Order of Service Sunday 17th October 2021 (Twenty-first Sunday after Pentecost)

Service led by Debbie Wood

**Welcome and intro to first song:**

Welcome to worship, 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. “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many”. Let us take a moment of stillness as we begin, to call on our Lord to open our hearts to receive His love and His Holy Spirit, to open our eyes and ears and minds so that we may know how we might serve others and in doing so serve Him.

Now we will join together in our first hymn: The Servant King

**Song-** The Servant King

Come see His hands and His feet  
The scars that speak of sacrifice  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered

This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King

So let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone Him  
Each other's needs to prefer  
For it is Christ we're serving

This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King

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| --- |
| From heaven you came helpless babe Entered our world, your glory veiled Not to be served but to serve And give Your life that we might live  This is our God, The Servant King He calls us now to follow Him To bring our lives as a daily offering Of worship to The Servant King  There in the garden of tears My heavy load he chose to bear His heart with sorrow was torn 'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said  This is our God, The Servant King He calls us now to follow Him To bring our lives as a daily offering Of worship to The Servant King |

**Prayers of thanksgiving and confession:**

Let us pray: Dear Lord, we come to You full of praise and thanks for all the blessings You have given us. We thank you for the love in our lives, for the hope we have because of You. We thank you for the treasures of Your creation so freely given. We thank You for always being by our side and hearing our prayers. In the silence we reflect on all You have done for us. (SILENCE) But we also come to you Lord to ask You to forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do; to quietly confess those times when we have strayed from your light into the darkness. In the silence we reflect on those times when we have been self-serving and have failed to serve others and in doing so have failed to serve You. (SILENCE) God of all mercy, forgive our foolish ways and cleanse our hearts to be moved by You; turn us away from our sin to live for and to serve You alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins. 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:**  Welcome to all the children who are worshipping with us today! We’re going to think about people who serve others. What can you see in our first picture? That’s right, all these people are involved in the emergency services: the police, the fire service and the ambulance service; it’s their job to take quick action to help those involved in emergencies. And what does our next picture show? That’s right, they are the armed services: the Royal Navy, the British Army and the Royal Air Force. It’s their job to defend our country and support international peacekeeping and respond to humanitarian disasters across the world. Many other jobs involve serving others like being a teacher or a doctor or nurse or a carer, or a minister in a church, working for a charity for example helping at the food banks, working in childcare or with the elderly. During the COVID pandemic we all valued the role of key workers in our society like those working in supermarkets, those people who remove our waste each week, the lorry drivers who make sure we have food on the shelves and petrol in the pumps! What all these jobs have in common is that they have at their heart serving others, helping people, making their lives better. But you don’t have to wait to have a job like these! You can serve others in your everyday lives just like Jesus did. You just have to put other first and ask yourself “How can I help?”

Now we will sing a song together called Shine and Serve! [Yancy - Shine and Serve [OFFICIAL LYRIC VIDEO] from Kidmin Worship Vol. 5 Missions & Serving - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gVE8ZNHhd_A)

**Song- Shine and Serve**

So let’s all shine and serve  
Let’s all give and love  
Till the whole world knows  
Jesus loves them  
So let’s all shine and serve  
Let’s all give and love  
Till the whole world knows  
Jesus loves them  
Let’s shine and serve  
We can shine and we can serve right here, right here  
We can shine and we can serve all over the world, all over the world  
We can shine and we can serve everywhere, everywhere  
We can shine and we can serve so c’mon, get ready, let’s go  
So let’s all shine and serve  
Let’s all give and love  
Till the whole world knows  
Jesus loves them  
So let’s all shine and serve  
Let’s all give and love  
Till the whole world knows  
Jesus loves them  
Let’s shine and serve

God made me  
A part of His story  
I will live all for His glory  
Everyday and every night  
  
God made me  
A part of His story  
I will live all for His glory  
Everyday and every night  
  
C’mon we’re gonna go change the world  
C’mon let’s go tell every boy and girl  
C’mon, get ready, let’s go  
  
So let’s all shine and serve  
Let’s all give and love  
Till the whole world knows  
Jesus loves them  
Let’s shine and serve  
  
God made me  
A part of His story  
I will live all for His glory  
Everyday and every night  
  
C’mon we’re gonna go change the world  
C’mon let’s go tell every boy and girl  
C’mon, get ready, let’s go

**Today’s First Reading: Isaiah 53:4-12**

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. 5But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed. 6We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. 8By oppression[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18720a)] and judgment he was taken away. Yet who of his generation protested? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was punished.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18720b)]**9**He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth. **10**Yet it was the Lord’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the Lord makes[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18722c)] his life an offering for sin, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the Lord will prosper in his hand. **11**After he has suffered, he will see the light of life[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18723d)] and be satisfied[[e](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18723e)]; by his knowledge[[f](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18723f)] my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities. **12**Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[[g](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18724g)]  
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[[h](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+53%3A4-12&version=NIV#fen-NIV-18724h)]because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

**Reflection part 1: Jesus, The Suffering Servant**

Today’s reading is an extract from ‘The Suffering Servant’ poem in Isaiah, in which it is considered the ‘gospel prophet’ prophesies the Messiah of Israel not as the anticipated conquering hero but as a servant who would save His people through His own personal suffering. This poem is indeed amazing in that through his description of the Suffering Servant (bearing in mind this was written 700 years before Christ) Isaiah reveals Jesus’ life and ministry and sacrifice here on earth; indeed, it is possibly one of the clearest examples of fulfilled prophecy in the Bible! In this extract from the poem, Isaiah explains that Jesus’ suffering is really our punishment, which He bears to heal us- “Surely our griefs He Himself bore.” The pain of His sacrifice, His suffering, is vividly described: pierced through, crushed, chastened, scourged! The suffering He endured for us, the sheep who have gone astray- in the words of Isaiah; for the ‘Suffering Servant’ is the ‘Good Shepherd’ who, in Jesus’ own words, lays down his life for the sheep. How Jesus bears this sacrifice is also revealed, it is done without complaint or resistance: “He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth” only accepting God’s will which is reflected again in Jesus’ own words in the gospels: “Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." This Suffering and faithful Servant of God and of us all, is ready to do God’s will not follow His own and if we are to be Jesus-shaped we must follow His example!

Isaiah then continues the innocent Servant’s descent to the grave and shows how He is justified in death; for although He was crucified as a criminal He was buried as befitted a man who was not. In the final verses, the fulfilment of the promise of the Servant’s suffering, the Messiah’s suffering is revealed- the Servant ascends to the exalted reward foreseen at the beginning of the poem with the insight that His sacrifice to save others is the will of God. We hear how God is going to lift him up high in exaltation, How the Servant will live on after death. He will live to see the justification, forgiveness and salvation of those who follow Him because of the ultimate sacrifice He has made on their behalf; because of His atonement, His intercession, that re-united God and sinners. In this story of the Suffering Servant’s death and resurrection, we discover the love of God that leads to true life because for those who accept Christ as God’s son who died for their sins, for those who believe, there is the promise that they are forgiven and that their salvation is guaranteed. Isaiah’s poem shows us how God reveals His greatest glory through the suffering of His most faithful servant-His Son. We see how God is exalted through humiliation and would ultimately be victorious in the face of apparent defeat. This reminded me of the sacrifice of Aslan, the Christ-like figure in one of my favourite childhood books written by the Christian author C S Lewis, The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe. Aslan is willing to suffer and die in place of Edmund who has been sentenced to death as a traitor by the evil White Witch. The White Witch accepts and at his death celebrates her victory over her enemy, the lion, Aslan. But the new dawn brings the resurrection of Aslan and shows that through his sacrifice death itself has been overturned and that what seemed his defeat at the hands of the White Witch was in fact his victory; just as Jesus’ selfless sacrifice conquers death for us, death to sin and the promise of everlasting life. The Suffering Servant’s mission has been fulfilled through our saviour, Jesus Christ!

We will now stand, as we are able, to sing our next hymn- Beauty for Brokenness – as we reflect on the suffering of our Servant King and His compassion shown throughout his life to those marginalised by society and His sacrifice for us and hope that we too can have hearts that are willing to serve others.

**Hymn-** Beauty for Brokenness

Beauty for brokenness  
Hope for despair  
Lord, in your suffering  
This is our prayer  
Bread for the children  
Justice, joy, peace  
Sunrise to sunset  
Your kingdom increase!  
  
Shelter for fragile lives  
Cures for their ills  
Work for the craftsman  
Trade for their skills  
Land for the dispossessed  
Rights for the weak  
Voices to plead the cause  
Of those who can't speak  
  
(CHORUS)God of the poor  
Friend of the weak  
Give us compassion we pray  
Melt our cold hearts  
Let tears fall like rain  
Come, change our love  
From a spark to a flame

Refuge from cruel wars  
Havens from fear  
Cities for sanctuary  
Freedoms to share  
Peace to the killing-fields  
Scorched earth to green  
Christ for the bitterness  
His cross for the pain  
CHORUS  
Rest for the ravaged earth  
Oceans and streams  
Plundered and poisoned  
Our future, our dreams  
Lord, end our madness  
Carelessness, greed  
Make us content with  
The things that we need  
CHORUS

Lighten our darkness  
Breathe on this flame  
Until your justice  
Burns brightly again  
Until the nations  
Learn of your ways  
Seek your salvation  
And bring you their praise

CHORUS

We will now have our second reading.

**Today’s second reading: Mark 10:35-45**

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.” **36**“What do you want me to do for you?” he asked. **37**They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.” **38**“You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?” **39**“We can,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, **40**but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.” **41**When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. **42**Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. **43**Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, **44**and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. **45**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

**Reflection part 2:**

So, there is no doubt that Jesus was the Suffering Servant and that His greatest service to mankind was to give His life as a ransom for our sins; but throughout His life He was a servant to others as He Himself says at the end of our reading from Mark, which echoes our first reading from Isaiah; “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve” and it is important for us to examine how He served in His lifetime as well as His death so that we too may serve to His glory. In everyday life, I believe the best leaders are those that lead by example and Jesus uses the image of the servant to illustrate the concept of leadership and greatness in the Kingdom and He is the ultimate example of a servant of God and throughout His ministry lead by example. Jesus is instructing His disciples (and consequently, us) to serve others as He has served, obviously not as a sacrifice for sin but in following His example of how He engaged with people. He served them in a way that changed their lives by His encounter with them. This reminded me of a quote from Mother Theresa: “Spread love everywhere you go…Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier.” Which is what happened to those who came into contact with Jesus and that still stands today! So surely it is essential that we help others to come into contact with Jesus through our own interactions in our own lives with God’s help? The key thing is to be a servant like the Son of Man. This was what He wanted His disciples to realise. He does not resent James and John’s desire for greatness in the Kingdom but makes clear the path.

So how do we do that? By following Jesus’ example. And there are numerous instances within the Gospels. What is essential to recognise is that all of them are rooted in love; Jesus was a servant who dedicated His life to setting people free-by healing them, delivering them, teaching them, challenging worldly authority and ultimately atoning for sin. As well as this, Jesus exemplified the indispensable need to live life in connection with God; for as His servants it is God’s will we need to listen to, not our own! We see at the Last Supper Jesus is still modelling the role of servant when he washes His disciples’ feet (even those of Judas Iscariot, whom He knew would betray Him) and John writes that in doing so, He showed them the full extent of His love. Whatever is done in serving others must be centred in love for that is the second greatest commandment given by Jesus to love others and He also makes it clear that it is only serving through love that identifies us as His disciples. Love not duty! Indeed, the other day after I had taken my Mum shopping, I jokingly said, “Duty done” and immediately regretted it because I do not help my mum through duty but because I love her and I quickly apologised!

All that we do should be motivated by love and need and acted on in faith! In all the instances recorded in the Gospels Jesus sees the need of others and recognises faith as a key factor in serving them- I am particularly minded of the healing of the bleeding woman whose faith was so great in Him that she believed she would only need to touch His cloak to be healed. He didn’t ever turn people away even when the disciples tried to- look at their response to children being brought to Jesus and the feeding of the five thousand- but used every opportunity to share His message, to teach and lead by example. He always put the needs of others before Himself and was never afraid to spend time with those marginalised in society or to challenge those who abused their power. This was how He served in the world.

Jesus also made it very clear that servanthood is rooted in God’s will. He stressed again and again that He only did what the Father wanted. So how will we know what God is asking of us? Prayer, communicating with our Heavenly Father, allowing ourselves to be moved by Him; recognising the opportunities that He puts in front of us each day to serve others in our actions and words and of course by sharing our belief and Christian hope revealed in His Word.

It is with God’s help that we can serve others. So how do we do that? John Maxwell in the NIV Leadership Bible has some suggestions because every believer is a person of influence with God’s help. He suggests in an article about Jesus’ teaching on servant leadership that we should put others needs ahead of our own, that we need to recognise need in others perhaps by walking more slowly through the crowd and take initiative to respond to that need; that we should perform acts of kindness and help others anonymously (God is the only one who needs to know what we have done); that we should be confident that we can make a positive difference; that we should reflect on the love that we have for others in our lives and develop a desire for action- which I would add should be rooted in love. All this but only with God’s help through the love and example of Christ, the guidance of His Holy Spirit and communication through prayer. For it is through God’s grace that we serve others, to His glory and not our own, it is by following in our Saviour’s footsteps that we can develop the heart condition that will allow us to be good and faithful servants!

Let us now reflect on today’s message and the importance of serving others rather than being self-serving as we sing our next hymn: Make me a Channel of Your Peace

**Hymn-** Make me a Channel of Your Peace

Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring your love.  
Where there is injury, your pardon, Lord  
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope  
Where there is darkness, only light  
And where there's sadness, ever joy.

Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

Make me a channel of your peace  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned  
In giving to all men that we receive  
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.  
  
Oh, Master grant that I may never seek  
So much to be consoled as to console  
To be understood as to understand  
To be loved as to love with all my soul.

**Prayers of Intercession-**

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 serve others as You did.”**

Dear Lord, we come to You in prayer, asking that You will help us to be true Christian servants, following your will and not our own always ready to serve others and not ourselves.

We pray for our precious world, make us faithful servants who take care of Your gift of creation so that we do not squander and destroy our beautiful planet in our own self-serving greed and selfishness. We ask that as we approach the COP26- the United Nations Climate Change Conference- that the nations of the world will unite in action not words to safeguard our planet’s future and to stem the decimating impact that climate change, caused by mankind, is wreaking on our fragile world.

**“Hear our prayers Lord, and help us serve others as You did.”**

We pray for the governments and religious leaders of our world asking that as they lead and determine the hopes and aspirations of the people they are there to serve, the decisions they make will be for the good of all Your people and never self-serving. We pray that the leaders of all nations will remember that they are there to serve and not be served and that to be great they must be the slave of all and we ask that they will clothe themselves in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience so that they might respond fully to the needs of all people across the world determined to put an end to poverty, discrimination, fear and injustice.

**“Hear our prayers Lord, and help us serve others as You did.”**

We pray for the Church across the world and ask that it be always ready to serve. We pray that Your church will reach outwards, shining with Your light to penetrate the darkness of the world by sharing Your message of hope with those waiting to hear the good news of the Gospel which is its greatest service. We pray that You will continue to protect those Christians who are persecuted for their faith, Your suffering servants, giving them strength and peace Lord as they bear their cross in Your name and let us be ready to serve in any way we can, to ease their suffering.

**“Hear our prayers Lord, and help us serve others as You did.”**

We pray for those in need. We pray that we will always be ready to serve others rather than being self-serving. Help us to serve, in any way we can, those marginalised in society; the victims of war and poverty and disaster and all people who find themselves displaced, victims of trafficking and abuse and those experiencing homelessness. We pray that we can be Your faithful servants reaching out to people in Your name and using our voices to plead the cause of those who can't speak and that we be willing to 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 serve others as You did.”**

We pray for all those who are sick whether physically or mentally and give thanks for those caring for them. We think of and pray for those who we know personally in the silence (SILENCE). We pray for all those in the emergency services who work so hard to protect life and thank them for the way they serve the communities they find themselves in. We continue to pray for Your healing touch to provide the miracles of medicine. 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 serve others as You did.”**

We offer all these prayers Lord and those in our hearts in the name of our great intercessor, Your son, the Suffering Servant, Jesus Christ. **AMEN.**

We will now sing our final hymn, Go Forth and Tell, as we think about how each and every one of us can serve others by going out and making the most of every opportunity to share our faith and hope in Christ!

**Hymn:**Go Forth and Tell

Go forth and tell! the doors are open wide:

share God's good gifts - let no one be denied;

live out your life as Christ your Lord shall choose,

Your ransomed powers for His sole glory use.

Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise!

Go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;

go till all nations His great name adore

and serve Him, Lord and King for evermore

Go forth and tell! O Church of God, awake!

God's saving news to all the nations take:

proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord and King,

that all the world His worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all;

He will in grace respond to all who call:

how shall they call if they have never heard

the gracious invitation of His word?

Go forth and tell! men still in darkness lie;

in wealth or want, in sin they live and die:

give us, O Lord, concern of heart and mind,

a love like Yours which cares for all mankind.

**Blessing:** And now, before we go out into the world to serve others let each of us take a moment to think about how, in the week ahead, we can be a faithful servant of Christ, how we can serve others and share our hope and faith as we listen to “Make me a Servant” by Marantha Singers: [Make Me A Servant With Lyrics - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6U8O_WnPZY)

Dear Lord, we thank you for all that we have shared together today. Send us out now Lord as Your servants, to serve You by serving others with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, forgiveness and love so that Your light might shine through us to everyone we meet. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all today and always. Amen.