

## Notices

Good Morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this last Sunday of October. If you are a visitor with us here at Tyndale or online, I extend a special warm welcome and hope you feel at home with us.

Our worship today is being conducted by Rev Helena McKinnon. Helena needs no introduction to many of us as she has played a major role in the life of the Whiteladies Road churches over many years. In addition to being a member of Redland Park URC, and being married to the current minister, she is a member of the South Western Synod training team, being in her time Youth Development Officer, Pastoral Care Lead and Outreach Coordinator for St Monica Trust, and specialises in spirituality and retreats. Helena, we are very pleased that you have agreed to lead worship for us this morning, and look forward to hearing God's message through your preaching.

On Tuesday, our in person Coffee Shop will take place here in the Sanctuary from 10am until 12 noon. Please come along and join us for this time of informal conversation and refreshments.

On Wednesday our time@tyndale will be led by Rachel Haig and we will be looking at 'What is Church?' – and evening of creative exploration with Godly Play. Refreshments will be served from 7.30pm.

Our coffee shop held over Zoom has moved to a Thursday morning at 11.00am, with the sign in details being able to be obtained through the Tyndale web site.

Next Sunday our service will be led by Michael Docker and will be our monthly morning Communion Service.

Thank you.

## Gathering Song **Come, now is the time to worship**

Brian Doerksen

## Greeting

I bring greetings from Redland Park United Reformed Church, just up the road and thank you for the invitation to lead worship here today.

Today is the last day of October, All Hallows Eve.

Last night the clocks went back and the coming days of darkness remind us of the changing seasons.

It was a pivotal time of year for our Celtic forbears who felt the border between this world and the next become especially thin in this autumn season. It became the time of year for remembering.

Some protestant denominations, particularly in Northern Europe mark the 31<sup>st</sup> Oct as Reformation Day: recalling the occasion when Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of Wittenberg's church

There's lots to recall and recollect at this season not least that we remind ourselves of those faithful souls who have gone before us, in whose steps we tread and whose Christian witness we commemorate every year on 1<sup>st</sup> November - All Saint's Day

However this year Oct 31<sup>st</sup> is of extra special significance for it marks the start of the COP26 summit in Glasgow, we wait to hear if anything of historic global significance will emerge.

But now we are come to worship God.

## Call to Worship

Present to one another and attentive to his Word  
we come to make space in our hearts for the One  
who is the source of all life and love.

God's people have gathered

## Let us worship him together

**BPW 442 Great God, your love has called us here**

## Prayers

Most Gracious and Loving God

Our world has its stories

Our lives have their stories

Our faith has its stories.

All these stories have their beginning and end in you.

And we look back with gratitude to the saints who have helped to shape your story across the years, leaving their mark on succeeding generations.

We praise and worship you for holding all their stories together.

There is so much that speaks to us of your love and purpose -

in the beauty of the world, the changing seasons, the colours and textures of autumn – all point to the grandeur and majesty of creation and the vastness of the universe.

There is so much that speaks to us of your tender loving care -

in the fellowship we share one with one another,

in the gifts that you release within us, and in the relationship we enjoy with you-

Through all these things you teach, you guide, you challenge us.

Forgive us then that we sometimes choose not to hear your voice,

that we turn away.

Preoccupied with our own agendas, we often do not want to hear, or listen or attend to your word.

Turn us around Lord, open our hearts, our eyes, our ears, our minds  
to receive your truth more completely, as did the saints of old,  
that we may know once more the freedom that your way brings,  
as with joy we take up again the Christian story and walk the way with you.  
Through JC our Lord.

### **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**

**Song recording      For all the saints who showed your love      Mike Garnier      John Bell**

### **Introduction -A Good Word**

I have this plaque hanging next to our front door in the manse – It reads

'Bidden or unbidden God is present'

This saying is commonly attributed to Carl Jung, the eminent Swiss psychologist -

however Jung states that that he actually discovered it among the Latin writings of Erasmus, the 15<sup>th</sup> century humanist scholar who in turn claimed it to be part of an ancient Spartan text.

Jung popularized the Latin text by having it inscribed over the doorway of his house and also on the headstone of his grave as a reminder that we should always be seeking the Spiritual in the everyday.

This English version hangs in our hallway and invariably invites comments from those who cross our threshold – it's certainly a talking point.

Over the past months since lockdown, I have had several requests for house blessings – many from folk who have little or no association with the church, but who still feel a connection with the rich spiritual legacy of Christianity.

Something prompts their enquiry: usually a memory from a past times and because of the precarious nature of life at the moment – people are drawn to look back, to recall and re-member what helped previous generations through difficult moments.

Prayer seems to feature quite a lot, so does the idea of a benediction – literally a good word.

The practice of having good words spoken around things that matter like family and home, is something that would have been second nature to our Celtic Christian forbears

Words of blessing matter, so choosing what to say and how to say it is important especially when moving into a new house or simply making room for a new work space

Something the saints of old would have done naturally.

We have a rich heritage that has been handed down to us, a treasure house of prayers, liturgies and rituals from the past that have suddenly come into their own.

And when folk are looking for reassurance during a time of uncertainty like now, something that feels solid and trustworthy and enduring has the power to evoke a sense of the numinous

All this reminded me that within the Jewish tradition there is the practice of pinning a small box to the doorpost. It's called the Mezuzah and contains a piece of parchment inscribed with the words of the first commandment, The Shema beginning-

'Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one'.....we all know it

### **PHOTO OF MEZUZAH**

It is deliberately placed on the doorpost to remind the faithful of the covenantal relationship between God and his people, so that every time anyone enters or leaves the home they touch the box to signify that their 'going out and coming in' is under the gaze of the Almighty.

These words are reminders of God's protection and providential care and reciting them has been a tradition within Judaism since the children of Israel first settled in Canaan.

I love that it is still so much a part of our Jewish friends ordinary everyday life today.

**Reading: [Deuteronomy 6 vv1-9](#)**

**Song      Oh the love of my Lord is the essence**

Estelle White

**Reading: [Mark 12: 28 - 34](#)**

**BPW 53      King of glory, King of peace**



## Sermon      First things first

Nothing in Mark's story prepares the reader for this conversation between Jesus and this Jerusalem scribe.

Throughout the gospels, the Scribes – the legal experts of the day generally get a bad press. They were always on Jesus' back.

In cahoots with the Sadducees, Pharisees and Herodians, who normally they would have nothing to do with, the Scribes sought to wrong foot Jesus so that one way or another they might contrive a way to bring him to trial.

The one person who breaks this pattern of hostility is the Scribe of our text.

He appears to be on side with the wit and wisdom of Jesus.

He discerns how subtly Jesus handles the opposition, turning the tables on the religious establishment and its silly games of oneupmanship.

This Scribe is impressed so proffers a genuine enquiry of his own.

He wants to engage this remarkable prophet in a conversation without strings, for he too is a seeker after truth and this teacher from Nazareth has tweaked his interest.

In what for Jesus must have sounded like a refreshingly open question, he is invited to step across the threshold of this lawyer's theological curiosity, to share in an honest dialogue.

On the face of it, the Scribe asks a very simple question

'Which, in your view is the is the first commandment of all?'

However the scribe knows full well that there are several schools of thought on this matter and he is interested to know where Jesus stands

Which religious tradition does he subscribe to ?

There were many interpretations of the law,

We are all familiar with the saying, where there are two Jews, there are three opinions, debate about the Torah was and still is always cut and thrust.

To the orthodox, the life of faith is and always has been bound by many rules and regulations. In some instances as many as 613 precepts were required to be kept.

So where does Jesus stand?

His reply speaks volumes.

His inspiration is taken from the first commandment which he recites with a little variation

Hear O Israel, the Lord our God the Lord is one:

you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.

In citing the Shema, he affirms his allegiance to the God of Israel, his sacred heritage while breathing new life into this ancient law, by attaching it to another equally weighty obligation.

Love your neighbour as yourself

There is no other commandment greater than these. Says Jesus

These twin obligations sum up all the law and are opposite sides of the same coin.

Love God, love your neighbour, love yourself. Get this right and every other commandment will follow on from there.

All those other rules and regulations, ordinances statutes will naturally find their place after this first and most important commandment has been observed.

There is no Loving God, you see, that does not also show loving concern for others. God's law comes with the ethical imperative to do good to your neighbour and yourself

However not all Jews of the day would have readily linked the one kind of love to the other.

To many, Neighbour was defined as someone similar in outlook to yourself, an observer of the faith, descendant of Abraham, identified as part of the chosen race, never an outsider.

It took Jesus in another gospel to spell it out more clearly.

In the parable of The Good Samaritan, in Luke, we see Jesus' teaching writ large:

prompted by another lawyer's question, 'Who is my neighbour' Jesus makes his views clear.:

he asks:

' In your opinion which of these three was neighbour to the man who was robbed'

The reluctant lawyer replies

'The one who showed him mercy'

Go and do likewise.

It made uncomfortable listening for many.

But the beauty of this text is in the response from the Scribe.

' You are right teacher, this is much more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices '-

a daring statement in the light of the fact that they were standing within a stone's throw of the Temple precincts, with all its ritualistic associations, rites and practices

The Scribe gets it and Jesus recognises this and commends and encourages him

'You are not far from the Kingdom of God'.

That shut the rest of them up pretty quickly for Mark tells us,  
'After that no one dared to ask him any question.' but only for the time being.

I've often wondered why Mark included this encounter, for elsewhere in his gospel we hear Jesus denouncing the whole cabal and before we even get to the end of this chapter 12, Jesus has another rant -  
'Beware of the Scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and to be greeted with respect in the market places and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets. They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers'.

I think we get the picture

Yet here, in this encounter we have an exception.

Perhaps Mark wanted to present a more sympathetic image of a legal expert to his largely Gentile audience – to give one example at least of genuine enquiry to those outside strict Judaism, who would be looking for some indication that the Jewish establishment were not all reactionary hardliners, but willing to be open to new thinking.

But as we know such folk were few and far between.

So there we have it: the first commandment, standing tall in all its profound simplicity.

Get this one right and the rest will fall into place, Jesus tells his listeners

And it's all about .....Love, not the wishy washy kind of love of a Barbara Cartland novel,

but the hard won, demanding, challenging, self-emptying love of One who lays down his life for his friends.

Love with Heart, soul, mind and strength, that's pretty gutsy.

Nothing namby pamby about that.

No half measures there, because it reflects the way God loves us. That deep.

God wants my whole self to be engaged in the transformative process of making real his kingdom on earth.

For to be fashioned in the divine image is to be given the potentiality of becoming movers and shakers and creators and reconcilers ourselves, for we are each called to be co-workers in this redemptive enterprise of making good, setting straight and putting right.

From today, world leaders and delegates from 196 countries are arriving in the city of Glasgow for the biggest diplomatic meeting on UK soil since the second world war.

They have come to re-affirm the commitment made on the delivering of climate change goals first set out in the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Alas the record on that front has been abysmal. World leaders and mutli nationals alike have fallen miserably short of the promises and pledges made then.

This summit is set to last 12 days. Let's hope that something constructive and positive and life-affirming will emerge.

For we have all come to recognise that climate change is no longer a subject solely for academics dining at high table.

It has become a living reality that touches all of us.

Extreme weather, forest fires, droughts, floods, rising water levels are now regular occurrences that hit the headlines and are the unintended consequences of industrialisation.

Nature cries out to be restored and made good.

But we have also discovered over the last 18months, coping with the pandemic,that human beings are inextricably woven into the very fabric of nature itself.

**We** need green things around us for both our physical and mental health to thrive.

To keep us balanced and connected.

We do not own or possess the good things of earth, we are honoured guests on this planet, here but for a short time, and it behoves us to pass on to our children a world that is a source of equal delight and enrichment for them.

What has given me a great deal of encouragement has been the Earthshot programme fronted by David Attenburgh and the Duke of Cambridge. I have been both inspired and amazed by the ingenuity of individuals who have put their whole selves into tackling various issues surrounding the effects of global warming.

Cleansing the air, reviving the oceans, protecting nature, tackling waste and fixing the climate are all areas being researched .

Every year in the coming decade 5 projects will be selected and given £1 million each to continue research and development. Now that looks promising!

Meanwhile we wait with baited breath for a good word, a benediction from Glasgow – something that might perhaps be inscribed above the lintel of the United Nations building or the door posts of multi – nationals to remind them of their collective responsibility to the greater good.

We have learnt that well intentioned pronouncements and pledges are all very well but they don't cut the mustard- especially now that we're in the last gasp saloon

'Put your money where your mouth is' I hear Greta Thunberg cry

The ethical imperative is writ large: love God, love your neighbour, that means loving the earth.

Then, perhaps, like the Scribe in our story we may find ourselves just that little bit nearer to the Kingdom of God.

Maybe even saints in the making.Amen

**Silence**

**CG 134 Touch the earth lightly**

Prayers of Intercession

Gracious God

we hold before you the needs of the world,  
especially at this time when the nations are gathering  
to discuss the future of our planet.

Help them to be responsive to your call to care for the good earth,  
and help us to do our bit in sustaining the wellbeing of our environment  
both near and far -

to think twice before putting our own needs first as though they have priority over everything else.

We ask for your wisdom and guidance in the challenges that face all humankind in finding the right way forward.

God of all. **Bring wholeness and peace**

We pray for those wrestling with difficult and demanding questions -  
those facing complex matters of conscience,  
those struggling with controversial social issues.

We are mindful of countries torn apart by civil and strife, as in Afghanistan and the Yemen  
whose survival, day by day hangs by a thread  
and closer to home, those having to stretch budgets or balance the books.

We bring to you the crisis concerning the increase in energy prices and its impact on global communities, reducing  
many to poverty.

Guide the companies and governments that a fair and equitable outcome may be reached.

Comfort and strengthen those who are worried about their future.

God of all. **Bring wholeness and peace**

We pray for your church at this time of reckoning  
Save it from naïve fundamentalism, from judgemental attitudes,  
from dogmatically believing it has the answers to every situation.

Grant to your people everywhere  
the humility to recognise that asking questions is part of faith,  
and that sharing in partnership with others is a holy calling.

We pray for our local churches together group  
and the fostering of relationships across the denominations,  
that they may shine as an example of mutual cooperation and respect  
to the wider community.

God of all. **Bring wholeness and peace**

Living God

We pray for ourselves in our daily round and routine, especially at this time,  
in the encounters with those who shape our lives on the phone, along the street,  
in the shops, the cafes or staring out from a screen at a zoom meeting.

May they remind us of the interconnectedness one with the other  
and that your loving concern for all,  
reaches out beyond face coverings and social distancing.

We pray for all who are sick, and continue to pray for those who are suffering as a result of Covid 19, for their families  
and all health care professionals.

We pray that the vaccination programme may be successful in minimising the number of those infected.

We pray for those who mourn the loss of loved ones over the last 18 months and found the grieving a hard and soulless  
experience.

We pray for all who dread the darker evenings, compounding their sense of isolation and loneliness and for those who  
are homeless or lack shelter.

Help us to be alert to the needs on our own doorstep.

We pray for all who have died as disciples of Christ, may they remain within the eternal bliss of your dwelling.

God of all. **Bring wholeness and peace**

Loving God, unite us as your family: may the stronger offer support, the wealthier share what they have, the church  
offer hope and all your children live together as in one gathered fellowship of love.

**Amen**

**Words of Offering**

We pause in this moment to acknowledge the gifts that enrich the common life of this place, for the money, time and  
talents offered and received for the building of God's kingdom among this people and those beyond these doors.

**BPW 531 Give to me Lord a thankful heart**

**Blessing**

Go now in peace, to love and serve the Lord

May the living Word of Christ lighten your hearts and quicken your step in the coming days.

And the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen