

9th May 2021 – Morning Service

Terms & Conditions

Rev Helen Croft

Call to Worship

Jesus said: 'No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.' So, let us join together as friends, Jesus' friends, to worship and serve the one who, because of his great love, gave his all for us. Creator God, You have called us to worship you, chose us to be your friends and invited us to extend that friendship to your people in all the world. May we live as Jesus lived, serve as he served, and love as he loved, to the glory of your name. **Amen**

StF 44 – Come on and celebrate

Come on and celebrate
His gift of love, we will celebrate
The Son of God who loved us
And gave us life.
We'll shout Your praise, O King,
You give us joy nothing else can bring,
We'll give to You our offering
In celebration praise.

Come on and celebrate,
Celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.
Come on and celebrate,
Celebrate, celebrate and sing,
Celebrate and sing to the King.

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Prayer of Confession

Dear Lord, your love is so precious; but we have turned away from you when our lives have been easy – forgive us and help us to turn back to you. You have commanded us, to love others; but we have turned away from them when their lives have been difficult – forgive us and help us to be there for them. You have shared with us your ministry of welcome; but we have turned people away – forgive us and help us always to be open to them. For the sake of Jesus, whose life and death, deeds and words have saved us.

Amen

God of hope and healing:

For choosing us – **we thank you**

For trusting us – **we thank you**

For befriending us – **we thank you**

For loving us – **we thank you**

And for forgiving us, redeeming and blessing us – **we thank you, In Jesus' name. Amen**

Reading: 1 John 5:1-6

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome, for whatever is born of God conquers the world. And this is the victory that conquers the world, our faith. Who is it that conquers the world but the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? This is the one who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ, not with the water only but with the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one that testifies, for the Spirit is the truth.

StF 242 – A new commandment

A new commandment I give unto you:
That you love one another as I have loved you,
That you love one another as I have loved you.

By this the world shall know you are my disciples
If you have love for one another.
(repeat)

Anonymous CCL No. 515642

Reading: John 15:9-17

As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

Reflection

When you sign an agreement, I wonder do you read all the 'terms and conditions' before signing? Or do you start to read them and then get part way down or lost in the legal language that is used but you still sign. What are the terms and conditions of following Jesus? Have you read them all? Do you know what you are 'signing up' for? Is there a difference between those of Jesus and those of the church (i.e. the organisation) to which we belong? Jesus terms and conditions are rather straightforward and brief: 'Love one another as I have loved you' and 'you are my friends if you do what I command' or as the Passion translation tells us 'Love each other deeply, as much as I have loved you' and 'you show that you are my intimate friends when you obey all that I command you' – and perhaps a few more similar phrases. Love and obedience are the essential terms and conditions.

In our English language, we use the word love for a variety of things. We say such things as...

- I love chocolate
- I love my husband/wife/parent/sister etc
- I love to listen to music
- I love God

We have used the same word for love and yet in each of these statements, we mean something different. In Greek, they used four different words to describe the different types of love – storge, phileo, eros and agape. Although our New Testament does not actually ever use the word eros but it does use the others.

1. **Storge** = a natural affection between kinfolk or those brought together with a common bond. An example would be Romans 12:10 *Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour*
2. **Phileo** = the love between two friends – a strong bond between people who share common values, interests or activities. An example would be 1 Peter 3:8 *Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart and a humble mind*
3. **Agape** = the love that serves regardless of changing circumstances. Unconditional love. Often described as the greatest of loves. An example would be John 14:21 *Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them*

Love one another as I have loved you or love each other deeply – of these three Greek words, it is agape that is used here. The love that is spoken of here is to be for another and to act for another, even at cost to oneself. It is the supreme act of giving. We need to remember, that love in the Gospels is not about a feeling. Rather it is being for the other and acting accordingly. Emotions are not absent, but they are not central. The primary canon by which love for one another is measured is God's love for the world – John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son* – and Christ's love which carried out in full and final obedience that love of God. If we want to know what love means in each of life's daily situations that we encounter, then we need to be abiding in God's love and being taught by the Spirit – John 14:26 *'The Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you'* (NRSV) – and becoming a friend of God, just like Abraham and Moses in the Old Testament.

Love is not just the motivation but it's the content for all we do. Jesus kept God's commandments and we are to keep Christ's. Jesus made God known, he was bathed in the knowledge and love of God, he only did what the Father said. We need to bath in the knowledge and love of God too. The more we learn the love of God, the more revelation we'll have of God's heart and the more we'll be able to live out our life in a world that is at odds with God's word but nevertheless in need of God's love.

So, let us learn to live daily in the love of God, that we will get to know the Source giver who displays his unconditional love for us, and who will enable us to live on Jesus' terms and conditions fully - to love one another deeply.

StF 544 – As the deer

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| 1) As the deer pants for the water,
So my soul longs after You.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You. | 2) I want You more than gold or silver,
Only You can satisfy.
You alone are the real joy-giver
And the apple of my eye. |
| Ch) <i>You alone are my strength, my shield,
To You alone may my spirit yield.
You alone are my heart's desire
And I long to worship You.</i> | 3) You're my Friend and You are my Brother,
Even though You are a King.
I love You more than any other,
So much more than anything. |

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Prayers of Intercession

All: 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.'

Leader: Father God, help us to love, to remain in an attitude of love toward all people, to show love to our communities, to our families, to those who do not show us love, and most importantly to ourselves. Help us now and always to remain in your love.

All: 'If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.'

Leader: Help us to keep your commands and remain in an attitude of love towards others. Help us to experience your joy when we show your love. Help us to take strength in the joy that comes from showing your love. Help us to experience your complete and full joy.

All: 'My command is this: love each other as I have loved you.'

Leader: Father God, help us to love when it's hard, when we don't want to, when it hurts – because when we do that, we are showing you, because you are love in the complete and perfect form.

Leader: Father God, help us to be sacrificial in showing love. Help us to love until it hurts, and then love some more. Help us to change this world by showing your love to one person at a time. For as long as we have breath in our bodies, help us to show your love.

All: 'You are my friends if you do what I command.'

Leader: Father, help us to be worthy to be called friend – to our neighbour, workmate, or family member, within our school, workplace or community, help us to proudly wear the title of 'friend' and always be available and have time for those who need a friend.

All: 'I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.'

Leader: Father, help us not to love and work for you out of some sense of duty, but rather help us to show your love because it is as natural to us as breathing. Help us to share not just your love, but also knowledge about you by what we do rather than what we say, and by people reading our actions as acts of love because we are loved by a loving God.

All: 'You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last – and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.'

Leader: Father God, thank you that you deem us worthy to be part of the answer to the world's problems by being your loved children. Thank you for choosing us to live the unique ministry and life that you have ordained for us. Thank you, Father, for the fruit that we can bear in your name, and may all the glory and honour always go to you.

All: 'This is my command: love each other.'

Leader: Father God, help us in this great command not to feel obligated to act in a certain way, but rather to act freely and willingly to show love to each other as we are shown love from you as our heavenly Father.

All: Help us now and always to love one another, and to remain in your love. 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 710 – Peace perfect peace

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| 1) Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord
Will the world know my friends.
Peace, perfect peace, is the gift of Christ our Lord. | 4) Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord
Will the world know my friends.
Hope, perfect hope, is the gift of Christ our Lord. |
| 2) Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord
Will the world know my friends.
Love, perfect love, is the gift of Christ our Lord. | 5) Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord
Will the world know my friends.
Joy, perfect joy, is the gift of Christ our Lord. |
| 3) Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord.
Thus, says the Lord
Will the world know my friends.
Faith, perfect faith, is the gift of Christ our Lord. | |

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Closing prayer & Blessing

Lord Jesus, we rejoice that you have chosen us to be your friends. Help us to be a friend to you by obeying your commands. As we go out into your world, help us to live a life that reflects your love, by being a friend to others. **Amen.**