**St John’s, Bourne End**

**worshipping together while we are apart**

**Sunday 22nd November**

*I suggest that if there is more than one of you, you choose someone to read the words in normal print and all join in with the words in bold or if you are alone, you silently read the words in normal print and say the words in bold out loud. Try not to rush through the words but allow some time for God to speak to you and you to hear him.*

*Remember, although we may be physically apart, we are together in spirit as we worship God together for we are all part of God’s family at St John’s.*

***Welcome and gathering***

We come from scattered lives to meet with God.

Let us recognize his presence with us.

*Silence*

As God’s people we have gathered:

let us worship him together.

Let us pray.

**Come, Holy Spirit,**

**fill the hearts of your faithful people,**

**and kindle in us the fire of your love;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

**Amen.**

**Praise: Psalm 103**

Praise the Lord, my soul;

all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

**Praise the Lord, my soul,**

**and forget not all his benefits –**

who forgives all your sins

and heals all your diseases,

**who redeems your life from the pit**

**and crowns you with love and compassion,**

who satisfies your desires with good things

so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

**The Lord works righteousness**

**and justice for all the oppressed.**

He made known his ways to Moses,

his deeds to the people of Israel:

**the Lord is compassionate and gracious,**

**slow to anger, abounding in love.**

He will not always accuse,

nor will he harbour his anger for ever;

**he does not treat us as our sins deserve**

**or repay us according to our iniquities.**

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

so great is his love for those who fear him;

**as far as the east is from the west,**

**so far has he removed our transgressions from us.**

As a father has compassion on his children,

so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him;

**for he knows how we are formed,**

**he remembers that we are dust.**

The life of mortals is like grass,

they flourish like a flower of the field;

**the wind blows over it and it is gone,**

**and its place remembers it no more.**

But from everlasting to everlasting

the Lord’s love is with those who fear him,

and his righteousness with their children’s children –

**with those who keep his covenant**

**and remember to obey his precepts.**

The Lord has established his throne in heaven,

and his kingdom rules over all.

**Praise the Lord, you his angels,**

**you mighty ones who do his bidding,**

**who obey his word.**

Praise the Lord, all his heavenly hosts,

you his servants who do his will.

**Praise the Lord, all his works**

**everywhere in his dominion.**

Praise the Lord, my soul.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now and shall be for ever. Amen.**

***Confession***

God shows his love for us in that, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let us then show our love for him by confessing our sins in penitence and faith.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,**

**we have sinned against you,**

**through our own fault,**

**in thought, and word, and deed,**

**and in what we have left undone.**

**We are heartily sorry,**

**and repent of all our sins.**

**For your Son our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake,**

**forgive us all that is past;**

**and grant that we may serve you in newness of life to the glory of your name. Amen.**

May the Father forgive us by the death of his Son

and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. **Amen.**

***Collect***

**God the Father,**

**help us to hear the call of Christ the King**

**and to follow in his service,**

**whose kingdom has no end;**

**for he reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,**

**one God, one glory.**

**Amen.**

***Pause for Thought***

Today we are bringing our sermon series *Acts: recipe for a flourishing church* to a close by thinking about the fruits of the habits that the early church had.

What was it that first made you want to go to church? What was it that first made you want to go to St John’s?

***Readings***

**Acts 5.12-16**

The apostles performed many signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon’s Colonnade. 13No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15As a result, people brought those who were ill into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter’s shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. 16Crowds gathered also from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing those who were ill and those tormented by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

**Luke 10.1-20**After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Do not take a purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet anyone on the road.

‘When you enter a house, first say, “Peace to this house.” If someone who promotes peace is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it will return to you. Stay there, eating and drinking whatever they give you, for the worker deserves his wages. Do not move around from house to house.

‘When you enter a town and are welcomed, eat what is offered to you. Heal those there who are ill and tell them, “The kingdom of God has come near to you.” But when you enter a town and are not welcomed, go into its streets and say, “Even the dust of your town we wipe from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure of this: the kingdom of God has come near.” I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

‘Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.

‘Whoever listens to you listens to me; whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever rejects me rejects him who sent me.’

The seventy-two returned with joy and said, ‘Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name.’

He replied, ‘I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.’

This is the word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

***Talk***

***Recipe for a flourishing church: fruits***

***Praise: Benedictus***

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel,

who has come to his people and set them free.

**He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour,**

**born of the house of his servant David.**

Through his holy prophets God promised of old to save us from our enemies,

from the hands of all that hate us,

**To show mercy to our ancestors,**

**and to remember his holy covenant.**

This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham:

to set us free from the hands of our enemies,

**Free to worship him without fear,**

**holy and righteous in his sight**

**all the days of our life.**

And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High,

for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,

**To give his people knowledge of salvation**

**by the forgiveness of all their sins.**

In the tender compassion of our God

the dawn from on high shall break upon us,

**To shine on those who dwell in darkness and**

**the shadow of death,**

**and to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

based on Luke 1.68-79

**Glory to the Father and to the Son**

**and to the Holy Spirit;**

**as it was in the beginning is now**

**and shall be for ever. Amen.**

***Prayers***

You might like to include the following in your prayers:

* pray that St John’s would be a flourishing church so we may grow in spirit and in number
* pray for our community in Bourne End, particularly this week for those who live and work in Sugar Lane and Lauries Close. May we shine Christ’s light and share his love with those we serve
* pray for our nation, particularly for wisdom for our Government as it makes important decisions about what follows the lockdown on 2nd December, plans for Christmas, Brexit and our economy
* pray for our hospitals and scientists, particularly pray for those caring for the sick, for those working on vaccines and treatment to help end the coronavirus crisis
* pray for those we know who need God’s special touch today

We gather our prayers together in the words that Jesus taught us:

**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 for ever. Amen.**

***Closing Prayer***

**Gracious God, please give us:**

**the urgency of the Early Church in our teaching,**

**the love of the early church in our fellowship,**

**the hospitality of the early church in our breaking of bread,**

**the commitment of the early church in our prayer,**

**the faithfulness of the early church in our worship,**

**the expectation of the early church in our ministry,**

**the generosity of the early church in our homes;**

**the joy of our risen Lord Jesus,**

**and the inspiration of your Holy Spirit**

**as we live as your people today. Amen.**

***Dismissal***

We go into the world to walk in God’s light, to rejoice in God’s love and to reflect God’s glory.

**In the name of Christ, Amen.**