

Worship at Earlsdon Methodist Church February 7th 2021

Call to Worship. Do not be anxious: in everything make your requests known to God in prayer and petition with thanksgiving. Philippians 4:7

Hymn S t F 20 Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

Prayers.

As we prepare to hear the word of God, may we be silent deep within, that we may receive as a gift the words we need to hear, the words we need to share, and the words we need to let go. In Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Forgive us, gracious God: when we have not listened to those whose voices have been challenging, when we have turned away from those whose voices have been pleading, when we have used our own voices unkindly, Forgive us and bless us, we pray in Jesus' name. **Amen.**

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Hear then the word of grace. Your sins are forgiven.

Amen thanks be to God.

The Lord's Prayer.

Reading Isaiah 40:21-31.

Hymn S t F655 We cannot measure how you heal

Reading Mark 1:29-39.

Reflection.

One of the most worthwhile activities I have been involved in over the past few years was to train Secondary school youngsters in Coventry to be Peer Mediators. It was part of an anti-bullying strategy and the aim was to equip the pupils to deal with conflict constructively with their fellows in the school. The young people emerged from the training with important life skills. A notable part of this training was to involve teachers, as it was important that all the staff were involved to ensure a consistent approach to handling conflict throughout the school.

Today's New Testament reading gives us an idea of the pressures on Jesus in his ministry and how he coped with them. Healing was a significant part of his ministry and has always been important in the life of the Church since day one. Prayer for the sick is said regularly in our churches. But how high on *our* list of priorities is the *Healing ministry*? I remember offering Healing services to one church and was met with the response, 'well Clive you see we don't really go in for healing services here because we are all engineers and scientists in our church!' In contrast to that church, a church I attended as a student had regular prayer for healing through the laying on of hands every Sunday and the minister quoted James 5:13-16 about being a healing community. It was just a normal part of the service. What stood out for me in that congregation was the fact that there was an expectation that God's healing power was at work and many people testified to the transformation they experienced from those healing prayers. It was known in the community as a *Healing Church*.

If Health and Healing are important in our church, it is important that we take a *whole church* approach to this work. What is the point of praying for the sick if we

are not as a whole church seeking to be a healthy church with the expectation that God heals.

What constitutes a healthy congregation? The reading gives pointers. In spite of his busy frenetic days, Jesus always found the time to be alone with his Father. As individuals and as a congregation we need to factor in to our days the time to be and to be alone with God and the time to do and be active.

Once healed, Simon's mother-in-law, we read, *began to wait on them*. A healthy community looks out for one another and is willing to serve one another.

Conflict if handled in *unhealthy* ways can lead to *bad* health, so it is important to see conflict as a means of connection, learning and insight and not to be afraid of it. Is conflict dealt with in a healthy way in the church?

For many people now life appears dark and uncertain, they feel weak and powerless and their lives are in ruins. Sounds familiar? The prophet Isaiah was writing to such people and our reading today finishes with those comforting words, *those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint*. Let us be *expectant* and *energised* as we exercise God's healing ministry. Amen.

Hymn S t F 649 God! When human bonds are broken

Prayers of Intercession. The spread of the Covid-19 virus has accentuated the inequalities in our country and in the world. Bearing this in mind we pray.

Loving God, we pray for those who speak out with the voice of compassion, for the marginalised, the abused and the exploited.....
Response **and for those who seek to silence them.**

We pray for those who speak out with the voice of courage, against corruption, greed and injustice....

We pray for those who speak out with the voice of concern, for the environment, the forests, the seas...

We pray for those who speak out with the voice of challenge, against complacency, apathy, self-righteousness.....

We pray for all those who speak out with your voice, in our world, our communities, our churches:

and for those who simply do not hear.

We pray for those who long for healing and for those who bring healing.....

Bring healing in body, mind, soul and spirit. Amen

Collect for this Sunday. God our Father, whose Word has come among us: may the light of faith, kindled in our hearts, shine in our words and deeds; through him who is Christ the Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Hymn S t F 481 The Lord's my Shepherd

The Blessing.

Rev Clive R Fowle