prepared by Brenda



Spend a few minutes with this image....

What feelings does this picture stir up in you?

How might this image represent institutions that we can put our trust in?

How has our trust been overshadowed?

Reflect on how God's kingdom is more trustworthy?

What role does God have for us in his Kingdom?

Song: Father Hear The Prayer We Offer
<https://youtu.be/Bj-mwx16bB8>

1. Father, hear the prayer we offer:
not for ease that prayer shall be,
but for strength, that we may ever
live our lives courageously.

2. Not for ever in green pastures
do we ask our way to be;
but the steep and rugged pathway
may we tread rejoicingly.

3. Not forever by still waters
would we idly rest and stay;
but would smite the living fountains
from the rocks along our way.

4. Be our strength in hours of weakness,
in our wanderings be our Guide;
through endeavour, failure, danger,
Father, be thou at our side

O Lord, Hear Our Prayers *Here are a few suggested pics 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...

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 all those who on holiday at this time 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: O Worship The Lord In The Beauty of Holiness
<https://youtu.be/ukRLJyRQW6Y>

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
Bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his Name!

Low at his feet lay thy burden of carefulness,
high on his heart he will bear it for thee,
and comfort thy sorrows, and answer thy prayerfulness,
guiding thy steps as may best for thee be.

Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness
of the poor wealth thou wouldst reckon as thine;
for truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,
these are the offerings to lay on his shrine.

These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,
he will accept for the Name that is dear;
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,
trust for our trembling and hope for our fear.

O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness!
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his Name!

Sending Out Prayer

**Through our words and actions, make us
Ready to take every opportunity
Under your protection and guidance.
Send us out to share your story
The good news for all people.
Amen.**

The Peace

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

