**Morning Praise @ Home**

**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 James 3:17 – 4:10 Matthew 7:24 – 29

### Reflection from Ruth

This week, we learned of the Archbishop of Canterbury’s resignation, following the Makin report into the abuse perpetrated by John Smyth.

In his resignation letter, Archbishop Justin says:-

“*The Makin Review has exposed the long-maintained conspiracy of silence about the heinous abuses of John Smyth. When I was informed in 2013 and told that police had been notified, I believed wrongly that an appropriate resolution would follow. It is very clear that I must take personal and institutional responsibility for the long and retraumatising period between 2013 and 2024.”*

I have always considered the Archbishop to be a thoughtful and prayerful person, who had a very difficult job in straddling both ends of the spectrum of Anglican theology, and all the associated difficulties.

What this goes to show us is even the highest ranking person in the Church of England can act unwisely at times. And taking responsibility for unwise decisions is the sign of a good leader.

And our reading this morning is about wisdom - the wisdom to know God’s heart and mind.

When James talks about “bitter jealousy and contention’, he means a spirit which is always carping and criticizing, which cannot let a nice word go by without adding a nasty one. And when someone with that kind of spirit claims to be healthy – claims, for instance, to be a practising Christian – James has a sharp response.

Such a person, he says, is boasting. They are telling lies against the truth.

Previously James has said that the tongue is a fire set aflame by hell; now he says that a mindset like that comes from the world of demons.

It may give some appearance of wisdom. Cynicism often does.

We are faced, then, with two kinds of wisdom. This may well be a word for our day, when so many people across the world are fed up with the way their country is run, with the way their police force behaves, with the way the global economy functions.

But the challenge then for God’s people is to be able to tell the truth about the way the world is, and about the way wicked people are behaving, without turning into a perpetual grumble, and in particular without becoming someone whose appearance of ‘wisdom’ consists in being able to find a cutting word to say about everyone and everything.

Think of a person who you consider to be wise.

What characteristics do they have?

I would imagine that they fit with James’ definition. It’s clear that this ‘wisdom’ isn’t a matter of knowing a large number of facts. Nor is it a particular skill in negotiating, or managing, or leadership, or academic scholarship.

 It is much deeper than any of these.

It is ‘holy, peaceful, gentle, compliant, filled with mercy and good fruits, unbiased, sincere’.

It might be easy for those James has described already, those filled with jealousy and contention, to pour scorn on these characteristics.

In our cynical age people might look on someone who is gentle and compliant as a wimp, perhaps a bit naive, not really aware of how nasty the world is.

 But these characteristics have nothing to do with naivety. They are hard to acquire and hard to maintain. They can only be sustained at great personal cost. They only appear where there has been a steady habit of prayer and self-discipline; even then they may take a while to show themselves.

Jesus said that peacemakers are blessed, and James goes further. Allowing a jealous spirit turn into backbiting and fault finding does not only stop peace.

It is allowing the build-up of a climate of fear, anger and suspicion in which wars and fighting can all too easily occur.

And with our country and the wider world in the situation it is, peacemakers are in short supply.

So asking for God’s wisdom and checking ourselves when we want to be critical can help us to discern how to act in a way which, over time, will make a difference to those around us, and as God’s church collectively - to the wider world. **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**

As the United Nations climate conference, COP29, continues, let us bring our prayers to God, who created the earth and all within it.

Give hope and strength to all who are caught up in disasters; all who are suffering from famine or flood, all who are caught up in storms or earthquakes. Help us all to take responsibility for events which happen due to climate change, for failure to manage the earth’s resources wisely. We pray for the countries which have been meeting at COP29 in Baku, that all will be committed to developing renewable energy for the benefit of all and that promises made for the future will come to fruition

Creator God we pray for people suffering from the effects of conflict, terrorism and persecution in all parts of your world. Strengthen all who work for freedom and justice and raise up leaders of integrity and faith who will fully embrace all efforts to care for their fellow man.

We pray that those who hold positions within the church will recognise their responsibility towards those affected by abuse and will act to protect the vulnerable in society

We pray for our community; for all without a home to call their own, for those without a proper wage or dependable income, for the overworked, for those who face discrimination. We give thanks for our homes and our loved ones and pray you will give to us the courage to stand for truth and to persevere in times of trouble.

Give grace to all who care for others in their daily work; for doctors, nurses and ambulance workers; for the fire brigade, the police and social workers. We pray for those who are unwell at this time and rely on those in the caring profession. Today we especially pray for Geoffrey Parsons. Give him the reassurance of your presence and bring him your peace.

We pray for those who mourn and this week we particularly remember the family and friends of Sue Smith.

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**