

This, and all other Broadway 'virtual services' since Easter, are available online at <https://urcwalsall.uk/virtual-church.html> .



Service for the second Sunday after Trinity, 13th June 2021

A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.

CALL TO WORSHIP (from Psalm 92)

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High;
To declare your steadfast love in the morning, and your faithfulness by night.

HYMN: Morning has broken

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Morning has broken
Like the first morning,
Blackbird has spoken
Like the first bird.
Praise for the singing!
Praise for the morning!
Praise for them, springing
Fresh from the Word!

2 Sweet the rain's new fall
Sunlit from Heaven,
Like the first dewfall
On the first grass.
Praise for the sweetness
Of the wet garden,
Sprung in completeness
Where his feet pass.

3 Mine is the sunlight,
Mine is the morning,
Born of the one light
Eden saw play.
Praise with elation,
Praise every morning,
God's re-creation
Of the new day!

Eleanor Farjeon

PRAYERS

Let us pray

Gracious God, maker of heaven, earth, sea and of everything in them; we come to worship you.

We praise you for your power and glory, which have been revealed in the healing power of Jesus and in the fearless witness of his friends. May we also proclaim your power and glory, not only in our words but in our lives.

Loving God, you have made many things from small beginnings. In the seed, you have hidden life and growth. In us your kingdom is waiting to grow.

Lord God, may your kingdom come in us as we do your will and seek to serve you.

We give you thanks for your light, which leads us, on and for your strength that gives us courage. For the peace which grows in our hearts and the joy which waits to receive us, we give you our thanks and praise.

Loving God, we confess that we have often been fearful in our witness for Christ. By our silence we have denied that we are his followers and friends. We have been afraid to make new friendships or to offer a helping hand. Forgive us, we pray, and fill us again with the power of your spirit, for Christ's sake,

Amen.

Jesus Christ came to heal and save. In Him we have forgiveness for our sins.

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.

SCRIPTURE READINGS

St Mark 4: 26-34

²⁶ Jesus went on to say, "The Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field.

²⁷ He sleeps at night, is up and about during the day, and all the while the seeds are sprouting and growing. Yet he does not know how it happens. ²⁸ The soil itself makes the plants grow and bear fruit; first the tender stalk appears, then the head, and finally the head full of grain. ²⁹ When the grain is ripe, the man starts cutting it with his sickle, because harvest time has come.

³⁰ "What shall we say the Kingdom of God is like?" asked Jesus. "What parable shall we use to explain it? ³¹ It is like this. A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world, and plants it in the ground. ³² After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. It puts out such large branches that the birds come and make their nests in its shade."

³³ Jesus preached his message to the people, using many other parables like these; he told them as much as they could understand. ³⁴ He would not speak to them without using parables, but when he was alone with his disciples, he would explain everything to them.

II Corinthians 5:17 – 6:1

¹⁷ Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹ Our message is that God was making all human beings his friends through Christ. God did not keep an account of their sins, and he has given us the message which tells how he makes them his friends.

²⁰ Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends!

²¹ Christ was without sin, but for our sake God made him share our sin in order that in union with him we might share the righteousness of God.

6 In our work together with God, then, we beg you who have received God's grace not to let it be wasted.

HYMN: Lord, speak to me

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Lord, speak to me, that I may speak
in living echoes of your tone;
as thou hast sought, so let me seek
thy erring children lost and lone.

2 O teach me, Lord, that I may teach
the precious things thou dost impart;
and wing my words, that they may reach
the hidden depths of many a heart.

3 O lead me, Lord, that I may lead
the wandering and the wavering feet;
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed
the hungering ones with manna sweet.

4 O fill me with thy fullness, Lord,
until my very heart o'erflow
in kindling thought and glowing word
thy love to tell, thy praise to show.

5 O use me, Lord, use even me,
just as thou wilt, and when and where;
until thy blessed face I see,
thy rest, thy joy, thy glory share.

Frances Havergal

ADDRESS: *Mrs Nancy McOnie*

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle once said "It has long been an axiom of mine that the little things are infinitely the most important".

I think Jesus might have agreed with that. Our readings today certainly remind us of the great potential of something very small indeed – the mustard seed.

I well remember, as a child, sprinkling both mustard and cress seeds onto some damp cotton wool in a saucer and watching each day to see how they had grown; but I confess it was eaten in an egg sandwich long before it had an opportunity to grow into a tree.

Jesus often spoke to the people in parables so that He could use ordinary, everyday things to help them to understand the spiritual truths of the message He was giving them. The seeds of nature became the seeds of the Spirit and the growth of the harvest illustrated the growth of the Kingdom.

The church today is also in the 'growth' business. It is our task to sow the seeds of faith and to encourage the growth of God's kingdom in the world. We pray daily "Your kingdom come, Your will be done in earth as in heaven...". However, we also need to be reminded of the part we play in building that kingdom; so perhaps we should begin with ourselves and the seed that is planted within each one of us.

When the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote in one of his poems “O thou Lord of life, send my roots rain”, it was not his garden that he was thinking about but his own spiritual needs. Are our roots still being nourished in spite of these months of difficulties? No doubt many of you have found refreshment through books, prayer & music, and we have had radio and television programmes to support us. It is good that we can now share together in worship at church again. We all need to have our seeds of faith watered for the Kingdom to grow within us.

The parable reminds us that we also need to plant the seeds of the Kingdom in others. Paul spoke in his Letter to the Christians at Corinth about passing on the message of our relationship and friendship with Jesus when he said: “we are workers together with God”. He reminded them – as the Revised Standard Version of the Bible translates it – “we are ambassadors for Christ”: God makes His appeal through us.

We have an important job to do. We can all sow seeds of love, kindness, peace and justice; but perhaps we also need to remember that an ambassador has a message to carry. We are called to sow the word of God, as the early Christians did, in the hearts of the people and the society around them. Perhaps we need to talk more about our faith – and what it means to us – whenever an opportunity opens for us.

Mother Theresa said “We can do no great things, only small things with great love”. We only plant the seeds, God himself gives the growth and works with us and through us. To quote words from Bryan Rees’ hymn

God’s kingdom is come, the gift and the goal,
In Jesus begun, in heaven made whole.”

With that assurance we can go forward in faith, giving the praise and glory to God.

Amen.

PRAYERS of intercession

Let us pray

Blessed are you, Lord God, for you give the increase to our sowing, to our work and to our plantings. You are the giver of life – of life in abundance. May we put our faith in your goodness and, when we have sown, trust the increase to you. Though our faith is small, it is in a mighty God: blessed are you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We give thanks for those who taught us the faith, who sowed the seed of the gospel in our hearts. We pray for the Bible Society and for all who produce and translate the bible.

Loving God, we long for the time when the kingdoms of this world will become the Kingdom of Christ our Lord. We pray that the rulers on earth may reflect the gentle and loving rule of your kingdom in heaven. We give thanks today for all who love us and show us through their lives a glimpse of your kingdom.

Bless our homes and those we love. Be with all who feel uncared for, or unwanted, and with all who are lonely.

We pray for members and friends of this congregation, holding especially in our thoughts Don and Paul, and their families. We give thanks for all the saints who have brought us the gospel and witnessed to your love. We remember our loved ones who are departed and pray that they may rejoice in the fullness of your kingdom.

We offer these prayers, together with the unspoken prayers of our hearts, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,

Amen.

HYMN: Christ for the world

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Christ for the world we sing;
the world to Christ we bring
with loving zeal:
the poor and them that mourn,
the faint and overborne,
sin-sick and sorrow worn,
whom Christ doth heal.

2 Christ for the world we sing;
the world to Christ we bring
with fervent pray'r:
the wayward and the lost,
by restless passions tossed,
redeemed at countless cost
from dark despair.

3 Christ for the world we sing;
the world to Christ we bring
with one accord:
with us the work to share,
with us reproach to dare,
with us the cross to bear,
for Christ our Lord.

4 Christ for the world we sing;
the world to Christ we bring
with joyful song:
the newborn souls whose days,
reclaimed from error's ways,
inspired with hope and praise,
to Christ belong.

Samuel Woolcott

BLESSING

Now go forth into the world in peace. Be of good courage! Hold fast that which is good, render to no-one evil for evil. Strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the afflicted, honour all people. Love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest upon us and abide with us, and with all whom we love, this day and for evermore.

Amen.