

The First Sunday of Epiphany Service



Reveal among us the light of your presence that we may behold your power and glory. **Amen.**

Almighty God, you wonderfully created us in your own image and yet more wonderfully restored us through your Son Jesus Christ: grant that, as Jesus came to share in our humanity, so we may share the life of Christ's divinity; who is alive and reigns with you, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

Spiritual Preparation- Confession and Absolution

Hear the words of the angel to Joseph 'You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

Let us take a moment to bring before God the things which we have done wrong knowingly and unknowingly. Those things which weigh lightly and those things which weigh heavily on our hearts ...

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
Forgive us all that is past.
Renew us in body, mind and spirit
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

Almighty God, who loved the world so much that he gave his Son to be our Saviour forgive us our sins and grant you peace of heart in the knowledge that you are worthy in God's sight. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Bible Reading: Isaiah 42:1-9

Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
² He will not cry or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;

³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.

⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

⁵ Thus says God, the Lord,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:

⁶ I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,

⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.

⁸ I am the Lord, that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.

⁹ See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

Reflection

Lutheran Pastor Michael Chan summarises what this reading says about the servant and his ministry. The servant:

- is upheld and chosen by God (verse 1)
- is one in whom God delights (verse 1)
- is one on whom God's Spirit resides (verse 1)
- brings forth justice to the nations (verse 1)
- does not raise his voice in the streets (verse 2)
- does not break a bruised reed or quench a burning wick (verse 3)
- faithfully brings forth justice (verse 3)
- will tirelessly work until he has established justice in the earth (verse 4)
- has teaching that the coastlands wait upon (verse 4)
- has the support of God (verse 6)
- is given as a "covenant to the people" (verse 6)
- is a "light to the nations" (verse 6)
- will "open the eyes that are blind"(verse 7)
- will "bring out the prisoners from the dungeon ... those who sit in darkness" (verse 7)
- is part of the "new things" God is up to (verse 9)

This 'servant' has been chosen and given by God, for a mission of global importance and humanity that includes healing, teaching, and establishing justice.

Although written at the time to the Jewish people in painful enforced exile, all of these concepts and certainly a desire for a 'new thing' of healing and hope are very much prominent and desired in our minds today.

It is, especially as we enter epiphany season, so easy to read this servant as the one who finds fulfilment in the birth of Jesus, and the coming of God's own self to us. This hope and long awaited saviour. This multi-generational prophecy now a reality, made flesh in Jesus Christ.

During this season, we read revelation upon revelation of who Jesus is. We see the heavenly witness to him - the angels on the mountain, the star in the sky, the heavens breaking open at his baptism. We see the 'ordinary' acknowledgment of him in the local shepherds and the prophetic honouring of him in the foreign Magi. We see the unexpected – the servant- in his vulnerability, in the humbleness of his birth and as he becomes a fleeing refugee to escape King Herod's wrath.

This child, this adult, is God's faithful promise and new covenant to us. It is universal in scope, everlasting in duration. It is a simple contract of grace and love, and the acceptance of that love and the grace of the cross. It is the renewed desire to see things through God's eyes. To bring healing, justice, voice and freedom to the oppressed in a hurting world. To choose the vulnerable and humble, the fleeing refugee and outcast, to choose the divine.

The Isaiah reading declares 'I am the Lord, I call you in righteousness'. As this new year begins let us seek that righteousness, that relationship. Living it out in our lives, in our spoken and social media communications, in our family, community and working life and in our use of the earth's resources.

The reading gloriously continues 'I have taken you by the hand and held you'. The companionship of this statement cannot be underestimated. God walks with us. Our story is part of God's story. What a beautiful and reassuring image this is.

So let us take God's hand, and go for a gentle stroll. Our lives will not be the same again. **Amen.**

Affirmation of Faith

Let us declare our faith in the God who loves us:

We believe in God, the Father and Mother of us all, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.

**We believe in God the Son,
who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us
with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God;
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Covenant Renewal Prayer - Methodist Service Book

I invite you to read through the challenging words of the Covenant Renewal Prayer from the Methodist Church below (Please note I have changed the words in the third line from 'put me to suffering' to 'put me to serving' as for many those words feel very raw at this time) ... and then if you would like to, join with me in committing ourselves afresh to God ...

**I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will;
Put me to doing, put me to serving;
Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you, exalted for you or
brought low for you;
Let me be full, let me be empty;
Let me have all things, let me have nothing;
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things to your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father Son and Holy Spirit;
You are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.**

Worship Music

Be Still- Lucy Gibson attached

Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zLwAcjuHZ_w&ab_channel=HARMONIOUSCHORALE-GHANA

As with Gladness Men of Old:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UB8rKNrlpDQ&ab_channel=ChetValleyChurches

Will You Come and Follow Me:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zK6IUaIj3sk&ab_channel=HymnChannel

Go Tell it on the Mountain:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=72LE487YZ-U&ab_channel=SusanCorgan

The Peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace. The peace of the Lord be always with you.

And also with you. Amen.

A Collection is taken (*If you would like to give to the ongoing mission and upkeep of our churches bank details are below*).

Prayers of Intercession

We are drawn to your feet in worship
Your creation facing its creator
Hearts laid bare by your light
Humbly asking for your mercy.
We come to you as a people in need
of assurance and forgiveness.
We come to you as a people in need
of healing and wholeness.
We come dependent upon your love.
Draw us close.
Enfold us in your arms.
Fill us with your Spirit

that we might reflect your light
within this hurting world.

We ask this through your dear Son Jesus Christ. **Amen.** (*Faithandwrship.com*)

We pray for all who have been hospitalised, and for those who care so diligently for them. For anguished health staff, emergency services and hospital chaplains. For those who have had lifesaving and pain diminishing surgery postponed, for those with long Covid and chronic pain.

We pray for the safe and efficient role out of the vaccine, and give thanks for scientists and biochemists for this hope.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for our schools and colleges, for staff, students, and families now home schooling once again. For those feeling overwhelmed. Those who require additional support. Those whose mental health is strained.

For those in poverty, and those who seek to address it.

Those for who there is no work, those who have lost jobs and businesses, and those in financial insecurity.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

As we pray for America, we pray for all leaders in all spheres of life that they may lead with integrity, and a desire to serve the common good. May they remain servants after God's own heart.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for all who suffer in body, mind and spirit

Heal, hold and comfort them with your presence and be with those who tend and worry for them.

Give peace in grief, and welcome all those recently departed into your eternal kingdom where pain and tears are no more.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We take a moment to lift the prayers of our own hearts before God...

We commend ourselves, those for whom we pray, those who have no one to pray for them, and the whole of creation to your unfailing love. Draw us close we pray.

Amen.

Joining all our prayers together we say the prayer our saviour taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven;

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive them that trespass against us.

And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,

for ever and ever. Amen.

Blessing

May Christ, who by his incarnation gathered into one things earthly and heavenly, fill you with joy and peace.

And the blessing of God almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be among you and remain with you always. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ. Amen.**

Collection – Church Bank Details

Thank-you to those who financially support our churches. Please don't worry if your circumstances are such that this is not possible at this time, we all support the Church and its Mission in so many different ways.

Brinkley Church

Bank Account Number: 44335059 Sort code: 60 15 47

Cheques payable to: Brinkley PCC

and can be sent to Treasurer: Mrs P Bull. Tree Tops, High Street Brinkley CB8 0SE

Email: trish.bull50@btinternet.com

Burrough Green Church

Bank Account Number: 00225002 Sort code: 20-60-38

Cheques payable to: Burrough Green PCC

and can be sent to Treasurer: Tiffany Orgill. 11 Walnut Cottages, Borough Green CB8 9ND

Email: tiffany.dialo@btinternet.com

Carlton Church

Bank Account Number: 30238090 Sort code: 20-60-38

Cheques payable to: Parochial Church Council of Carlton St. Peters

and can be sent to Treasurer: Helen Coppen, Breydon, Acre Road, Carlton, CB8 9LF

Email: helencoppen@gmail.com

Dullingham Church

Bank Account Number: 40337684 Sort code: 20.60.38

Cheques payable to: St Mary's Dullingham PCC

and can be sent to Treasurer: Fiona Wharton. 14 Algar Drive, Dullingham, CB8 9XN

Email: fionamarywharton@gmail.com

Stetchworth Church

Bank Account Number : 80841595 Sort code: 20-60-38

Cheques payable to: Stetchworth PCC

and can be sent to Treasurer: Alastair France. 61 High Street Stetchworth, CB8 9TH

Email: afrance@jdpw.com

Westley Waterless Church

Bank Account Number : 40954934 Sort code: 20-60-38

Cheques Payable to: Westley Waterless PCC

and can be sent to Treasurer: Zara Napier. Gowan Cottage, Westley Waterless CB8
0RQ

Email: zaranapier@aol.com

With grateful thanks, Nikki and the PCC's