**Order of Service Sunday 13th June 2021 (Third Sunday after Pentecost)**

**Service led by Debbie Wood**

**Welcome and intro to first song:**

Welcome to worship on this third Sunday after Pentecost, my name is Debbie and I am a member of Bamford Chapel and Norden URC which is part of the Rochdale, Bury and North Manchester Missional Partnership. “The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance but the Lord looks at the heart.” (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV) So, let us come just as we are before God as we begin with our first hymn: Come Now is the Time to Worship

**Song-** Come Now is the Time to Worship

Willingly we choose to surrender our lives  
Willingly our knees will bow  
With all our heart, soul, mind and strength  
We gladly choose You now  
Come, now is the time to worship  
Come, now is the time to give your heart  
Come, just as you are to worship  
Oh come, just as you are before your God  
Come, come, come, oh come  
Oh come, come  
Bow, you nations  
Come and worship  
Come and worship your maker

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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  
One day every tongue will confess You are God  
One day every knee will bow  
Still the greatest treasure remains for those  
Who gladly choose You now  
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  
One day every tongue will confess You are God  
One day every knee will bow  
Still the greatest treasure remains for those  
Who gladly choose You now

**Prayers of thanksgiving and confession:**

Let us pray: Father God, we thank You for seeing past our sins and weaknesses, for loving us unconditionally. We thank You for having a purpose for each one of us and for always being there for us even when we might not even acknowledge Your presence. We are sorry that we fail You so often: for the times that we are thoughtless and selfish putting our own needs ahead of those of others; for our harsh words that can hurt others, for being quick to judge and responding in anger, for not using the gifts You have given us to Your glory. Loving Father, You transform shepherds into kings, the smallest seeds into magnificent trees and hardened hearts into loving ones. Bless us with your life-giving Spirit, re-create us in your image and shape us to your purposes. Help us Lord to put You at the centre of our lives and keep our eyes turned upon Jesus so that we might be more Jesus-shaped in all that we think, say and do to Your glory. Amen

Let us join together now in saying 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.

**Children’s Address:**

When we look at someone we can see how tall they are, what colour hair and eyes they have but can we know a person just by looking at them, by what they look like? How can we see inside a person? Well if you are a trained doctor you can see inside a person using x-rays or scans. Let’s see if you can guess some animals from their skeleton! (Show pictures of animal skeletons on a PowerPoint). But doctors can still only see the physical parts of us. We might think that someone looks happy on the outside but inside they might be feeling sad. Today we are thinking about How God sees us and how we should try to see others the way God sees them. Samuel, a servant of God, was asked by God to go and find the next King of Israel and when he did he was surprised who God chose because Samuel didn’t think he was the most suitable for the job! He couldn’t see how God sees. God can see inside to who we really are. (Show Fishnet Tales story of Samuel Anoints David.) We, like Samuel, can’t see who a person is by looking at them; but when God looks at us, like He did with David, He sees who we really are. Let us pray that all of our young people have a wonderful as they learn together with our junior church leaders today, may God bless them all. Amen. As they leave us now, we will have our second hymn: Open Our Eyes, Lord.

**Song-** Open Our Eyes, Lord

Open our eyes Lord  
We want to see Jesus  
To reach out and touch Him  
And say that we love Him  
Open our ears Lord  
And Help us to listen  
Open our eyes Lord  
We want to see Jesus

Open our eyes Lord  
We want to see Jesus  
To reach out and touch Him  
And say that we love Him  
Open our ears Lord  
And Help us to listen  
Open our eyes Lord  
We want to see Jesus

REPEAT UNTIL JUNIOR CHURCH HAVE LEFT

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**Today’s Reading: 1 Samuel 16: 1-13 NIV**

**Samuel Anoints David**

**16**The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”**2**But Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.” The Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ **3**Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.”**4**Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, “Do you come in peace?”**5**Samuel replied, “Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.” Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.**6**When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.”**7**But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” **8**Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, “The Lord has not chosen this one either.” **9**Jesse then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, “Nor has the Lord chosen this one.” **10**Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, “The Lord has not chosen these.” **11**So he asked Jesse, “Are these all the sons you have?” “There is still the youngest,” Jesse answered. “He is tending the sheep.” Samuel said, “Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.” **12**So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features. Then the Lord said, “Rise and anoint him; this is the one.” **13**So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David.

**Reflection:**

**“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”**

This key verse in our reading from Samuel prompted me to first think: How does God See me? In some ways I was scared by how God sees me because He is the one who can see me for who I really am. He sees all of me. He sees my sins and my weaknesses and my failings and my shortcomings! As the psalmist in Psalm 44:21 says, God “knows the secrets of the heart.” He sees the parts of me that I hope others don’t see too often but that I am only too aware of. Those parts of me that make me doubt that I can offer anything in His service. But then I stop and remember I don’t need to be scared, that when He sees me although God sees someone who sins He also sees someone who is forgiven because “we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son” (Romans 5:10) Despite our sins, God demonstrated His love for us by sacrificing His Son, Jesus Christ. So, when God sees me, He sees one saved by Christ, He sees one whom He loves! We do not need to fear coming as we are before our God. For He knows everything about us, warts and all, and yet He still loves us. For as John says in chapter 3 verse 17 “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.”

When God looks at us, He sees His children, we are children of God and brothers and sisters in Christ; in God’s eyes we are co-heirs with Christ. Paul writes in Romans chapter 8 verses 16-17: “The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. 17Now if we are children, then we are heirs-heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ,” and in the first chapter of John verse 12 we read: “Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.” So, what does this mean for how God sees us? He sees someone created in His own image, He sees someone who has a desire to live in a way that will please Him- he sees someone who is ready to love Him and to love others as ourselves because in accepting Christ we have accepted His greatest commandments. In Christ we are born again to be children of God through the gift of His Spirit as Jesus Himself explained to Nicodemus in the gospel of John when He said, ““Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.” So as God sees us as His children, He sees us as being with Him in His Kingdom with Jesus for eternity. How blessed we are.

When God looks at us, He sees a soul with whom He can communicate, have a relationship with. He wants us to turn to him, to communicate with Him and that is why prayer is central to who we are with God. It is through prayer that He can show us the path He has laid out for us and help us stay on it. Jesus Himself spent time in prayer when on Earth so that he could communicate with His Father recognising that He must do His will. Prayer is our conversation with God and how we can develop a personal, meaningful relationship with the God of the universe who loves us. Maybe sometimes we see prayer as us talking to God which is so important but I share the words of Mother Theresa with you “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.” So, this is how He can do miracles in our heart.  Through prayer, He can bring our lives into alignment with His vision and His plans.

When God looks at us, He sees the potential we have to serve Him, He sees the purpose He has created for us. For, as it says in Ephesians 2:10, “we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” God wants us to see ourselves as He does so that we can go out into the world filled with His love knowing that He has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit through Jesus to guide us and support us as we fulfil our purpose to shine His light in the darkness in all that we do, to do His will not ours. Indeed, this is what God saw in David as is confirmed in Acts 13:22 “God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David, son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.” It was David's heart of dependence upon the Lord that qualified him as Israel's next king and not his outward appearance. May we have hearts like David and do everything God wants us to do!

The key verse from today’s reading (**“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”**) also prompted me to think about how we need to see not just ourselves as God sees us but others as God sees them.

Before we continue, I’d like to share this short film clip, which I came across whilst I was researching my reflection today, called What if we Saw Others through God’s Eyes ([What If we saw others through God's eyes - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AbT1lT7Bu8) )

When I watched this, I was only too aware of how easy it is to be judgemental about others and am sad to say that I am guilty of such thoughts and recognised myself in this young man. Maybe you do too? Maybe we all need reminding, I guess, to take time to see others as God does, to get beneath the surface, to stop thinking about ourselves before others. It is only by spending time with others and listening that we can hope to see a person as God sees them. I know I often fall short and so pray constantly for God’s help that through the Holy Spirit I might be a better listener (open our ears Lord our earlier hymn asked) might see things from another’s point of view. With growing awareness of mental health, we see more and more on social media or street adverts the message that we should treat others with kindness as we don’t know what they’re going through. But God does and when He puts another person in our path we need to be ready to see them as God does: to see how we can help or encourage them or be helped or be encouraged by them.

Such encouragement happened to me one Sunday after a service here at Bamford Chapel and Norden URC when a very Jesus-shaped lady, Rene Flood, whose great faith I’m sure was an inspiration to all who met her, stopped and quietly said to me “You’ll be up there one day!” meaning leading a service- which never in a month of Sundays would I have actually ever expected to happen and yet here I am today despite the voices in my mind telling me I’m not enough, that I can’t measure up as Lauren Daigle sings in a song we will hear shortly. How did Rene know? What did she see? Was it because she could look at another as God does and see His spark because she was actively trying to see in that way? As Christians, like Jesus, like those early disciples we are expected to share God’s message of hope so isn’t there an expectation on us all to look for how we ourselves might be seen by God to look for and act on His purpose in us and to encourage others to do the same? For we are told in 1 Peter 4:10 “Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” Rick Warren in one of his online daily teachings in April this year says, “When God looks at you, he wants to see you using your abilities in the ways he intended so that you will experience his blessing.” So, we must see God’s purpose in each of us, see what it is He sees in us to be able to play our part, with the help of the Holy Spirit, in sharing His message of hope in His Kingdom.

The truth of our identity I believe, without doubt is in how God sees us, we are a new creation in Him and as it says in Hebrews 3:1 as holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, we must fix our thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest, the Son of God; and so we must keep our eyes on Him who sees with the eyes of God so that we too might aim with the power of the Holy Spirit to see as Jesus did, to see as God does. For the only thing that matters is what God thinks of each of us, what He sees in our hearts as He did with David.

We will now share in the song You Say by Lauren Daigle, mentioned in our reflection. As you follow the words, take comfort knowing that you are loved, that God sees us for who we are, that He is holding us even when we let Him down and that it is in Him that we find our true worth and our identity.

**Song:**  You Say

And you say I am held when I am falling short  
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours  
And I believe, oh, I believe  
What You say of me, oh, I believe

Taking all I have, and now I'm laying it at Your feet  
You have every failure, God, You have every victory  
Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak  
You say I am held when I am falling short  
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours  
And I believe, oh, I believe,  
What You say of me, I believe

Oh, I believe, yes, I believe   
What You say of me,  
I believe

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I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough  
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up

Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low  
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know  
Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak  
And you say I am held when I am falling short  
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours  
And I believe, oh, I believe  
What You say of me, I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me  
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity  
Ooh-oh

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak

**Prayers of Intercession- Debbie**

We now come to our prayers of intercession. After each prayer focus please join in with the words: “**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to see through Your eyes.**”

Dear Lord, we come to You in prayer, asking that You will help us to see through Your eyes as Jesus Himself did, that Your light and love will guide our vision.

We pray for our precious world, asking that you will help us see what You expect of us as stewards of Your wondrous creation. Help us to see the harm that mankind is causing our planet. Guide us to find solutions to the issues of climate change, habitat loss, pollution and diminishing natural resources. Give us the foresight to protect our planet and all its inhabitants so that we may once again behold our world through Your eyes and see creation once again in all its glory and know that it is good.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to see through Your eyes.**

We pray for the governments and religious leaders of our world asking that they will see the world and all Your people through Your eyes so that they will have the vision to work together for the good of all mankind, to realise the world You intended. We pray that they will be inspired by Your Spirit to ensure we have a world that is at peace, praying particularly for those affected by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and praying a solution will be found that is fair and just for all. We also pray at this time that the governments of the world will see they need to work together to ensure that all nations benefit from the vaccines that have been created to bring an end to this global pandemic and realise that no nation can be left behind.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to see through Your eyes**

We pray for the Church across the world and ask that it be Jesus-shaped in all that it does seeing what is needed from its mission through Your eyes. We pray that You will give our churches and their leaders the vision to reach outwards; that Your church will shine with Your light penetrating the darkness of the world to share Your message of hope with those waiting to hear the good news of the Gospel. We pray that You will Help us to see through the eyes of those Christians who are persecuted for their faith- who share our faith but not our freedom. Give them strength and peace Lord as they bear their cross in Your name and let us be ready to journey alongside them as You do.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to see through Your eyes**

We pray for those in need. We pray that You will help us to see through Your eyes the needs of others before ourselves, especially those marginalised in society, as Jesus did. Help us to see through the eyes of those affected by war so that we may work harder for peace. Help us to see through the eyes of those living in poverty so that we might advocate for fair sharing of wealth across the world. Help us to see through the eyes of those who are victims of trafficking and abuse and be moved to support them and those who work to help them. Help us to see through the eyes of refugees and all people who find themselves displaced and those experiencing homelessness so that we might welcome them and do more to help them and petition on their behalf so that all people across the world would have their basic human rights met.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to see through Your eyes.**

We pray for all those who are sick and give thanks for those caring for them. We ask that everyone might be enlightened to the plight of the NHS and health services across the world as they battle through this global pandemic; so that everyone might do their part to help stop the spread of this virus. We thank you for the vision of those who have worked so hard to produce the vaccines now being distributed. We continue to pray for Your healing touch to provide the miracles of medicine. We pray that we will see through disabilities to the person You see and be ready to petition for equalities for those who are excluded from living a full life in our society because of a disability. We pray also for the bereaved and ask that You will comfort them and give them peace that they might discover solace in Your gift of everlasting life.

**Hear our prayers Lord, and help us to see through your eyes**

We offer all these prayers Lord and those in our hearts in the name of our great intercessor, Your son, Jesus Christ, who saw through Your eyes, the light of our vision, the ruler of all. **AMEN.**

We will now share our final hymn; Go Peaceful in Gentleness, by Paul Field ([Go Peaceful - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BVpFVpXIKrA) )

**Song-** Go Peaceful in Gentleness

Be righteous  
Speak truthfully  
In a world of greed and lies  
Show kindness  
See everyone  
Through heaven's eyes  
  
God hold you  
Enfold you  
And keep you wrapped around his heart  
May you be known by love  
  
God speed you  
God lead you  
And keep you wrapped around his heart  
  
May you be known by love  
May you be known by love

Go peaceful  
In gentleness  
Through the violence of these days  
Give freely  
Show tenderness  
In all your ways  
  
Through darkness  
In troubled times  
Let holiness be your aim  
Seek wisdom  
Let faithfulness  
Burn like a flame  
  
God speed you  
God lead you  
And keep you wrapped around his heart  
May you be known by love

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**Blessing**

Dear Lord, we thank you for all that we have shared together today. Thank you for inviting us to come and be with You in worship today so that we can see the joy and light in following You and understand that we need to see everyone through Heaven’s eyes. Send us out now Lord, seeing the world and all those we meet afresh through Your eyes as Your beloved son, Jesus, did; filled with the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit today and always.

Amen