

## Notices

Good morning, and welcome to Tyndale on this third Sunday of November. If you are a visitor, with us on line or here in the church, I extend a special warm welcome and hope you feel at home with us.

Our worship is being conducted by our minister Michael Docker. I would like to thank him for leading us, and look forward to hearing God's message through his teaching and preaching.

On Tuesday, our in-person Coffee Shop will take place here in the Sanctuary from 10am until 12 noon, where a warm welcome will await everyone.

On Wednesday our time@tyndale will be held in the Sanctuary. We are pleased to be able to offer a two course meal to which everyone is invited after such a long break. Refreshments are provided from 7.30pm with the meal being served at 8pm.

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

I have one advance notice and that is on the 9th of December at time@tyndale we will be welcoming the Bristol Brass Consort who will be playing a series of seasonal tunes to help us prepare for Christmas. Please put this date in your diary.

## Welcome

I add my word of welcome to everyone, in church, on-line or following the recording or script, as we come to worship on this Sunday of Christ the King – just before Advent begins - the weeks of waiting before Christmas, as our focus closes in on the baby in the manger. Today we 'lift our eyes' – to see that the Jesus we hail at Christmas is – the great paradox at the heart of things – King of all, Lord of the universe; the One in whom and through whom all things came into being by God's power. Majesty, power, humility and vulnerability *together* is the source of our wonder and our worship..

## CG 38 Gather us in

### Call to Worship

Our eyes are lifted to where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. We see Him, as it were, in our mind's eye, over and above all things – life and death; greater than all, more powerful than all and more full of love than all or any. Christ the King – it is through him that we are called here by God – and His life-giving, ever-reigning Spirit is what makes it possible for us to worship in His name.

## BPW306 Christ Triumphant

### Prayer

Lord God, the God who saves us, the God from age to age the same, from before time until the farthest reach of eternity, beyond anything we can see and understand, greater than our greatest imagination, richer than our richest experiences, higher than our highest thoughts – Lord God, we worship you – because in Christ Jesus you have come close to us, become one with us, become nearer than our next breath, become one with the world, knowing its pain and overcoming all its powers of destruction and death – praise be to your name – we worship you by the power of your own Spirit, and we look to you, on this day, to lift us to catch sight – maybe no more than a glimpse – of your eternal greatness but more, to gain a fresh awareness of your unending love for us each one - Lord God we worship you and praise you, in Jesus' name..

### 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

'Jesus is King'

Wendy Churchill

Reading [Psalm 56](#)

'Healing Streams'

Hartley, Townend and Minter Sung by Mike Garnier

Reading [John 5: 1-18](#)

## Sermon

*Lord, we give you this time; may what is spoken ring with truth, may what is heard and understood be touched by your Spirit, and may what is decided lead us on towards your Kingdom. Amen.*

There is in Jerusalem, by the Sheep Gate, a pool'. So John sets the scene. The actual site John refers to is a matter of continued conjecture, but he gives it a name.

Of the several different ways of translating it the most popular one is 'Bethesda' – House of Mercy – Bethesda – one of those Bible place names that are widely used –

Many a chapel has been named 'Bethesda', many a city, too. In the US several states have their own city called 'Bethesda' – many hospitals in the US are called Bethesda..

Bethesda..House of Mercy – 'Grace'

You may have seen a Bethesda chapel – if you've ever walked past Alma church – the building is called 'Clifton Bethesda'.

Lots of others – chapels: Methodist, Baptist (all sorts) – in many parts of England; across Wales; in Snowdonia there's a town called Bethesda

Bethesda: House of Mercy; where, according to the story, Jesus spoke to a disabled man who was lying there unable to get into the waters that were reputed to bring healing....

'Do you want to be made well?'

I don't remember many sermons – not many of us do! But I'll always remember one. It was preached in the chapel in the old College building in 1986 by Neville Clark – Principal of South Wales Baptist College.

Neville was a bit old-fashioned to us, dressed like Alec Guinness in *Kind Hearts & Coronets*, but he stood there holding just a small Bible. With no notes he spoke for about 12 minutes .

I can't remember all of it, but I remember he began – as he looked around the room at the full-of-vim students itching to get on with ministry – 'do you want to be made well?'

A silly question? Asked by a preacher, or by Jesus - *Of course* I want to be made well..We want to go into the ministry to make others well...*of course*..

Or was Jesus, perhaps, being sarcastic? '38 years? *Was there no one in all that time to help you into the pool?*' Sounds like a bit of an excuse, doesn't it?

'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; and while I am making my way, someone else steps down ahead of me.'...really? Really?

And you ministerial students about to launch off into the church – maybe you'll end up in a Bethesda-type chapel, a 'House of Mercy' –

You want to make others well; what about you? Do you want to be made well? (the gist)

At points like these the gospel gets very personal doesn't it? We're quite self-contained; we like to think we're OK – 'how are you? We're often asked...

'I'm fine thanks' ...even if we're not really..even if inside we're churning with anxiety;

'Do you want to be made well? We'd run a mile if anyone said that to us, wouldn't we? Maybe not 38 years; still, we're comfortable in our sinfulness, or anxiety, or whatever,

We don't like change; don't want to give up our lifestyles; we quite like having something wrong with us, it makes us feel secure; it's part of our identity..

fossil-fuel users; firms making vast profits chopping down forests while the planet burns & many people's lives are ruined..

Our individual, personal sinfulness is all-of-a-piece with the sinfulness of the world. Ask a doctor about the correlation between illness and social conditions.

Do you want to be made well? I wonder if anyone asked Emad Al-Swealmeen, the Christian convert who blew himself up outside the Liverpool Women's hospital last week.

By all accounts his conversion seemed genuine, but you never can tell, can you, what's going on inside someone else..'Do you want to be made well?'

Depends who's asking....we're not likely to answer just anyone; maybe someone who knows us well; maybe a stranger. It's easier sometimes, isn't it, to open up to a stranger?

'Cos who's asking is likely to be human, suffering the same kind of afflictions that we are; we're only likely to answer openly & honestly if who's asking is, like a stranger, *not* (apparently) afflicted by being human like we are, or.... somehow *more* than human..

Human...and *more than* human...

That's the genius of the story. At Bethesda..at the House of Mercy the One who *is* Mercy, Grace - God-and-Human rolled into one – who knows us because he knows what it is to be human, & who knows what it means to suffer the consequences (to die) & who knows what it means to overcome & to live for ever:

alone can ask, 'do you want to be made well?' He's One of us & He's Lord & King of all on *Christ the King Sunday* & he's asking us & our world 'Do you want to be made well?'

It can be quite sad. Lots of Bethesda chapels are closed down, now. Some have been converted into carpet warehouses: not all – Alma is thriving by all accounts – but many...

At one time those 'Houses of Mercy' were where folk went to 'be made well' – to hear the Word of Life & respond; to love and serve..Praise God for places where they still do.

It's a reason for having churches, don't you think? Open as much as possible. With people inside *not* who will interfere & ask awkward, personal questions, but who will point to Jesus..

Lots of folk look elsewhere, now and the old 'Bethesdas' have to find new ways all the time of helping people to discover that Christ the King is the only one, really, who can ask the question, 'do you want to be made well' But another question occurs. Why, of all the lame, blind, paralysed people – lots & lots, it seems, did Jesus pick out just this one person to ask 'do you want to be made well?'

Didn't they *all*? Wasn't that the point about the Bethesda pool? You'd think if the waters could heal everybody, everybody would have been healed.

You'd think if Jesus was able to heal *one person* he could have healed the whole lot. But the story isn't interested in such questions. The story is about what has been called the 'scandal of particularity' - it's about Jesus and *one person* who wants/needs to be made well.

There's a criticism of so-called healing stories today; so-called claims that God has saved this person or made this person wealthy or found that person a job.

I accept the force of it, 'if God can heal, why didn't He heal everybody else?' 'if God saved so-and-so why didn't he save all the others?'

It's a forceful argument against God, isn't it? But praise God that the gospel works the other way round; it's for you...& you...& *me* –

it's personal, individual, God knows *me* & *you* & *you* – he deals with us as we are, for he *knows* us as we are. He asks *me* – & you...& *you* - 'do you want to be made well?'

And the rule-making, earth-bound, narrow-minded ones don't like it; remember a few weeks ago we called them the 'detractors of Jesus' –

they don't like that the works of God are being done on earth by Jesus the King; they'd rather be left to their own devices..

Just as today I'm sure there are those who prefer it when chapels are converted into carpet warehouses; who'd be glad if 'Houses of Mercy' & all the religious gobbledygook that goes with them disappear completely & the world is left to its own devices to look to lots of other places–

But we proclaim, in such a world, that God has come to us; that he knows us & our world; he hasn't left us to our own devices: he has given us Christ the King – & he lives for ever & he brings us healing, love & life itself – & He is the answer to 'do you want to be made well?'

And I guess churches – 'Bethesdas' – are places where any might discover what happens if someone does as Jesus said, 'Stand up, take your mat and walk'

### **Words of Offering**

Lord we come to you; you who are King – King of the Universe; you who are Mercy and Grace; in whom what it means to be human and what it means to be God come together...we come to you as we hear you asking 'do you want to be made well?' Lord, forgive us, for we have not always wanted to be made well; sometimes we have been content to carry on in the same old way; sometimes we have been comfortable in our frail, frail human nature; we have not always wanted to change, to let go of what is past and to walk upright into your future. Forgive us, we pray, and, as we give of ourselves again in these and all our gifts; help us to walk again in the light and love, mercy and grace, of your Kingdom.

### **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.

## **BPW322 The Lord is King**

### **Prayers**

Lord, the earth is wounded – its climate and its environment changing. We are wounded – failures and frailties wear us down; illnesses do their worst. Our society is wounded; poverty spreads; institutions stretch to breaking point; promises are broken.

Christ the King, we would be made well and we would see our world be made well – come to us again; touch our wounds with your love and heal us by your power.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

Lord, the nations crash and burn – states fail, refugees struggle to cross borders; economies fall; wealth concentrates in fewer and fewer hands.

Christ the King we would see such a world be set free from fear, violence and oppression and have its poverty and injustice ended. Change our world by your spirit; raise up those who would do only good.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

Lord, the powerful hone their swords – military spending increases, dictators and authoritarians oppress their people and spread terror abroad.

Christ the King we would see such a world be infused with peace. Change us into peacemakers and lovers of justice.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

Lord, the Spirit of the Age is a spirit of fear, avarice, secrecy and division; prejudice; avarice breeds selfishness; secrecy breeds corruption and division breeds further division.

Christ the King we would see such a spirit overtaken by a spirit of hope, generosity, openness and unity. Mend us with your spirit.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

Lord; still there is much for which to be thankful in a good world; sadnesses are overcome by remarkable acts of charity and giving; many give their lives in the service of others and often love wins out over hate and violence

Christ the King we would live for you and for such things in our world. Make us well through your love.

Lord hear us, **Lord graciously hear us.**

We offer these and all our prayers in the name of Jesus, Amen.

**We will hail the name of Jesus,**

Lord of life, of death and birth;  
We'll proclaim his healing spirit  
Over all the wounds of earth:  
We'll proclaim him, (we'll proclaim him)  
Over all the wounds of earth.

We will grieve with Christ who grieves as  
Wealth lets poverty rampage,  
We'll proclaim his generous Spirit  
To the Spirit of the Age  
We'll proclaim him, (we'll proclaim him)  
To the Spirit of the Age.

We will stand by Christ for ever,  
Hail his rising, his return,  
We'll proclaim his peaceful Spirit  
While the nations crash and burn:  
We'll proclaim him, (we'll proclaim him)  
While the nations crash and burn.

We'll rejoice as Christ's life triumphs  
Over all the world's sad ways;  
We'll proclaim his rising Spirit  
By our service, faith and praise  
We'll proclaim him, (we'll proclaim him)  
By our service, faith and praise.

We will follow Christ who loves us,  
Tell his stories, live his words.  
We'll proclaim his gentle Spirit  
While the powerful hone their swords;  
We'll proclaim him, (we'll proclaim him)  
While the powerful hone their swords.

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### **Benediction**

The blessing of God Almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be with us and remain with us always

Thanks everyone who has made today's service possible. Soon we shall be into the 'waiting time' – that is also a time of hope. We commend ourselves to God's care and the care of each other as we live hopefully – and look to the coming of the King...