

# 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020 – Morning Service

Rev Chris Watson

## Call to Worship

Loving God, we are here in the name of Christ. We come before you to bow our heads, to lift up our hearts and to offer you our praise. We come to confess Jesus Christ as Lord, to enthrone him in our lives. We come to seek his will, to hear his word and receive his blessing.

## Prayer of Adoration

Creator God, maker of all that is, we draw near and enter your holiness.

Your presence welcomes us; your love enfolds us; your power sustains us.

**We bring our love to you.**

Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of Man, we draw near and come to you.

Your example challenges us; your love forgives us; your peace restores us.

**We bring our love to you.**

Holy Spirit, God around and within us, we draw near, united by your power.

You lift our hearts in joyfulness; you guide our ways in obedience; your love enriches our love.

**We bring our love to you.**

Accept our worship, accept our praise; accept our dedication; for your holy name's sake. **Amen.**

## Prayer of Thanksgiving

Thank you, loving God, that you are with us in community, and that, through your presence, we are strengthened by each other. Thank you for the challenges we find in Scripture, for guidance on faithful living and wisdom to seek and to know you. Thank you that you are near to us, that you forgive; that you empower; that you support us with your peace. Thank you that you enable us, through your example, to live together; to guide each other; to offer and receive forgiveness.

Thank you for all that you are, and all that you do. **Amen.**

## The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who 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.**

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.  
Save us from the time of trial  
and deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are  
yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

## StF 30 – Jesus stand among us

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) Jesus stand among us<br>At the meeting of our lives,<br>Be our sweet agreement<br>At the meeting of our eyes;  | 2) So to You we're gathering<br>Out of each and every land,<br>Christ the love between us<br>At the joining of our hands; |
| Ch) <i>O, Jesus, we love You,<br/>So we gather here,<br/>Join our hearts in unity<br/>And take away our fear.</i> | 3) Jesus stand among us<br>At the breaking of the bread,<br>Join us as one body<br>As we worship You, our Head.           |

Graham Kendrick © 1977 Thankyou Music CCL No. 515642

## Reading: Psalm 119:33-40

Teach me, O LORD, the way of your statutes, and I will observe it to the end.  
Give me understanding, that I may keep your law and observe it with my whole heart.  
Lead me in the path of your commandments, for I delight in it.  
Turn my heart to your decrees, and not to selfish gain.  
Turn my eyes from looking at vanities; give me life in your ways.  
Confirm to your servant your promise, which is for those who fear you.  
Turn away the disgrace that I dread, for your ordinances are good.  
See, I have longed for your precepts; in your righteousness give me life.

## Reading: Matthew 18:15-20

If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.  
Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.”

## StF 424 – God forgave my sin

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) God forgave my sin in Jesus' name,<br>I've been born again in Jesus' name;<br>And in Jesus' name I come to you<br>To share His love as He told me to.        | 2) All power is given in Jesus' name,<br>In earth and heaven in Jesus' name;<br>And in Jesus' name I come to you<br>To share His power as He told me to. |
| Ch) <i>He said: `Freely, freely, you have received,<br/>Freely, freely, give;<br/>Go in My name and because you believe,<br/>Others will know that I live.'</i> |  |

Carol Owens © 1972 Bud John Songs CCL No. 515642

## Reflection - 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us'

This passage from Matthew, taken on its own, reads like a legal manual on how to deal with someone who has caused offence, steps are laid down, rather like a disciplinary process in a workplace. Instead of dismissal this process leads to excommunication and exile from the community, the defendant will be treated as an outsider, this is the punishment if the process does not bring about change and reconciliation.

Matthew's Gospel was written for a small community, living in a hostile environment and their life as a community was very important, how they lived together, how they interacted together was very important to their survival. Chapter 18, of which this passage forms a small part, also asks questions such as "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom?" Jesus answers by placing a child in front of them and saying "Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom." The disciples are warned against putting stumbling blocks in the paths of others, to be conscious of the effects their lives might have on others, they are warned not to be disdainful of others or self righteous but to take care of each other.

Our passage then is not about being better than others and pointing out their faults but more about how to live together in harmony, how to get along with each other. It is easy to unknowingly and carelessly cause affront to others that we are close to. There are very many ways of doing this, by the words we say or don't say, by the tone we use both verbally and in writing, by the actions we take or don't take, by the care we give or withhold.

Life inside and outside the Church can be a minefield that requires careful navigation. We all, without exception, get it wrong from time to time but the beauty of our life together lies in our willingness to forgive and to be forgiven. God forgives us all the time willingly and without keeping any score card so we should forgive each other. When we are the injured party we are to seek out the person who we feel has caused the injury and initiate reconciliation. Often times the offence has been caused unknowingly and once pointed out apologies are offered and accepted. We have no right to nurse grudges, we are to take the first steps to solving the problem before it gets too big, before others are drawn into the situation. We pray 'Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us', we all have much to be forgiven for so we all ought to forgive much.

Here are a few Bible verses which comment on forgiveness

**Ephesians 4:32** "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." (NIV)

**Col 3:13** "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (NIV)

**Luke 17:3-4** "If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." (NIV)

**Matt 18:21-22** "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times." (NIV)

**Mark 11:25** "And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." (NIV)

The chapter ends with the parable of the unforgiving servant who in spite of being forgiven a large debt does not forgive a small debt owed to him so he incurs the wrath of his Master. We are the servant who has been forgiven a huge debt and we are to forgive all the small hurts and debts as we have been forgiven. In that way we can live together in harmony in communion with each other and with God. Our reading ends with the oft quoted promise that where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus he will be present. Gathering in his name means we are in accord with what his name means and stands for. To claim that promise means to gather together in harmony, in love, in communion with each other and with God.

## Prayers of Concern

Where there is conflict,

**bring reconciliation and peace.**

Between nations and races, when there is oppression and abuse of power:

**bring reconciliation and peace.**

In places of work, when conditions are governed by profit and the humanity of employees is ignored:

**bring reconciliation and peace.**

In local communities, where neighbours cannot agree; where rights are not respected:

**bring reconciliation and peace.**

Between people of different faiths, different approaches to faith, different traditions:

**bring reconciliation and peace.**

Within our church, within our families, within our home:

**bring reconciliation and peace.**

Reconciling God, may we honour one another, see your image in our neighbour, and always work for justice, mercy and peace. We pray in the name of the Prince of Peace.

**Amen.**

## StF 409 – Let us build a house

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1) Let us build a house where love can dwell<br/>And all can safely live,<br/>A place where saints and children tell<br/>How hearts learn to forgive.<br/>Built of hopes and dreams and visions,<br/>Rock of faith and vault of grace;<br/>Here the love of Christ shall end divisions:</p> | <p>3) Let us build a house where love is found<br/>In water, wine and wheat:<br/>A banquet hall on holy ground<br/>Where peace and justice meet.<br/>Here the love of God, through Jesus,<br/>Is revealed in time and space;<br/>As we share in Christ the feast that frees us:</p>                         |
| <p><i>Ch) All are welcome,<br/>All are welcome,<br/>All are welcome in this place.</i></p>   | <p>4) Let us build a house where hands will reach<br/>Beyond the wood and stone<br/>To heal and strengthen, serve and teach,<br/>And live the Word they've known.<br/>Here the outcast and the stranger<br/>Bear the image of God's face;<br/>Let us bring an end to fear and danger:</p>                   |
| <p>2) Let us build a house where prophets speak,<br/>And words are strong and true,<br/>Where all God's children dare to seek<br/>To dream God's reign anew.<br/>Here the cross shall stand as witness<br/>And as symbol of God's grace;<br/>Here as one we claim the faith of Jesus:</p>      | <p>5) Let us a build a house where all are named,<br/>Their songs and visions heard<br/>And loved and treasured, taught and claimed<br/>As words within the Word.<br/>Built of tears and cries and laughter,<br/>Prayers of faith and songs of grace,<br/>Let this house proclaim from floor to rafter:</p> |

Marty Haugen © 1994 GIA Publications CCL No. 515642

## Closing Prayer/Blessing

To God who is always forgiving, always loving, always offering new beginnings, be honour and glory, praise and thanksgiving, this day and for ever. **Amen**