

Sunday, 14 August 2022

Proper 15 | Ordinary 20

The Rev’d Ruth Whitehead

Call to Worship

God of all, join us with your Church throughout the world to sing your praise.

God who is close to us, draw closer still and help us hear your whisper.

Prayers of Approach and Confession

*Based on verses from Psalm 82 – two voices could be used – one to read the verse of the Psalm and one to lead the prayer.*

*v1 God takes his stand in the council of heaven.*

Living God, You created all of heaven and earth, and we bow our heads before your power and your might. Loving God, You came to us in Jesus Christ so that we might see you in flesh and blood teaching and healing dying and rising.

*v2-4 "How long will you judge unjustly, and show favour to the wicked? Save the weak and the orphan; defend the humble and needy; rescue the weak and the poor; deliver them from the power of the wicked.*

God whose Spirit brings your word to life for us, help us to hear and respond to your challenge. Make us those who live for justice, who defend and save the weak, who deliver others from wickedness.

*v5 They do not know, neither do they understand; they go about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.*

God forgive us when we fail to hear and understand your commands. Give us a fresh start this day and each day we live, that our lives may declare your greatness.

*v8 Arise, O God, and rule the earth, for you shall take all nations for your own.*

God, all-holy, all-loving, all-merciful, be present in your people and bring your rule to all the earth. In the name of the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Amen.

A Prayer of Illumination

Speak to us in your holy word,

that we may know Jesus the living Word

and show your grace in all our words. Amen.

Readings

Jeremiah 23:23-29 | Psalm 82 | Hebrews 11:29-12:2 | St Luke 12:49-56

Notes For A Sermon

All the readings can be linked by the idea of ‘looking for signs’.

*Jeremiah* asks how people can detect the signs of true prophets, speaking in God’s name, and not false prophets, seeking to feather their own nests. God’s true word is like wheat, it nourishes and feeds God’s people.

*Psalm 82* offers signs of God’s rule – there is justice, care for the weak, deliverance for the down-trodden.

The *Letter to the Hebrews* offers signs, or examples, of faith – in named and unnamed people; in the ‘heroes’ of the Bible and in surprising people; in those who live and those who die.

Jesus, in *Luke’s Gospel*, speaks of the signs in the weather, which people find easy to interpret, and signs that he has come to bring God’s justice, which can divide people, which his listeners find hard to understand.

What are your listeners needing to hear from you?

Do they need signs to help them discern God’s voice?

Do they need challenging to step up to be those who work for God’s kingdom?

Are they struggling to find faith – do they need reminding about the ‘cloud of witnesses’ surrounding and encouraging them?

Are the ‘sign of the times’ – as seen in the world news – causing division and strife – do they need to attend to the voice of Jesus, to find the direction Jesus wants to lead them?

Very few congregations will need all of this – you could select which passage or passages you think are speaking most clearly into your situation. People need challenge – but they also need good news. All these passages remind us we are not alone in our struggles, and that God never leaves us without signs to direct and help us, and with God’s power and grace to enable us.

An Affirmation of Faith

We believe that God is the God of all time and space: filling all things, yet close to each one of us - **Creator, Father and ground of all being**

We believe that God came to us in Jesus Christ: flesh of our flesh, yet fully God -

**Saviour, Son and redeemer of the world.**

We believe that God send the Holy Spirit: fire and wind, yet soft as a whisper -

**Sustainer, Spirit and power of the Church**

We believe that we are God’s people: falling and failing, yet redeemed and forgiven -

**made in God’s image to proclaim God’s glory.**

Outline Prayers of Intercession

*Since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. from Hebrews 11*

In prayer we are brought into communion with the church of God in all space and time, so let us pray.

We pray for those who need to lay aside the burdens which weigh them down:

those who grieve, who are in relentless pain, those ground down by injustice.

Lord who is near, hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for any to whom sin clings closely:

those who live with guilt and shame, those who are abused, those exploited by greed.

Lord who is near, hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for those at the start of life’s journey:

for new parents, for those being adopted, for those who help life to flourish.

Lord who is near, hear us: **Lord graciously hear us**

We pray for those who feel the pace of life is hard:

for those who feel there is no time to rest,

for those who feel there is nothing to live for,

for those who feel they cannot pause, even for a moment.

Lord who is near, hear us: **Lord graciously hear us**

We pray of those at the end of life’s race:

those whose life has been all too short,

who have always struggled,

who cannot wait to reach the finish line -

Lord who is near, hear us: **Lord graciously hear us**

We pray for all who seek to strengthen the lives and the faith of others:

for medical professionals, for teachers, for carers -

Lord who is near, hear us: **Lord graciously hear us**

Lord Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, receive our prayers, and at the end of our life receive us into your loving arms, we pray. In the grace and mercy of God, three-in-one. Amen.

Offertory

By faith, let us bring our gifts to God – gifts of money, and our lives, given with a grateful heart.

Lord, receive these and all the gifts we give you – money, time, talents.

Bless and increase them, and make us and all your children glad. Amen.

Blessing

May the God who fills heaven and earth,

fill you with grace, joy and wholeness, that you may see:

God the Creator at work in this world,

God the Son in the faces of all you meet,

God the Spirit alive inside and outside the Church,

now and forever more. Amen.

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| **Hymn** | **RS** | **StF** | **CH4** | **MP** |
| The love of God comes close | 107 | 654 |  |  |
| Songs of thankfulness and praise | 191 |  |  |  |
| The kingdom of God is justice and joy | 200 | 255 |  |  |
| Christ is alive, let Christians sing | 260 | 297 | 416 |  |
| O happy day that fixed my choice | 359 |  |  | 499 |
| Lord for the years your love has kept and guided | 603 | 470 | 159 | 428 |
| God of freedom, God of justice | 625 |  | 263 |  |
| Sent by the Lord am I |  | 239 | 250 |  |
| Inspired by love and anger |  |  | 253 |  |
| Guide my feet while I run this race https://hymnary.org/text/guide\_my\_feet\_while\_i\_run\_this\_race |
| Wendell Kimbrough ‘The hand of God’ – Ps 82 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubNfyXOoxaw |
| Beauty for brokenness | 693 |  | 259 |  |
| Jesus Christ is waiting, waiting in the street | 251 |  | 360 |  |
| The Lord Hears the Cry of the Poor (James Foley)http://catholichymn.blogspot.com/2015/09/The-Cry-of-the-Poor.html |
| *Key:* *RS = Rejoice and Sing, StF = Singing the Faith, CH4 = Church Hymnary 4, MP = Mission Praise* |