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# **Second After Pentecost**

# **Proper 8 / Ordinary 13**

# **26th June 2022**

# **The Rev’d Sarah Moore**

# **Call to Worship**

# Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

# **Let us come before the Eternal One with thanksgiving, and extol God with music and song.**

# **Prayers of Approach, Confession & Forgiveness**

The Psalmist cries, “I cry aloud to God, aloud to God that they may hear me.” Holy One, we are met in your presence, to glorify you, creator of all that was, all that is, and all that shall be.

Here, today, we call to mind your deeds, remembering your works of old,

your action in all creation. Your way is holy, no one and no created thing can be as great as you.

You redeemer of creation call us to follow you, as we follow in the way of your Son.

“In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted.”

Holy One, life can be far from easy. Our minds, bodies, and souls can be restless and wearied. We recognise in your presence those aspects of ourselves that prevent us from loving you with heart, mind, soul, and strength, and loving neighbour as ourselves.

Transform us into the best versions of ourselves, the people you created and call us to be. Show us again how to be disciples of the risen Christ, ready to do his work in the world, empowered and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

We join together in the prayer that Jesus taught his friends and teaches us

Our Father…

# **Prayer of Inspiration**

# O Lord our God, your Word is a lamp to our feet

# and a light to our path.

# Give us grace to receive your truth in faith and love,

# that we may be obedient to your will

# and live always for your glory;

# through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

# **Readings**

*2 Kings 2.1-2, 6-14* | *St Luke 9.51-62*|

# **Sermon Notes**

The passage from 2 Kings is concerned with legacy – Elisha wanting something of Elijah’s legacy; wanting, to paraphrase St John’s Gospel, to do greater things even than his master. Elijah, aware his ministry is drawing to a close wanted to tidy up loose ends – he anoints new kings over Aram and Israel and then anoints Elisha to continue his prophetic ministry.

In our jubilee year the URC might be tempted to be self-congratulatory – after all we’ve made it for 50 years! We are testimony to how union enables various differences to be lived with and celebrated; we’ve proved we’re tenacious. Yet, with the majority of churches in the West, we’ve declined in number, influence, strength. We don’t know if we’ll be around in 50 years’ time; maybe it’s time to think about anointing our successor just as Elijah anointed his? Yet we don’t know what is next; wars, not just rumours of war, the environmental catastrophe which unfolds behind us, the march of secularism – giving us freedoms our forebears could only dream of – continues apace. We know the acts God has done in the past and what we’ve done in previous generations but are unsure what’s next. That makes knowing who to anoint rather difficult as we don’t know what the task ahead of us might consist of.

In the reading from St Luke we are faced with those who want to follow Jesus but not just yet. They have loose ends to tie up before they can follow. Perversely we can take heart in reminding ourselves there have always been those who have resisted Jesus’ call. Just like joining a religious order, the call to follow Jesus is radical and requires us to move leaving behind the things we cling to. It’s hard.

Elijah’s call to anoint a successor was hard – he had to give up control over his own ministry. He was called to recognise he was about to die; that’s hard. Yet we all know how wonderful legacies can be in the life of a local church – through the death of a faithful disciple the church is given resources to do wonderful things for God. The Elijah/Elisha story shows both sides of legacy – the pain of giving up and the uncertainty of how to use the gifts that have been released. As a church we are in both situations – we know much has to be given up yet we know wonderful resources can be released in so doing. We just need to learn, as Jesus’ disciples had to, not to get in the way!

# **An Affirmation of Faith** (by Ruth Whitehead from Pentecost 2022)

# We believe in God, whom Jesus called Father,

# **who created all things in love.**

# We believe in the Holy Spirit,

# who was with God the Father from the beginning

# **who co-created the universe, and holds it in being.**

# We believe in Jesus Christ – one with the Father and the Spirit –

# **who came to live a human life**

# **and gifted the Spirit as comforter and guide.**

# We believe in God who is three in one

# **who was and is and is to come. Amen.**

# **Prayers of Intercession**

God of freedom, you invite us to share your freedom and live your way of peace and justice. The apostle Paul reminds us that the whole of the law is summarised in the commandment, “You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself”. We make our prayers for church, world, community, and ourselves in the spirit of this commandment.

We pray for the Church throughout the world, asking that you show us what it means to love other traditions as we love our own. We wonder if such is even possible. Show us how to cherish love to other churches, as we work to build up your Church wherever you place us.

We pray for the nations of this world, asking that you show us what it means to love other nations as we love our own. We pray for peace where there is none, particularly for Ukraine, Syria, Yemen and other places we hear about and those we do not.

We pray for the communities where we are set, for many of us that is multiple places where personal, professional, family and other aspects of our lives work out. Show us what you need us to do, what perhaps only we can do, in the places we live out our lives. Show us how to love neighbour as ourselves.

We pray for ourselves noting the commandment to love neighbour as self. We pray for our own concerns, and for whatever gift or grace we need for the coming days.

In the name of the Risen One we pray. Amen.

# **Offertory**

# Let us return to God the offerings of our life and the gifts of the earth. The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and all who live in it.

# Holy One, you call us to love neighbour as self. Use all we have to offer, of money, talents, time, and energy to live and love the good news of your kingdom in our lives. Amen.

# **Blessing**

# May the blessing of God

# Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit,

# be and remain with all creation,

# those we love and those we are called to love,

# today and in the days to come. Amen.

# **Hymn Suggestions**

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| **Hymn** | **RS** | **StF** | **CH4** | **MP** |
| O Breath of Life Come Sweeping Through Us | 302 | 391 | 595 | 488 |
| The Church is Wherever God’s People Are Praising | 583 |  | 522 |  |
| Will You Come and Follow Me? | 558 | 673 | 533 |  |
| Come Down, O Love Divine | 294 | 372 | 489 | 89 |
| Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy | 531 | 526 | 166 |  |
| *Key:*  *RS = Rejoice and Sing, StF = Singing the Faith, CH4 = Church Hymnary 4, MP = Mission Praise* | | | | |

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