

Welcome

Welcome once again to the worship of Tyndale Baptist Church, sadly not in the building, but recorded, as another lockdown begins. It has been good to meet Sunday by Sunday over the last few weeks and to welcome people both in the church and on Zoom, but now, for a time, we must revert to the somewhat more 'remote' form of a recorded service. Nevertheless we trust that this time will be as worshipful as a 'live service' – and the welcome is made as warmly and sincerely as ever.

All worship uses the frail, partial efforts of human beings – music., voices, words – to reach beyond our human experience in an attempt to touch the life of God and that's true whether it's live or recorded, but Christian worship proceeds in the hope, expectation and confidence that God graces us with His presence and that his Holy Spirit is able to take what we have to offer and, as it were, transform it, make it acceptable, so that, live or recorded, worship is both human and divine – it's shot through with God's life in every part.

In fact during this lockdown churches are still able to open, but we have decided *not* to do so – of course for reasons of safety, but also 'to stand with the wider community in making every effort to limit the spread of the virus' – to quote words from the website of the Baptist Union of which Tyndale is a member church. When schools, colleges, businesses of every kind are forced to close it feels right that we should also share in the inconvenience and, indeed, the common experience, of so many; its little enough, but, we hope, it's more than just a gesture of our part in common humanity. We can claim no special privilege because of our religion, and we are called to witness to the One who came to share our human lot.

But, we believe, he – Christ - came to share it and *to transcend it*; and that's what our worship testifies to – not least on this Sunday which marks the baptism of Christ, which speaks of death *and* resurrection – the very heart of the gospel, and good news for a suffering world.

BPW 132 ['Morning has broken'](#)

Orla Fallon

Call to Worship

We gather in the spirit of togetherness with all who, this day, wonder and worry and work and wait for the day when freedoms will come, when justice will be done, when peace will be known, when we will be one; we gather in the belief that all these things spring from the heart of God and flow into our world and our lives through Christ; we gather in the name of Christ and in the power of God's own Spirit, and we worship

BPW 544 ['Through all the changing scenes of life'](#)

Scottish Festival Singers

Opening Prayer

Lord God, in the peace of these minutes we come before you and offer you our worship. We rejoice in the life you have given and that you sustain and that, in Christ, you have made new as we bring thankful hearts for all your goodness; as we honour and adore you for your creating power and your overwhelming love, and as we come from a world that aches and groans in the turmoil of these times and from frustration at its own frailty.

Lord the aching and groaning are ours also; forgive us as we confess before you in a moment of quiet our own frailty and as we turn again to you in Christ; as we trust you once more; as we put our faith in your Word to us.

All of this we do, Lord, only because first you have done marvellous things for us in Christ Jesus, with a love that reaches beyond the worse we can do, have done, have allowed, have not challenged; with a love that mends all and covers all and forgives all and brings healing where there is much to be healed and peace where there is little sign of peace.

Lord, accept our worship in Christ's name we pray, amen.

Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen

Reading [Genesis 1:1-5](#)

'Creation Sings The Father's Song'

Townend & Getty, performed by Keith & Kristyn Getty

Reading [Mark 1:4-11](#)

Sermon

We've left some Christmas lights on outside the manse. Well folk on the local community Whatsapp group suggested leaving lights on as a way of brightening things up during these dark winter days. Now I understand there's a call for folk across the country to do similarly.

We're joining in with the 'clap for carers' – now 'clap for heroes' on Thursday evening.

We've closed Tyndale. Lockdown rules allow us to stay open, but we've decided to close – for safety, of course, but also 'to stand with the wider community in making every effort to limit the spread of the virus'.

A quote from the Baptist Union's website..

Sounds good to me; actually it captures something of the spirit of today's theme – the baptism of Christ –

Mark: *In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan'.*

Luke: *Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized....'*

Solidarity. We've decided to close the church out of solidarity- a gesture, no more, of solidarity with all those whose lives are closed down – businesses, schools, jobs, families – while health workers struggle to cope and hospitals fill to bursting – a suffering world – and we stand in solidarity.

Like the clapping – probably not many health workers will hear, or see, but hopefully they will know - we're clapping in support and to express gratitude *and we – me -* are joining in – out of solidarity.

Like the lights on our street – most years lights left on after Candlemas (twelfth night) look a bit sad, to me, a bit of an anticlimax. The old curmudgeon in me wants to say, 'bah, humbug!' – they don't look particularly cheerful, to me, they just look a stale, about as alluring as leftover Turkey..

But this year, folk are leaving their lights on, and so are we, *out of solidarity*. It's only a gesture, it won't make much difference to anything, but we're doing it *out of solidarity*

I can't help feeling sorry for all those Trump supporters in Washington who caused such mayhem last Wednesday, storming the Capitol building. Listening to some of them, they really believed that they could overturn the whole thing.

Oh, I am entirely supportive of the general condemnation and I was struck by the contrast someone drew between the way Black Lives Matter protestors were treated by the police last year and the way these protestors were able to run riot –

But I can't help feeling a bit sorry for them – why? Because Trump, having incited them and saying in his speech that 'we are going to walk down to the Capitol', went back to the White House in an armoured SUV and 'hunkered down', while his supporters stormed the Capitol without him – 'solidarity?'

Surely if he believed what he's been saying and wanted his supporters to 'take back America' he'd have gone with them out of solidarity..

The baptism of Jesus. There's lots to be said about what it means - the symbolism of death and resurrection, the sign at the start of his ministry, his relationship with John etc – but for today – solidarity – think of Jesus being baptised *out of solidarity – Now when all the people were baptized, and when Jesus also had been baptized....'*

Out of solidarity, you might say, with all those people – all those who had begun to respond to John's message, who had begun to turn from their old lives and had been baptised as a sign of their commitment to leading a new life –

that's how baptism has often been portrayed, hasn't it? That's how we've often practised it; something

done in the church amongst a chosen few who have committed themselves to new lives – the great engine that’s moved the Baptist world for centuries, this baptism –

But more than that – solidarity, not just with John’s baptismal candidates – but with *everyone* – think of baptism as a sign of the world – the world that, Genesis says, was born in water; the world that, we all know, is marked by death and ending and destruction – don’t we know it, in this pandemic?

Doesn’t it strike you that baptism is a fitting sign in such a world – going down into the waters – what is it the psalmist says, ‘save me, O God, for the waters have come up to my neck’ – we know about that sense, don’t we? Is there anyone who doesn’t (apart from Donald Trump, possibly..)?

That sense of being overwhelmed; ‘this isolation is really getting to me’; ‘how can I keep my business, my livelihood, my family, my very self – afloat?’; ‘How many more patients are going to come through those swing doors?’; ‘How can I teach my 10 year old algebra I haven’t thought about for forty years?’

That’s our world at the moment – that’s the world of every pandemic sufferer, every refugee, every employee, every Trump supporter, every Rohingya Muslim, everyone – apart, perhaps, from a few billionaires...a few bikini-clad influencers on a Dubai beach, though it’s coming for them, too, I’m sure: ‘the waters have come up to my neck...’

Solidarity ‘it is necessary to fulfil all righteousness’ says Jesus in Matthew – maybe it was necessary to fulfil something else as well – his participation in our human destiny. It’s a sign of what we will come to see in coming weeks: at the last, he dies our death.

Out of solidarity. Thank God that at the heart of our faith is one who is like us in every way, born like us, living like us, dying like us

Out of solidarity..Then thank God, also, that solidarity cuts both ways; if he has become like us, then we, by faith, can become like him...

As Paul puts it - Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

See, it might seem like only a gesture, Jesus’ baptism.. it didn’t seem to make much difference to anything..

But Mark, Luke and Matthew record that Jesus came up out of the water, and he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, “You are my Son, the Beloved;^[1] with you I am well pleased.”

And we shall see in coming weeks that the gesture was a sign of all that lay ahead and that led, eventually to his death and his rising again – that made a difference to *everything*

[‘Baptism’](#)

Prayers

Lord, we pray in solidarity with all those who suffer this day; in hospitals, in care homes, in private homes; in businesses, on the streets, in refugee camps and on asylum seeking routes – and keep silence for any known to us

May they be helped by the spirit of the One who came into our world, in solidarity with us all

Lord
Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray in solidarity with all those who struggle this day; exhausted health workers, hard-pressed parents; politicians faced with impossible decisions; the depressed, the lonely, the grieving, the ill, the disillusioned - and keep silence for any known to us

May they be strengthened by the spirit of the One who lived and died in solidarity with them all

Lord
Hear our prayer

Lord, we pray for ourselves, grateful that you have lived in solidarity with us, died our death and risen so that we might live in solidarity with you

May we be enabled to live by faith, inspired to serve the world and humbled by our common human lot
Lord
Hear our prayer

'Guardian God'

Cantus Firmus Trust

Offering & the Grace:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore, Amen.

'I heard the voice of Jesus say'

Vocals: Wendy Ritchie. Horatius Bonar/adpt. & arr. Ralph Vaughn Williams.

Blessing

Thanks to Rachel, to the Tyndale Singers, to Mike and Mavis for the readings and to Nick & Tina for getting the script out in the post. Thanks to Ian Holyer for producing and recording the service and to Ian Waddington for managing the website.

We think of each other as we enter another week and commit to praying for one another and supporting each other and anyone we can in any way we can – until we meet again.

A 'together though apart' time follows at 11.30 am