**Communion Service - Sunday 2nd August 2020**

**‘Who do you say I am?’**

*Service, family address and Communion led by Rev. Richard Bradley*

*Reflections: Debbie Wood*

All but one of the songs today are in video format so the words in the script may differ slightly to those on the music videos.

**Words of Welcome**

Good morning and welcome to worship. I want to begin by sharing some words from Psalm 95:

**“ 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song. 3 For the Lord is the great God,**

**the great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6 Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”** (Psalm 95:1-7 – NIV)

We come to join in the singing of our opening song: Come, now is the time to worship.

**Opening Song: Come, Now is the Time to Worship**

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| --- | --- |
| 1.. Come, now is the time to worship.Come, now is the time to give your heart.Come, just as you are, to worship.Come, just as you are, before your God.Come. | Chorus: *One day ev'ry tongue will confess**You are God.**One day ev'ry knee will bow.**Still the greatest treasure remains for those**who gladly choose you now.* |
| 1.. Come, now is the time to worship.Come, now is the time to give your heart.Come, just as you are, to worship.Come, just as you are, before your God.Come. | Chorus: *One day ev'ry tongue will confess**You are God.**One day ev'ry knee will bow.**Still the greatest treasure remains for those**who gladly choose you now.* Come, come, come, Come. |
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**Prayers of Praise, thanksgiving and Confession**

Let us pray….The writer of Psalm 150 says: **“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord”** (Psalm 150:6 – NIV) Gracious God, we come before you in praise. To place you at the centre in this time of worship. We offer you our praise in the speaking, the listening and the reflecting we will do in this act of worship today. We praise you for your goodness and faithfulness that never leaves us. We praise you that you are always there always ready to listen and always ready to speak. In a moment of quiet reflection we bring you our prayers of praise……

The writer of Psalm 100 says: **“Enter his gates with thanksgiving”** (Psalm 100:4a – NIV)

Loving God, we come with thankful hearts today. Thankful for all the goodness in our lives and in our world. For the beauty of the seasons and the beauty of the earth that you alone created. We thank you that we are but a small part of Your creation, yet You have set us apart to care for the earth.

We thank you for those things that we so often take for granted: for food, drink, warmth, security, family friends and so much more. We thank you for your sacrifice which we will remember later when we share in the bread and wine of communion. In a moment of quiet reflection we bring our prayers of thanks to you……

John in 1 John 1:9 writes: **“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”** (1 John 1:9 – NIV) Lord there are times when we are weak and fall short of what you expect from us. Sometimes our lips our weak and speak words that hurt and injure.

Sometimes are lips are weak and don’t speak up against injustice. Forgive us we pray.

Lord, there are times when our actions do not portray the love that we have been shown. Forgive us we pray. Lord, there are times when we don’t act when we should. Forgive us we pray.

Lord, there are times when our thoughts are not in line with what you would expect from us. Forgive us we pray.

May we know that when we say sorry and confess our wrongdoing to You, You grant us forgiveness made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus, your Son. Amen.

**Family Address – “Who am I?”**

I want to invite you to play a game…I will give you some clues as to a person or character and you need to guess what they/it are? (For those reading rather than watching – the answers are at the end of the script)

1. Is a character
2. I have yellow shoes b) I have black ears c) I have a tail
3. Is a character
a) My outfit is predominantly blue b) I have a red cape c) I wear red boots
4. Is a person
a) I sing for a living b) I am welsh c) My stage names is slightly different to my real name d) I am a judge on ‘The Voice’
5. Is a person
a) I worked at a Football Club in Manchester b) I was a successful manager c) My team won many football titles
6. Is a person
a) I am an Australian Actor b) I was in the film series “X-Men” c) I was also in the film “The Greatest Showman”

Some of these items may have been easier to guess than others. Some you may have got after 1 clue others after more than one! Some of you may not have known who the person was even after all the clues.

Today in the service we are thinking about “Who am I?” not because we have forgotten who we are…but who are in the eyes of God. There may have been times in our life when we haven’t always felt we are of worth….we may have been sad…or felt let down by people…we may have even let people down and feel bad about it.

But, what we must remember is that we are always special in God’s eyes! He might not always like what we do….but He never stops loving us or caring for us. So always remember whether in the good times or the bad times….God loves you and wants to us you to serve in His Kingdom. You are loved and You are chosen! Let us pray…..

Loving God, thank you for loving us. Thank you for creating us in Your image and for never leaving us.

Help us to serve you faithfully and in all we do. Amen.

We are going to join in singing …..

**Song: I, the Lord of sea and sky** (chorus after each verse)

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| --- | --- |
| 1.. I, the Lord of sea and sky, I have heard My people cry. All who dwell in dark and sin, My hand will save. I who made the stars of night, I will make their darkness bright. Who will bear My light to them? Whom shall I send?  | Chorus: *Here I am Lord, Is it I Lord? I have heard You calling in the night. I will go Lord, if You lead me. I will hold Your people in my heart.* |
| 2.. I, the Lord of snow and rain, I have borne my people's pain. I have wept for love of them, They turn away. I will break their hearts of stone, Give them hearts for love alone. I will speak My word to them, Whom shall I send?  | 3.. I, the Lord of wind and flame, I will tend the poor and lame. I will set a feast for them, My hand will save Finest bread I will provide, Till their hearts are satisfied. I will give My life to them, Whom shall I send?  |
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**Bible Reading: Mark 1:14-20 - NIV**

14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" 16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." 18 At once they left their nets and followed him. 19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John in a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him.

Thanks be to God for His Word.

**Reflection 1: Who am I?**

Who am I? I wonder if this was a question those first disciples asked themselves when Jesus called them to follow him- who am I that Jesus would call me? Jesus chose ordinary and unlikely people to be his disciples (fishermen, a tax collector, a zealot)- to be those whom he would work through to reach others. Did they feel fear and trepidation? A sense of unworthiness? Worry at their lack of knowledge? I can identify with such feelings and thoughts here before you today- somewhere I never thought I’d be; for who am I to be doing this? This is a question I kept asking myself as I prepared for sharing with you today. To quote one of my favourite Christian singers, Lauren Daigle, “I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I’m not enough, every single lie that tells me I will never measure up.” And I’m sure that those voices are right if it was just me but it’s not just me as it wasn’t just those young fishermen- they had Jesus as we do now.

We heard in the reading from Mark that Jesus called the fishermen:” Come follow me’” Jesus said, “I will make you fishers of men and women,” Jesus knew their purpose, we have to trust he knows ours. Indeed, in this call to follow there is an inbuilt expectation that those who follow are expected to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God; the Good News of Jesus Christ. We are called for his purpose not ours.

Jesus invited those first disciples to follow him- an invitation that is extended to each one of us. I wonder if we can choose to follow as those first disciples did in Mark with such immediacy, prepared to give up what they knew and had and leave their families. They were maybe intrigued, excited by this man Jesus who as we are told had been proclaiming the Good News that the Kingdom of God was near before he chose his disciples (a spiritual kingdom that is realized when we surrender our hearts to God). Indeed, in the Gospel of John, John the Baptist announces that Jesus is the Lamb of God, and two of his disciples (including Andrew) follow Jesus. Andrew then goes to his brother, Peter, announcing that he has found the Messiah (John 1:35-41 NIV). So, we can understand why they follow Jesus so with what we know about him; surely, we must be prepared to follow without question too? Jesus was calling those who listened to “Repent and believe the Good News!” We tend to think of repentance as feeling guilty, but is it not really a change of mind or direction—seeing things from a different perspective, turning to God, keeping our eyes on Jesus? We might then feel bad about how we had been seeing things or behaving but repentance surely starts with the new vision rather than the guilt feelings. Like those first disciples we need to be ready to see things as Jesus wants us to, to step into the unknown, to believe, to trust, to have faith!

And then the journey begins. Jesus takes us just as we are in the words of our opening song; he just wants us to give our hearts. Like those first disciples we need to get to know Jesus, develop a relationship with him, learn from him, be constantly with him, become more like him. Like those first disciples we may struggle to understand, to see what Jesus intends (we hear in Mark 7: 14-23 NIV how Jesus has to explain again to the disciples the parable he has told about what defiles a person). Like those first disciples we may make mistakes (in Mark 10; 13-16 NIV the disciples send the children away and Jesus admonishes them saying: “Let the little children come to me and do not stop them, for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these.”). Like those first disciples we may not have enough faith at times (we read in Mark 4: 35-40 NIV how the disciples are afraid for their lives when Jesus sleeps through the storm in the boat and wake him and he rebukes them saying “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?”) Like those first disciples we may let Jesus down- we all know how he was betrayed by Judas and denied three times by Peter. But this is to me reassuring because despite all this, despite them being fallible, Jesus loved them (John 13: 34 NIV “ As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”) and forgave them and empowered them with his Holy Spirit just as he loves us, forgives us and empowers us with his Holy Spirit. There is a sense of urgency expressed in the reading from Mark (at once, without delay) and this continues throughout the gospel and that urgency continues today in the mission we are tasked with- to share our hope in Christ. We do not need to fear we are not good enough because we have his help. Like the disciples, all of us have faltered in our faith and failed. That, however, is not a reason to be discouraged, give up, or feel condemned. Jesus kept on working with His disciples, and He will keep on working with us!

Jesus sent these ordinary men out, endowed with His own power and authority through the Holy Spirit. As long as they relied on His strength, they were unstoppable. “Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it” (Mark 16:20 NIV).

Like in the words of our second song we must be ready to bear his light to others, be ready to be sent, be ready to offer ourselves to his service to go where he leads us remembering that it is only with God’s grace, the love of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit that we can do this. And so, it was with fear and trepidation I began to share this message and asked who am I to be doing this? But it is with the strength of the Holy Spirit gifted by Christ that I can say I am a child of God; I am a disciple of Jesus.

**Song: My Jesus, My Saviour**

We will now sing My Jesus, My Saviour before we consider how we will answer the question “Who do you say I am?”

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| 1.. My Jesus, My Saviour,Lord, there is none like You.All of my days, I want to praisethe wonders of Your mighty love.My comfort, my shelter, tower of refuge and strength, let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship You. | Chorus: *Shout to the Lord, all the earth, let us sing,* *power and majesty, praise to the King!**Mountains bow down and the seas will roar,* *at the sound of your name!**I sing for joy at the work of your hands,* *forever I'll love you, forever I'll stand.* *Nothing compares to the promise I have in You.* |
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**Reading 2: Matthew 16: 13-20**

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" 14 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." 15 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not

overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20Then he warned his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Christ.

Thanks be to God for His Word.

**Reflection 2: Who Do You Say I Am?**

‘Whom shall I send?’ our earlier song asked; well God sends those who love him and choose to follow him so God sends each one of us. When we become disciples of Jesus, we are expected to not only grow in our own faith but to extend the hope of the gospel to others. But when we talk with others about Jesus who do we say he is? Throughout our daily lives we all have to answer important questions: What do you want to do with your life? Will you marry me? But the most important question we ever have to answer is the one Jesus asked his first disciples in verse 15 of the reading we have just heard: “But what about you? Who do you say I am?” In fact, there are two questions. The first one personalises the second. But what about you? This is a question when I read again that I realised can not only be asked collectively but individually. Collectively, as Church, we must undoubtedly answer as Simon Peter does in verse 16 that Jesus is “the Messiah, the Son of the Living God,” we accept and believe in him as the saviour of mankind this is the Good News of the gospel that we as church are charged to share.

But I believe this question “But what about you?” is a challenge to each and every one of us as we come to know Jesus and learn all about him and grow in a relationship with him through his word, prayer and fellowship that in the end, each one of us has to answer for ourselves the central question of life: “Who do you say I am?” This is not just about believing and saying what Peter answered but about living out our belief, living each day in a Jesus-shaped way letting our actions reflect our confession, to God’s glory. It is also about realising that each person is made specially by God and given their individual mission in this world to bring glory to God in every relationship they have. Each of us has a personal relationship with God he knows each one of us by name and has a plan for us. How amazing is that? I remember being amazed by how my headteacher at Bury Grammar School, Miss Lester, knew every girl by name in the school and how it made me feel very special that she was aware of who I was but also it made me feel more of a responsibility about how I behaved, that what I did with my life would somehow matter more because I felt she knew me and had expectations of me. This is no different but so much more challenging and life-changing in our relationship with God. He knows me by name and He has expectations of me and I must be ready to listen to him to find out what it is He asks of me- how it is that I can serve him and go and tell others about Christ, tell them who he is. In Colossians 4:3 we are told to pray that God will give us many opportunities to speak about Christ- we need to make the most of those opportunities. Prayer is essential in hearing what God wants us to do, in being guided by him. In one of my favourite Mother Theresa quotes, she says: “Prayer is not asking, Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depths of our hearts.” We need to be ready to go where God leads us despite our own misgivings!

But we also need to be sure of our answer to Jesus’ question “Who do you say I am?” so that we can be clear about what we will tell others about him.

Mark Roberts in a daily reflection produced by The High Calling writes: “The way we answer Jesus has the potential to change our lives. If we acknowledge Jesus to be a divinely inspired teacher, then we will pay close attention to what he says so that we might believe it and live it. If we see Jesus as the Messiah, then we will serve him as God’s royal representative who ushers in the kingdom. If we believe Jesus to be the Saviour of the world, then we will put our ultimate faith in him. And if we confess Jesus to be the Word of God Incarnate, the very Son of God, then we will fall before him in worship so that we might live our entire lives as an offering to him.”

And so, we must be ready to live what we believe and show others the light of Jesus through our love for them for as Jesus says in John 13:35 NIV “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

He is our guide, our inspiration, the core of our being, our example of perfection. He is the Mediator between God and man and he is the Way to everlasting Life! He is my Jesus, my saviour. He is who we should all aspire to be, a world full of Jesus-shaped people would enable God’s Kingdom to come on earth as it does in heaven! In accepting Jesus as our saviour, in following his word, in putting our faith in him, we surely must become a part of his great commission to his disciples and share who he is and know what that means for our lives and for those we share the Good News with so that one day every tongue will confess he is God!

We will now ready ourselves for coming to the Lord’s table by singing the first verse of Be Still for the Presence of the Lord.

**Song leading to Communion: Be still for the presence of the LORD (v1)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1.. Be still for the presence of the Lordthe holy one is here.Come bow before Him nowwith reverence and fear.In Him no sin is foundwe stand on holy ground.Be still for the presence of the Lordthe Holy One is here. | David J Evans © 1986 ThankYou Music /Capitol CMG Publishing/Integritymusic.com ccli 169737 Streaming Licence 595811  |

**Communion**

John 6:35 & 37

**“ 35Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty…. 37 All that the Father give me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.”** (NIV)

We gather from north, south, east and west at the table of the Lord. Wherever you are celebrating this communion today is holy ground. Jesus invites us receive from him the bread and wine, symbol of his body and blood and we as we share we believe we take into ourselves something of the life changing power of Jesus’ presence.

We hear from the Apostle Paul 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

**“ 23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “this is my body that is given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”**
(NIV)

Loving God, we praise and thank you for your creation and the beauty we can enjoy day by day.

We praise you for Jesus, our Lord and Saviour who came to earth as a baby, he grew up in difficult times and changed and transformed lives.

In his life he challenged injustice, he healed the sick, he taught people how to live, he brought from the margins those who the world had sidelined.
In challenging injustice and those in authority he suffered and he died. And was raised to glorious new life and lives forever with you.

He promised the Holy Spirit would come and as we celebrated last week the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and transformed them.

And so we pray that your Holy Spirit would come upon us this day and upon this bread and wine that for us these symbols of earth would have heavenly power to change and to transform us so that we make become more and more like Jesus Christ.

So as we come to your table here, we bring all that we are and all that we have and offer it to you as a living sacrifice and offering. Amen.

As we heard in Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians, Jesus, at supper took bread and said: “This is my body given for you” and he instructed that we remembered him when we took the bread.

We take the bread now, we take eat, and give thanks. *(We eat the bread)*

*(we pause and give thanks)*

As we heard in Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians, Jesus, after supper took the cup and said: “This is my blood which is shed for you” and he instructed that we remembered him when we drank from the cup.

We take this cup now, we drink, and give thanks. *(We drink from the cup)*

*(we pause and give thanks)*

Friends we have taken bread and wine symbols of the body and blood of Christ. We are joined to Christ as believers in him. We have remembered and given thanks to God for giving His son that we might have life and have life to the full.

We continue with our prayers of Intercession…..

**Prayers of Intercession**

Living God, who gave His Son Jesus Christ to be the savour of the world we thank you that you can for all your creation. We lift to you those in our world who are in need. As I list people we pause to offer our own prayers: we pray for:

\*those who are living with war and political unrest….

\*those who are living with life limiting illnesses…...

\*those who are used, abused and trafficked….

\*those who are homeless….

\*those who have lost their jobs….

\*those who are sick, unwell and in hospital….

\*those who are dear to us – our family and friends….

\*our own church….

\*ourselves…..

\*we pray for wisdom in looking after your creation….

Loving God we trust in faith that you have heard our prayers and will respond.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

**Closing Song: Yet not I but through Christ**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1.. What gift of grace is Jesus my redeemerThere is no more for heaven now to giveHe is my joy, my righteousness, and freedomMy steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace | 2.. To this I hold, my hope is only JesusFor my life is wholly bound to HisOh how strange and divine, I can sing: all is mineYet not I, but through Christ in me |
| 3.. The night is dark but I am not forsakenFor by my side, the Saviour He will stayI labour on in weakness and rejoicingFor in my need, His power is displayed | 4.. To this I hold, my Shepherd will defend meThrough the deepest valley He will leadOh the night has been won, and I shall overcomeYet not I, but through Christ in me |
| 5.. No fate I dread, I know I am forgivenThe future sure, the price it has been paidFor Jesus bled and suffered for my pardonAnd He was raised to overthrow the grave | 6.. To this I hold, my sin has been defeatedJesus now and ever is my pleaOh the chains are released, I can sing: I am freeYet not I, but through Christ in me |
| 7.. With every breath I long to follow JesusFor He has said that He will bring me homeAnd day by day I know He will renew meUntil I stand with joy before the throne | 8.. To this I hold, my hope is only JesusAll the glory evermore to HimWhen the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me |
| 9.. To this I hold, my hope is only JesusAll the glory evermore to HimWhen the race is complete, still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me | 10.. When the race is complete, still my lips shall repeatYet not I, but through Christ in meYet not I, but through Christ in meYet not I, but through Christ in me |
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**Blessing**

Lord, help us remember that you have chosen us to go and bear fruit for you; we thank you that you are with us always, we ask that you will give us strength to share our hope in you with others- that we are saved by grace through faith in you. Send us out with love in our hearts so that your light may shine through us, in your name. Amen.

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**Answers to the questions in the “family address”**

1.. Micky Mouse 2.. Superman 3.. Sir Tom Jones (christened Sir Thomas John Woodward) 4.. Sir Alex Ferguson 5.. Hugh Jackman