

TODAY IS A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF SERVICE TO WHAT WE NORMALLY DO.

Please don't go into the hall until you have read the next few paragraphs.

Last Sunday, as part of a series about being committed to our church as partners, Graham spoke about "A God to serve and worship". After making several points about worship and service, and that it is essentially God that we serve, he read this verse:

Jesus said, "So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God." (Matthew 5: 23,24)

It was paraphrased like this:
"If you are bringing your costly act of service to God and realise that your brother has something against you, STOP, and go and be reconciled..."

If we all actually did this and ceased our acts of service and worship until we were reconciled with one another it could lead to

chaos! Holy Chaos! A chaos that we would be better for in the long run!

We are providing this opportunity, during this fortnight, to pray and reflect and for people who realise the need to do so, to enter into a process of reconciliation with any who have something against them. So this Sunday we have stopped normal service. We are saying this: ensuring we have healthy forgiving relationships with one another is more important than the church programme.

The main hall is a Holy Space, for worship, healing, communion, prayer and reading. Please respect this by speaking quietly and coming out of the hall if you just want to have a conversation that is not related to worship, reconciliation and forgiveness.

There are books, short readings and Bibles on a table in the hall.

You are welcome to take communion with those you are with. You are welcome to make coffee and tea in the lounge and talk there. If you have no issues to resolve with anyone else, that's great, please take the opportunity to pray, read, or to serve others in whatever way you can - making brews, washing up or whatever.

This is an Order of Service that you may wish to follow during your time in this Holy Space. You can follow it alone in quietness, or in a small group. You may like to speak out the words together, with one person reading the words in bold while the rest of you read the words in normal text.

Scripture

Read silently and reflect

Matthew 5:23-24

So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God.

We bring our hearts and minds before the Lord.

As we examine our consciences, we remember that God is merciful.



Prayer

Our Father God, You come to look for the lost sheep; joyfully You carry it on Your shoulders.

Yet do we run away from You because of pride, arrogance, or shame?

Pause

You go to meet the prodigal son; You embrace him in Your arms.

Yet have we become jealous of Your mercy for those who we think don't deserve it?

Pause

You choose the humble and the sinner to be Your servants; You have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.

Yet are we deaf to Your voice because of our need to be perfect, self-sufficient, or right all the time?

Pause

You save Peter from drowning in the sea when he lost his faith in You.

Yet are we too afraid to even try what seems impossible?

Pause

You enter the house of Zacheus in order to seek out and save what was lost.

Yet do we close our doors to Your own people?

Pause

You accept the perfumed oil of the sinful woman; because of her tears You pardon and defend her.

Yet do we carry stony and indifferent hearts, refusing to ask for and offer forgiveness?

Pause

Forgiveness The Key to Freedom

You heal the lepers and restore them to wholeness, though only one returns to give You thanks.

Yet do we daily take Your blessings for granted?

Pause

You open the gates of Paradise to the repentant thief crucified by Your side.

Yet do we condemn and crucify others with our words, actions, and failure to act?

Pause

Scripture

Read silently and reflect

Matthew 5:7-9

*Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

*Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.*

*Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called sons of God.*



General Confession

Our God is a God of mercy, slow to anger and abounding in love. Like the father who welcomes us home, or the mother who kisses away our wounds, our God is ready to forgive. So let us trust in his goodness as we confess our sin.

Father eternal,
giver of light and grace,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour,
in what we have thought,
in what we have said and done,
through ignorance,
through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We have wounded your love,
and marred your image in us.
We are sorry and ashamed,
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son,
Jesus Christ, who died for us,
forgive us all that is past;
and lead us out from darkness
to walk as children of light.
Amen.



In Christ the people of God are called to peace.

Scripture

Read silently and reflect.

Ephesians 2:13-18

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations.

His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility.

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

(The words of this service are drawn together and adapted from many different sources.)

Communion

Bread and Wine are available at four stations around the hall.

After reading the next prayer, you or one of your group, can fetch bread & wine for yourself or your group.

I am the bread of life.

All who come to me shall not hunger, and all who believe in me shall not thirst.



With Christians around the world and throughout the centuries, we gather around these symbols of bread and wine—simple elements that speak of nourishment and transformation.

Prayer

Loving God, we thank you that you are as close to us as breath and that your love is constant and unfailing.

We thank you for all that sustains life, and especially for Jesus Christ, who died for our sins that

we might have life now, and life eternal. Thank you for the promise of transformation made visible in His life, death and resurrection.

We ask you to bless this bread and this cup. Through this meal, join us together as the body of Christ.

We remember on the night when Jesus and the disciples had their last meal together, Jesus took the bread, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples, saying “This is my body, which is broken for you. Take and eat it, and as often as you do, remember me.”

In the symbol of the broken bread, we participate in the life of Christ and dedicate ourselves to being his disciples.

*Take time to break bread and eat
Pause*

In the same way He took the cup, and after giving thanks He gave it to the disciples, saying: “Drink this, all of you. This cup is the new covenant, poured out for you and for many. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

In the symbol of the cup, we participate in the new life Christ brings.

Take time to drink wine, either sharing the cup or using the individual thimbles.

Pause

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father in Heaven,
Hallowed is Your Name.
Your Kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil, for Yours is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, forever and ever Amen.

Prayer

We give thanks, loving God, that you have refreshed us at your table. Strengthen our faith; increase our love for one another. As we have been fed by the seed that became grain, and then became bread, may we go out into the world to plant seeds of reconciliation, justice, transformation, and hope.

Christ has died:
Dying you destroyed our death.

Christ is risen:
Rising you restored our life.

Christ will come again.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.

When we eat this bread, Lord, and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, until you come in glory.

Prayer

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day when Your kingdom comes and justice, mercy and peace between all peoples will be seen across the earth.

Look with favour on Your people, gather us in Your loving arms and bring us together with all Your people everywhere to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father, forever and ever.

Feel free to have refreshments, leave or stay, pray and read in this Holy Space until 1pm.