

**Welcome** by Bruce.

Good Morning, and welcome to our on-line service on this Mothering Sunday.

Our worship today is being conducted by the Rev Peter Webb and the Rev Elizabeth Webb. Peter and Elizabeth need no introduction as their association with Tyndale goes back to 1975 when Peter became our minister. Their family grew up as part of the church and we were delighted when, on their retirement, they decided to move back to Bristol and rejoin our fellowship. I would like to thank them both for leading us, and look forward to a greater understanding of God's message.

Our Zoom coffee shop will take place as usual on Tuesday morning at 11.00 with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

On Wednesday evening at 7.30, again on Zoom, there will be a discussion led by Ken Stewart on the film entitled "I am Greta." It would be good if people try and see the film before hand as it is 1 hour 42 minutes long, and won't be shown on the night. It is available on [BBC i-Player](#) without cost, if you pay your TV licence.

Please join us if you are free....

The Annual Election of Deacons' took place on Tuesday night and I am pleased to report that all three candidates being David Bell, Graham Lewis and Ian Waddington were duly re-elected for a further three years. At that meeting the decision was taken that Tyndale will re-open for morning services from the 18<sup>th</sup> April, assuming that the current road map out of lockdown has not changed.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Rachel our Community Minister following her surgery and the good news that she requires no further treatment.

And finally tea and coffee will be served at the end of this service if you walk to your kitchen and make it.

Thank you.

Thank you for your welcome. Elizabeth and I are pleased to be leading worship at Tyndale again though under rather different circumstances from the last time. Even so we worship where we are whether at church or at home or anywhere else.

Elizabeth and I are members of the Northumbria Community and part of our discipline is to say the Daily Office where we join with people of all denominations all over the world. We thought it would be good if used that act of devotion and prayer as we share in worship today. You may well find that some of the words are already familiar to you.

"[Faithful One](#)" by Brian Doerksen performed by the Mandate

**Opening Sentences** *from Morning Prayer of the Northumbria Community*

One thing I have asked of the Lord,  
this what I seek  
that I may dwell in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life;  
to behold the beauty of the Lord  
and to seek him in his temple.

Call: Who is that you seek?

**Response: We seek the Lord our God**

Call: Do you seek him with all your heart?

**Response: Amen, Lord have mercy.**

Call: Do you seek him with all your soul?

**Response: Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Call: Do you seek him with all your mind?

**Response: Amen. Lord have mercy.**

Call: Do you seek him with all your strength?

**Response: Amen. Christ have mercy.**

*Declaration of Faith*

To whom shall we go?

You have the words of eternal life,  
and we have believed and have come to know

that you are the holy one of God.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ,  
King of endless glory.

Hymn No. 374 (BPW) [God is love](#) - sung by St John's Episcopal Church, Boulder

### **Prayers of Thanksgiving and Confession**

After the words *For that great truth* please respond **we praise and thank you**

Gracious God, as a mother loves a child so you love us.

*For that great truth we praise and thank you*

We owe our very lives to you. You have watched over us from our birth, tenderly nurturing us, showing us with love. When we have needed you, you have been there.

*For that great truth we praise and thank you.*

You have given us strength in times of need, comfort in time of distress, encouragement in time of despair, guidance in times of uncertainty. Whatever we have faced, you have been with us.

*For that great truth we praise and thank you.*

Gracious God, we have not always appreciated your love, all too often ignoring what you would teach us, disobeying your instructions, taking you for granted and wandering far from your side. Yet through it all your love has remained constant.

*For that great truth we praise and thank you.*

Gracious God, caring for us more than you care for yourself, sacrificing your all for our sakes, loving us with an unquenchable love, you have called us to be your children,

*For that great truth we praise and thank you, in the name of Christ. Amen*

### **The 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

Hymn No 103 (BPW) Open this book - sung by Tyndale Virtual Singing Group

Reading [Luke 2: 25-35](#)

"I waited patiently" – Mike Garnier

Reading [Colossians 3: 12-17](#)

### **Sermon**

Today, on this Mothering Sunday, I want us to look at the significance of the family and what this has to say to the church. Because the family is the place of greatest human intimacy it is often the place where human tensions are felt at their strongest. We can say: "There's no place like home", but we know very well home is not always a happy place, nor is its influence always good. But whether good or bad it does have tremendous influence, affecting every one of us.

For some time, the importance of the family has been challenged. There are those who have said that the grouping of people together in families has a purely biological explanation. There are others who say we live together in families simply because we have never stopped to consider whether there might be a better way of organising things. Some argue that the family is just a matter of economics. Money determines where we live and how we live and with whom we live. But although all these explanations may have some truth, none of them satisfies us, for as Christians, we believe the family was created by God. It is not merely accidental or convenient; it is his gift for our enjoyment.

Some attempts have been made to dispense with the family, or at least modify it for the benefit of the state. The Nazis in Germany experimented in an attempt to produce a master race. The kibbutzim in Israel and the communalisation of the family in Communist China have both been attempts at social engineering. Nor does the family lack its respectable critics. "Far from being the basis of the good society, the family with its narrow privacy and tawdry secrets is the source of all our discontents." So said the anthropologist, Edmund Leach. The family has been under pressure for some time.

As we look at the social factors of poverty, poor housing and unemployment we see the crying need to support, strengthen and develop family life.

The Bible is full of teaching about the family. It could well be said that the Bible is most profound when it describes our relationship with God in family terms. Does any prophet get nearer the truth of God than Hosea, picturing God as a parent yearning for Israel as a dearly loved but wayward child? There is the tender account of Mary's conception, birth and nurture of her child and the prophecy of the pain she will endure as we saw in our first reading from Luke 2. Can any teaching about God compare with that of Jesus, who, in Luke 19, weeps over Jerusalem, like a mother, saying if only they had let him gather them under his wings as a hen protects her chicks. Jesus further teaches us that husband and wife are called to the joy of lifelong, faithful union in marriage. He also reveres children, and sees the young child as the pattern for those who would enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The New Testament letters develop Christ's teaching, and spell out the mutual love and respect that should mark Christian wives and husbands, parents and children as indicated clearly in Paul's letter to the Colossians.

Biblical teaching on the family is the root of a caring civilization. It is the real back to basics. The family is the primary setting for learning moral values - trust, forgiveness, sharing, and unselfishness. What quality would you rate highest for family life in your understanding? Is it too obvious to say, to quote the Beatles Song "All you need is love"? The family is the one place where we can expect to find love. But anyone with the least experience of real families knows that it is a struggle to maintain relationships as even the Royal Family have discovered. Too readily we take our families for granted. You would expect us to be grateful to those to whom we owe most, but it's very easy to treat those nearest to us as we would treat strangers. Family love needs to be protected and fostered. What is it that families have most missed during the separation caused by lockdown? Hugs and kisses. We want to show the members of our family how much we love them, by words and actions which we can say and do for one another for no other reason than love itself. However, there is a sense in which family love is the love you can take for granted, the one love you should be able to count on, come what may. In the family you are loved for yourself, not because of what you are, often in spite of what you are. This may not be true of every family, of course, but thank God it is true of many, and should be true of Christian families. Family love is the one love you don't have to fight for, or work for, or earn, or deserve. And this is why it comes nearest God's love.

At its truest and best, the Christian family can be the foretaste of the Kingdom of God. What we have said of the family we can say of the church. Today, on this Mothering Sunday, we are called to celebrate the family, and show our mothers the appreciation they deserve as they seek to make our homes places of acceptance, love and forgiveness. This is no easy task with the undermining pressure of the corona epidemic. We have been made aware of the tremendous pressure put on children and parents as they struggle with home schooling and working from the house rather than the office. We feel the pain of not being able to see elderly parents and grandparents. We're anxious about the future and frustrated because we can't make any plans. But we have hope that the epidemic will be overcome and we will eventually find a new normal. In the meantime we find all sorts of ways of keeping in touch by Skype Zoom and WhatsApp .

What has all got to say to the church? Mothering Sunday is a day when we are reminded that we are called to make the church a true family of God, sharing the adventure of faith, supporting each other, genuinely interested in each other, willing to make sacrifices for each other, creating community. However, it has to be said there are those who feel alienated from the church. They feel unwanted, unworthy, unaccepted. They think the church is just for the good, the pious, the holy. If that is the case we have work to do, for as someone said: The church is a not a social club for saints but a hospital for wounded sinners. The true family of God is where all may find they belong, whatever their background, gender, race, or colour.

This, I believe is one of Tyndale's strengths. The very fact that we have a slogan "Open to God Open for All" indicates that we believe the church exists not just for those who come to worship but for the vulnerable, the fragile and those who rarely come at all. The church, the family of God exists for everyone. There's room for anybody. It is where the lonely, the outcast, the stranger find a welcome, highlighted in one of the verses in the hymn we shall sing at the end of our service:

"Let us build a house where hands will reach  
beyond the wood and stone,  
to heal and strengthen, serve and teach,  
and live the Word they've known.  
Here the outcast and the stranger  
Let us bring an end to fear and danger.

All are welcome, all are welcome, all are welcome in this place."

Let us pray that these words will continue to be the thread that runs through the whole life of Tyndale as we open up our buildings again for worship and service to the community in the days that lie ahead.

Hymn No 473 (BPW) [Brother, sister, let me serve you](#) - sung by the Northumbrian Community

## Prayers for others

After the words Lord of love, please respond, **hear our prayer**

Gracious God, you know what it is to love your children – to watch over them tenderly, anxiously, proudly and constantly. You know what this means, for you have called us your children and you care for each of us as deeply as a mother cares for her child. So now we pray for those entrusted with the responsibility of motherhood, all those who watch over their children in the same way, with the same feelings and intensity. Grant to each one your wisdom, guidance and strength.

Lord of love, **hear our prayer**

We pray especially for single mothers and fathers – those faced with the challenge of raising a child or children on their own, with no one else to share the joys of parenthood. Give to each of them patience, devotion and dedication.

Lord of love, **hear our prayer**

We pray for those who have lost their mothers or never known them, those orphaned as children or given up for adoption, those whose mothers have died, all for whom this day brings pain rather than pleasure. Grant them your comfort, your support and the assurance of your love always with them.

Lord of love, **hear our prayer**

We pray for those who are anxious about their children, – mothers whose children are returning to school at this time of Pandemic, and those whose children have moved far from home. We remember mothers who have suffered a miscarriage or been through an abortion, and those who have endured the agony of a child's death. Give to them your comfort, your solace and hope for the future.

Lord of love, **hear our prayer**

Gracious God, we pray for the church that we who are the body and hands of Christ here on earth may have a true concern for all, a genuine awareness of the wider fellowship to which we belong that all may see the bond in Christ that makes us one. Help us to learn what it means to be your people, to appreciate the wonder of your love and teach us to show the same love and care in all our dealings with one another.

Lord of love, **hear our prayer, in the name of Christ. Amen**

## Offering

We share together the grace:

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

## *Canticle from the Northumbrian Community*

Christ, as a light illumine and guide me. Christ, as a shield overshadow me. Christ under me; Christ over me; Christ beside me on my left and my right. This day, be within and without me, lowly and meek, yet all powerful. Be in the heart of each to whom I speak; in the mouth of each who speaks unto me. This day be within and without me, lowly and meek yet all powerful. Christ as a light, Christ as a shield, Christ beside me on my left and my right.

Hymn CG 4 [Let us build a house](#) - Marty Haugen and choir

May the peace of God, which is beyond our utmost understanding and of far more worth than human reasoning, keep guard over our hearts and thoughts; in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

## [A Northumbrian Blessing](#)

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you, wherever he may send you. May he guide you through the wilderness, protect you through the storm. May he bring you home rejoicing at the wonders he has shown you. May he bring you home rejoicing once again into our doors.