

**Sunday 30th August, service led by Nicola Grieves:
'Take up your cross'**

Welcome

Call to Worship

(based on Exodus 3:1-15; Matthew 16:21-28)

Listen! God is calling!
Can you hear it?
Calling us to turn away from self-interest;
to put down the things that distract us,
to take up our cross
and follow.
Can you hear it?

Gathering prayer :Approach to God

Creator God,
You have created all things good.
Nothing is beyond Your reach
or Your redemption.
You are the God of the whole universe,
of all of creation
and yet You are mindful of us.
You call on us to reveal Your presence
and to speak of Your faithfulness
from generation to generation.
Wherever we gather, You are there.
You were there before we arrived
and will be there when we leave.
Your presence makes every space a sacred space.
You delight in our praise
and rejoice in all Your people who find a way
to acknowledge Your presence
in our world and in our lives.
May our worship bring us back to You
and increase our awareness of Your beating heart
at the centre of life,
calming our fears and restoring our souls,
knowing ourselves beloved of God,
united with all Your creatures in heaven and on earth

Through the power of Your Holy Spirit,
move within us and among us as we worship.
Open our eyes to Your presence;
open our ears to Your call,
open our hearts to one another.
And then send us back out into the world,
to live and work as Your faithful disciples.

In the name of Jesus Christ,
Amen.

Hymn Be still for the presence of the Lord

Psalm 105:1-6 Reflection

ALL: Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done.

Leader: Is there a nation that is on your heart?

A place where you would like to see God's name proclaimed?

[pause]

"Let's mention these to God in our hearts

ALL: Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.

Leader: What are some of God's wonderful acts?

Can you think of one to mention as praise to him?

[pause]

"Let's mention these to God in our hearts"

ALL: Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Leader: Do you know someone who is seeking God at the moment?

Someone you would love to see rejoicing?

[pause]

"Let's mention these to God in our hearts "

ALL: Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

Leader: Is there a situation where you need God's strength?

Where you need to remember to look to the Lord for help?

[pause]

Let's speak these situations out loud together as a prayer _____

All: Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

Leader: Can you remember a miracle God has done?

In your own life or in history?

[pause]

"Let's mention these to God in our hearts "

Leader: Let's say the last verse together to one another, reminding each other that we are chosen servants:

All: you his servants, the descendants of Abraham, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

Amen

Prayers and Lord's Prayer

In everything, O God, may we bring our thanks to You.
In our darkness and questioning,
in our relief and rejoicing.
In the assurance that You hold us in love,
may we be able to serve others,
holding out hope for a world in fear.
May we be conscious of Your divine footprint matching ours
as we travel through these uncertain days,
bringing moments of joy and calm.
God in everyday, we see You:
In the beauty of a flower
In the smile of a child
In the dedication of a partner
In the selfless giving of a carer.
Lord, as You confront us in the mundane with signs of the divine,
may we raise our thanks to You.

When we find it hard to love,
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

When we find it hard to give,
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

When we find it hard to live,
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

Walk with us on stony paths that hurt our feet.
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

Walk with us up steep and breathless hills.
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

Walk with us through soaking rain and chilling wind.
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

And when we cannot walk,
when too tired, too hurt, too lost, too sad to even try,
stay with us awhile,
until our courage returns,
our hurts are healed,
and in your love our spirits lifted,
that we may continue our journey with you.
Come Lord Jesus,
Walk with us.

As our saviour taught us so we pray:
our father who art in heaven.....

Bible Reading Exodus 3:1-6

Reflection

Hymn We bow down

Reading Matthew 16:21-28 followed by Romans 12:9-21

Reflection

Hymn Dear Lord and father of Mankind

Prayer with pictures

Hear the invitation of Jesus:

*If any of you want to be My follower,
you must turn away from your selfish ways,
from the things you think you want and need.
You must pick up your cross and follow Me.
If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it.
But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.*

What is it you need to turn away from,
in order to follow Jesus more closely?

(time of silent reflection)

Are there things you may need to give up
in order to follow Jesus more closely?

(time of silent reflection)

What do you hear Jesus calling you to do?

(time of silent reflection)

Merciful God,
help us to turn away from things that do not lead to life--
from attitudes and actions that get in the way of our relationship with You
and distract us from hearing Your voice and doing Your will.
Open our eyes and ears to Your presence and Your call.
Give us courage to take up our cross and follow where You lead,
even if the path is uncertain or leads in unexpected directions.
For You alone are God, and we are Your people.
Take our lives, and use us to Your glory. Amen.

Prayer of Intercession

To those who carry the cross of persecution and oppression,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of anger and abuse,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of pain and suffering,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of isolation and loneliness,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

To those who carry the cross of grief and mourning,
loving Lord:

give strength and courage.

Living and loving God,
give wisdom and encouragement
to us and to all your children,
as we seek to take up our cross
and to follow you faithfully.

Amen

Song: A little Love

Prayer

God, we praise You for Your faithful love,
and for the mercy You have shown toward us.
Open our eyes to recognize Your presence in our lives.
Give us grace to hear Your call,
and courage to follow without hesitation,
knowing that Your way is the only way that leads to life.

In the name of Jesus, our Saviour and Lord,

Amen.

Hymn: In Christ alone

Sending out and blessing

May God the Father remove all the stumbling blocks
from your path.
May God the Son give you the courage to take up your cross.
And may God the Holy Spirit empower you
to walk with confidence, day by day.

Amen.

The Lord bless you and keep you
The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious
the lord turn his face toward you and give you peace
Amen

Music: Blessing song