

### Welcome and notices

A warm welcome to our service this morning. As you can see later on we will be gathering around the Lords table in celebration and obedience. All songs and hymns will be on the screen and in the order of service.

### Completion of Covenant Cards

Has everyone returned their covenant card if not please add them to the collection basket.

### Call to worship

28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11: 28 – 29)

### Opening prayer

We meet in the presence of God, who knows our needs, hears our cries, feels our pain, and heals our wounds.

Since we believe that Jesus our Saviour has ascended into heaven, and opened the way into God's presence for us, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith; let us hold fast to the hope we profess; and let us consider how we may spur one another on to love and good deeds.

Faithful one, whose word is life, come with saving power to free our praise, inspire our prayer and shape our lives for the kingdom of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### Confession

Christ himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds we have been healed. Let us then seek forgiveness for the sin by which we have denied God's claim upon us. Shall we say the words of the confession together.

**Have mercy on me, O God, in your constant love; in the fullness of your mercy blot out my offences.**

**Wash away all my guilt, and cleanse me from my sin.**

**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.**

**Give me the joy of your help again and strengthen me with a willing spirit. Amen.**

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Therefore, to all who truly repent this is his gracious word: 'Your sins are forgiven.'

**Amen. Thanks be to God.**

### Hymn/Song: 10,000 reasons

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul

Oh my soul, worship his holy name

Sing like never before, Oh my soul

I'll worship your holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning  
It's time to sing your song again  
Whatever may pass and whatever lies before me  
Let me be singing when the evening comes

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul  
Oh my soul, worship his holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

You're rich in love and You're slow to anger  
Your name is great and Your heart is kind  
For all Your goodness, I will keep on singing  
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul  
Oh my soul, worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

Bless the Lord, oh my soul  
Oh my soul, Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, oh my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

And on that day when my strength is failing  
The end draws near and my time has come  
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending  
Ten thousand years and then forevermore  
Forevermore

Bless the Lord, Oh my soul  
Oh my soul, worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, Oh my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

Bless the Lord, oh my soul  
Oh my soul, worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, oh my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

Oh my soul bless the Lord,

Bless the Lord, oh my soul  
Oh my soul, worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, oh my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name

I'll worship  
I'll worship Your holy name

### Offertory prayer

**Generous God, creator, redeemer, sustainer, at your table we present this money, symbol of the work you have given us to do; use it, use us, in the service of your world to the glory of your name.**

**Amen.**

Lord we thank you for your faithful people who have renewed the covenant with you. Bless them and protect them as they take your message out into the world. **Amen**

### THE MINISTRY OF THE WORD

#### Readings – Isaiah 50: 4 - 9.

The Sovereign Lord has given me a well-instructed tongue,  
to know the word that sustains the weary.

He wakens me morning by morning,  
wakens my ear to listen like one being instructed.

5 The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears;  
I have not been rebellious,  
I have not turned away.

6 I offered my back to those who beat me,  
my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard;

I did not hide my face  
from mocking and spitting.

7 Because the Sovereign Lord helps me,  
I will not be disgraced.

Therefore have I set my face like flint,  
and I know I will not be put to shame.

8 He who vindicates me is near.  
Who then will bring charges against me?  
Let us face each other!

Who is my accuser?  
Let him confront me!

9 It is the Sovereign Lord who helps me.  
Who will condemn me?

They will all wear out like a garment;  
the moths will eat them up.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**Song/Hymn: More than conquerors**

When my hope and strength is gone  
You're the one who calls me on  
You are the life  
You are the fight  
That's in my soul

Oh, Your resurrection power  
Burns like fire in my heart  
When waters rise  
I lift my eyes  
Up to Your throne

We are more than conquerors, through Christ  
You have overcome this world, this life  
We will not bow to sin or to shame  
We are defiant in Your name  
You are the fire that cannot be tamed  
You are the power in our veins  
Our Lord, our God, our Conqueror

I will sing into the night  
Christ is risen and on high  
Greater is He  
Living in me  
Than in the world

No surrender, no retreat  
We are free and we're redeemed  
We will declare  
Over despair  
You are the hope

We are more than conquerors, through Christ  
You have overcome this world, this life  
We will not bow to sin or to shame  
We are defiant in Your name  
You are the fire that cannot be tamed  
You are the power in our veins  
Our Lord, our God, our Conqueror

Nothing is impossible  
Every chain is breakable  
With You, we are victorious  
You are stronger than our hearts  
You are greater than the dark  
With You, we are victorious  
[x3]

### Reflection:

We are familiar with the words of Jesus with which we began this service: "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30).

Recently I have been inundated with emails advertising online and in-person events and conferences. They promise to help me to rest and recharge my batteries, to reconnect with God and myself. Events like this are being organised because so many people are weary and tired from this pandemic.

So, what does this passage in Isaiah have to say to us when we are weary, bewildered and disconnected? What is his word that can sustain us?

### SPEAKING GOD'S WORD NEEDS TIMES OF PRAYER

'The Sovereign LORD has given me an instructed tongue, to know the word that sustains the weary' (v4). We all get weary, but when we hear God's word to us personally and to us as a church family, it lifts us. The Lord told missionary Heidi Baker to go and pray for people who were blind. In obedience she went. Nothing happened, but she kept going until at the 39th person she prayed for she said to the Lord that she'd had enough. But when she prayed for the 40th person and they suddenly could see, she said it sustained her to pray for thousands more. For Heidi Baker a close walk with the Lord was vital in praying for all those people.

The suffering servant of Isaiah not only taught God's Word but listened for God's Word. 'The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears' (v5) he says. A very real reason that Jesus was so close to God and was able to teach and heal so powerfully was that in his earthly ministry each morning he went off to pray. Mark tells us in his gospel, 'Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place where he prayed' (Mark 1:35). Isaiah declared of the servant, 'He wakens me morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen like one being taught' (v4). In order to speak God's word that sustains the weary, we need times of prayer. I don't just mean saying some prayers but really connecting to God.

Many would say that we need to have this time of prayer early in the morning, following Jesus' example, when the world is still. Then we can listen for God's word, a word that can



not only sustain us but also others. This is a particular challenge for those who like me are not larks but owls. We need times of real connection to God. It might happen when you're out walking, or when you're at home and sitting still. The important thing is that we listen to the Lord, and are attentive to his voice.

#### GOD HELPS US

Moving on in Isaiah 50, we read twice of God's help. 'The Sovereign LORD helps me' (v7). 'It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me' (v9). As we have seen with the other servant songs in Isaiah, we see these prophecies fulfilled in Jesus. For example, to the religious leaders about to stone a woman caught in adultery he said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). And to the woman he said, "Woman, where are they? Has no-one condemned you?" "No-one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you. Go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:10-11). The Sovereign LORD certainly helped the woman in this situation. What help do you need? Ask the Lord and stand on the promise of Scripture: The Sovereign LORD helps me.

#### RESILIENCE

As well as listening daily to God and receiving his help, we are also to imitate the resilience and strength of the suffering servant. 'I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting' (v6). The word we may hear from God or the word we are called to bring may not be a welcome word. After all, the words of Isaiah were fulfilled at the trial and crucifixion of Jesus (Matthew 26:67, 27:30). It is the suffering servant at the cross who fulfils these prophecies in Isaiah. When the prophet spoke these words he himself would have suffered a negative response from his people in exile in Babylon. To comfort the disturbed can often mean disturbing the comfortable. That was true for Isaiah and for Jesus. Jesus himself experienced resistance and persecution from both the authorities and from his own people. Sometimes even his own disciples opposed him.

How will we be in the face of opposition? Will we crumble? Luke tells us that Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem (Luke 9:51), which is the turning point in his gospel. From now on Jesus is heading for the cross of calvary. This echoes Isaiah's words where Isaiah's suffering servant says, 'Therefore I have set my face like flint and I know I will not be put to shame' (v7). Both Isaiah and Jesus had a task to fulfil and it wouldn't be easy, but their words would ultimately bring healing and hope. A modern day example of resilience is the one I gave earlier, Heidi Baker's example of praying for the blind and persevering despite the lack of results.

For us we can draw great strength from being people of conviction, people who keep on carrying on, who are determined to endure suffering if it comes and keep on living for Christ and loving him in the stranger. I hope as a church we can emerge from the pandemic as a church which mirrors the qualities of the suffering servant in this ancient song, the qualities of Jesus. The quality of prayer, listening to our Heavenly Father each day and speaking his

words to sustain the weary around us. The quality of humility and resilience, of not being afraid of ridicule and rejection, but keeping on the road which leads to life.

So, the word for the weary is listen to the Lord. If you struggle to do this, ask the Lord to open your ears to his voice. Amid the busyness of life, take time to pray. A Scottish Jesuit put it like this: 'Be attentive to God in all you do and your life will become one of unceasing prayer.' Maybe go for a walk and pray as you walk. A word for the weary is you are not alone. The Lord will help you fulfil his purposes. For some of you his word is to stop trying to carry a burden that is not from the Lord. Remember Jesus says his yoke is easy and his burden light. But to others of you his word is to be resilient, to keep going and he will strengthen you in what he has given you.

May the Lord bless you in your service, your listening and praying, and in your resilience, that you may know the help of our Sovereign LORD, Jesus, our flint-like Saviour.

### **Prayers of Intercession**

Noel will now lead us in our prayers of intercession

### **Hymn/Song: Beautiful one**

Wonderful, so wonderful, is Your unfailing love  
Your cross has spoken mercy over me  
No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart could fully know  
How glorious, how beautiful You are

Beautiful One I love You  
Beautiful One I adore  
Beautiful One, my soul must sing

Powerful, so powerful, Your glory fills the skies  
Your mighty works displayed for all to see  
The beauty of Your majesty awakes my heart to sing  
How marvelous, how wonderful You are

Beautiful One I love You  
Beautiful One I adore  
Beautiful One, my soul must sing

Beautiful One I love You  
Beautiful One I adore  
Beautiful One, my soul must sing

You've opened my hearts to wonders anew  
You've captured my heart with this love  
'Cause nothing on earth is as beautiful as You

Jesus

You've opened my eyes to wonders anew  
You've captured my heart with this love  
'Cause nothing on earth is as beautiful as You  
Jesus

And You've opened my eyes to wonders anew  
You've captured my heart with this love  
'Cause nothing on earth is as beautiful as You  
Jesus

Beautiful One I love You  
Beautiful One I adore  
Beautiful One, my soul must sing

Oh, my soul, my soul must sing  
My soul, my soul must sing  
My soul, my soul must sing  
Beautiful One

Oh, my soul, my soul must sing  
Oh, my soul, my soul must sing  
Oh, my soul, my soul must sing  
Beautiful One

### **The peace**

'Where two or three are gathered together in my name,' says the Lord, 'there am I in the midst of them.'

The peace of the Lord be always with you  
**and also with you.**

Let us offer one another a sign of peace.

### **The Act of Breaking Of Bread**

When we share the cup of the Lord and break bread together, we express our common participation in the benefits of Jesus' death for us. Therefore, we should examine ourselves before we eat the bread and drink the cup, confessing our sins to God, acknowledging the need to care for one another, and renewing our trust in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. As we prepare to gather around the Lord's table let us take a few moments of silence to clear our hearts and our minds and remember why we do this.

We come to this table not because we must, but because we may.  
We come not because we are strong, but because we are weak.

We come not because we have perfect faith, but because we have questions and even doubts.

But we come nonetheless because Jesus invites us to come and we will never be turned away.

The apostle Paul tells us of the institution of the Lord's Supper:

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you:

The Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. (1 Corinthians 11: 23–26)

### The Lord's Prayer

**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.**

### Distribution of bread

As is usual we will be sharing only the bread and can you retain it so that we can all eat together.

The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, given for you. **Amen**

### Prayer after confession

**Gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here.**

**You have made us one with all your people in heaven and on earth.**

**You have fed us with the bread of life,  
and renewed us for your service.**

**Now we give ourselves to you;  
and ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom,  
and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

### **Hymn/Song: Mighty to save**

Everyone needs compassion  
A love that's never failing  
Let mercy fall on me

Everyone needs forgiveness  
The kindness of a Saviour  
The hope of nations

[Chorus:]  
Saviour, he can move the mountains  
My God is mighty to save  
He is mighty to save  
Forever Author of Salvation  
He rose and conquered the grave  
Jesus conquered the grave

So take me as you find me  
All my fears and failures  
Fill my life again

I give my life to follow  
Everything that I believe in  
Now I surrender

[Chorus]

Shine your light and let the whole world see  
We're singing for the glory of the risen king Jesus [2x]

[Chorus x2]

Shine your light and let the whole world see  
We're singing for the glory of the risen king Jesus [6x]

### **Blessing**

The love of the Lord Jesus draw you to himself; the power of the Lord Jesus strengthen you in his service; the joy of the Lord Jesus fill your hearts; 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.**