**Morning Praise @ Home 16 July 2023**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Isaiah 60: 1 – 3 Luke 9: 1 – 6

**Reflection from John *God’s Sent Ones***

Sometimes in a conversation there’s a passing phrase or sentence that takes the chat in a new direction.

At first sight this passage of Scripture is all about the apostles being sent out to show and tell the Good News of Jesus. It’s true. That’s what it is about but this scripture begins with a phrase which transforms for us all that follows.

READ LUKE 9:1

Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases.

That time together with Jesus was vital for the first apostles and for us, the friends and followers of Jesus.

When a business venture starts up, it’s often the dream of the one who starts it up but to succeed it needs others to come on board. One person can’t do it all. How much more is this true for the followers of Jesus.

The 12 apostles have been with Jesus for quite some time by now. They have witnessed many miracles and heard many teachings. What Jesus knows - but they don’t - is that he won’t be physically with them much longer. They must learn to do what he has done:

To trust God as he trusted God.

To adventure with the Kingdom beyond their previous experience.

Now Jesus is sending them on a mission with the power and authority over all the powers of darkness and to cure diseases.

This is a great lesson in leadership here, namely empowering the less experienced followers, empowering them with His own Spirit and giving them the tools they need to accomplish their tasks.

Make no mistake, as Jesus sent the Apostles repeatedly to show and tell his life and love so he asks the same of each of us.

When we say in the Creed that we believe in the One, Holy Universal and APOSTOLIC CHURCH what are we saying?

Apostolic means sent ones. They were sent and so are we BUT we are also to be equipped. And so that first verse is vital. It matters that as God’s Church we are equipped for an outward facing adventure of Faith.

So note that Jesus empowers those whom He calls before He sends them.

Recall that the 12 apostles were ordinary individuals. Yet, with the power and authority Jesus gave them, they were transformed into courageous preachers and healers. Indeed, Jesus can turn our weaknesses into strengths for His own sake!

The next bit is a bit of a surprise. Jesus says YES I will prepare and equip you but he goes on to say travel light because stuff = possessions have the tendency to possess us. Jesus instructs His 12 apostles to take nothing for the journey. It means they have to rely on divine providence.

If Jesus clothed them with power and authority, He will surely make sure their daily material needs are provided as well. He will be the one to touch the hearts of people to be generous to those whom He sent. Thus there is no need for them to bring large and heavy suitcases.

There is a danger when God’s missionary people focus more on their luggage than on their mission. Going out for a mission is basically going out of our comfort zone. Heavy baggage is necessarily burdensome. Hence, it is important to travel light.

Take nothing for your journey! This is a definite call for simple living. For 2000 years the Church has progressively saddled itself with treasures and buildings and leaders who expect to be honoured. They are hungry for resources. Instead Jesus says forget all that and travel light.

What does that look like here?

That calling as sent ones undoubtedly asks that we learn and relearn how to share our faith in OUR GENERATION. In our times.

We must translate for our own day what it means to proclaim the good news of the kingdom - of lives lived under God’s rule and in seeking to discover God’s future. At the heart of this task for his sent ones is Jesus the Son of God, our Saviour. He is the Good News and the proclamation of it is the very core or heart of our mission. By living as true Christians, our life becomes a witness to the truth of Jesus’ mission.

And there’s more…………….

Healing the physically and spiritually sick people.

As His followers, Jesus can make use of us to extend His healing touch to others. By our prayers and compassionate living activities, we can actually be instruments of God’s healing to people who are sick, hungry and emotionally drained.

Immediately beyond our Reading today is the feeding of the 5000. That’s a brilliant expression of the fact that whilst Jesus miraculously provided for the vast crowd he also asked his sent ones to give them something to eat. They and we have a part to play.

In Matthew 28: 18-20, Jesus said for all of us “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

All of us are called to become God’s apostolic Church - his sent ones. We may not be sent to faraway locations but we can be sent to our family, friends, neighbours and workplaces. We don’t have authority of our own but the authority comes from Jesus. We need not be afraid or ashamed because He is with us always to the very end of age. **Amen**

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in the world?

**We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Sue**

We thank you Lord that you are a God who longs to know our needs and involve us in your plans. We come humbly before you now:

*LORD IN YOUR MERCY* – **HEAR OUR PRAYER**

*Father God* we pray for the world you have created and now sustain.

* We lift up to you those who are making decisions about how best to support those involved in the Ukraine conflict, both militarily and in terms of humanitarian aid. We pray that an ethical, wise and effective way forward is chosen. We pray for families separated - children whose fathers are fighting, parents divided from their sons and daughters - those whose homes have been destroyed. Lord help those who have been uprooted to have their physical and emotional needs met, and we pray that they trust you as their rock when all else is shaken.
* We pray that you work in the hearts of rival leaders in Sudan, prompting them to decide to rebuild their shattered nation, rather than continue to tear it apart. We pray that you give courage to medics and humanitarian workers as they face danger in trying to give aid to the Sudanese.
* As people flee war and religious or political oppression, we pray for our response to migration here in the UK. Please inspire those in power to honour your care for the vulnerable – may the current migration bill be something that respects the dignity of all human beings as well as balancing the physical constraints of UK provision.

*LORD IN YOUR MERCY* – **HEAR OUR PRAYER**

*Lord Jesus*, we pray for your people, working so that your Kingdom on Earth reflects that in Heaven.

* We pray for all involved in foodbanks, as the increasing cost of living increases their client base. May the volunteers be able not just to provide food but also welcome and care. We pray for those giving advice on behalf of Christians Against Poverty, that you give them grace and patience as they deal with seemingly intractable problems, and for those feeling overwhelmed as the waiting list for help grows ever longer.
* We pray for the many Christians involved in the NHS and in education therefore caught up in the recent disputes, that they may be guided by your wisdom and love, caring both for their patients or pupils and their colleagues. We pray for an effective resolution of grievances so that the health and development of everyone is sustained.
* We pray for church leaders who are currently carrying heavy burdens, that they are sustained and encouraged, keeping the flame of mission alive.

*LORD IN YOUR MERCY* – **HEAR OUR PRAYER**

*Holy Spirit*, we lift up to you this community.

* We ask that you prompt us to share our faith in such a way that our neighbours are intrigued and come seeking more. Inspire us to reach out in imaginative and engaging ways, particularly lifting up to you Messy Church, our links with the staff and pupils of Bishop Wilson school, and for the right individuals to apply to be our Children and Families’ worker.
* We pray for the security of those who will be travelling on holiday over the summer break, and that you keep us alert to the vulnerable who may lack the routine support of neighbours or school. Help us to respond to your prompting in care of our neighbours, that your name may be commended.
* We pray that you bind the members of this church together in deeper trust and fellowship, and in communal generosity, so that we truly function as a team and are properly resourced in serving our community.

*MERCIFUL FATHER* – **ACCEPT THESE PRAYERS FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SON, OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, AMEN.**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be, that you may live and work to his praise and glory, and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**