



Sunday 17th January 2021 Notices, Readings, Prayers Reflection



Samuel being Called by God

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In Partnership (The Partnership Monthly magazine): <http://wswinlyd.org.uk/news>

Prayers for today



Do please let us know if there is someone you would like to add to the list for prayer, remembering that we must have the permission of the person for whom we would be praying. Please pray for Graham's cousin Hayley, Norris, Sarah, Hazel, and all those you know who are in need of God's special love, care and healing.

We pray for our ministers Clive, Rachael, Trevor and Teresa and all our worship leaders and their families across the Partnership. May God bless us all with wisdom and strength for the challenges of each day of this New Year. Please pray for your home congregation that they may be sustained until we can meet together again and for the continuing work with our children, young people and families in West Swindon. We pray for Grace, Peace and a way forward in your Love in these uncertain times in our lives. May we continually thank God for his great Love and Faithfulness.

Sunday 10.30 Zoom Worship - Rev Rachael Wilson - Zoom opens at 10.15

To join the Zoom service on a PC, laptop, tablet or smart phone click on the link below.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7839856489>

To join the service on land line or mobile telephone dial the number 0203 051 2874,,

When asked for the Meeting ID enter the following number Meeting ID: 783 985 6489#

This Sunday URC Online Service: dailydevotions@urc.org.uk

Dear Friends,

Sunday's service is being led by The Revd. Dr John McNeil Scott. John is a member at URC and Principal of The Scottish United Reformed & Congregational College, based in Glasgow. This service will include the sacrament of Holy Communion. If you wish to partake, please have some bread and wine/juice with you when the service begins. Hymns take a particularly highland theme, Ruth Duck's As a fire is meant for burning, Leith Fisher's For your generous providing, Maule & Bell's Jesus calls us here to meet him, and Love is the boat for the journey to the tune Loch Lomond.

As usual, the service will be sent out at 9:45am for a 10am start. Please read further on this email if you have any technical difficulties.

with every blessing,

Dan Morrell

Near-coordinator, Daily Devotions from the URC

Toothill Church Worship by Zoom

Sunday 31st Mr. David Hoar

February Services

Sunday 14th 10.30 Mr Mark Dowling

Wednesday 17th TBA Ash Wednesday

Sunday 21st 10.30 Mrs Rachel Dowling 1st Sunday in Lent

Sunday 28th 10.30 Rev Capt Clive Deverell 2nd Sunday in Lent

March

Sunday 7th 10.30 Rev Rachael Wilson 3rd Sunday in Lent

Sunday 14th 10.30 Mrs Rachel Dowling 4th Sunday in Lent /Mothering Sunday

Sunday 21st 10.30 Mr David Hoar 5th Sunday in Lent

Thank you to everyone

The response to the Toothill Church Christmas Appeal was overwhelming and we are most grateful to everyone!

As a result we will be sending:

£240 to Refuge (for women and children against domestic violence);

£240 to The Children's Society

In addition, the Church is meeting the costs (£307) of Becky's Christmas Eve celebration of gifts and foodstuffs for the needy in Toothill; and we are sending a gift of £150 to The Filling Station.

For all of this we give thanks.

Blessings

Mike

(Treasurer)

Day-group for Jesus Spring Programme Jan 21 to Mar 21

Meeting– 1:30pm to 3:30pm

Monday, 25th January 21 - Fortitude – Leader Edward

Monday, 8th February 21 – Reverence – Leader tbd

Monday, 22nd February 21 – Fear of the Lord – Leader tbd

Monday, 8th March 21 – When we were still far off – Leader tbd

Monday, 22nd March 21 – The Lamb of God – Leader tbd

For further details contact:

Edward Glennie – edglennie@hotmail.com - 07598482538

Peter Rogers – peter.rogers5599@ntlworld.com – 07500355201

We will be continuing with our Zoom calls until further notice. Zoom Meeting details are:

Click on link below to join meeting:

<https://zoom.us/j/92404636497?pwd=bFJLbFM5TFdsalppekdRV2o1QzJEZz09>

Meeting ID: 924 0463 6497

Passcode: 181042

Dial-in Number: 0330 088 5830

Motto:

The Armour of God - Ephesians 6: 10 to 11 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God...

The dates for meetings can also be found on Holy Trinity Shaw's website:

Website: <http://htschurch.org.uk/>

Reading: 1 Samuel 3: 1-10 Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the Lord under Eli. The word of the Lord was rare in those days; visions were not widespread.

2 At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room;

3 the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord, where the ark of God was.

4 Then the Lord called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!"

5 and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

6 The Lord called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

7 Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

8 The Lord called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the Lord was calling the boy.

9 Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Now the Lord came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

Prayer

God of wisdom and truth,
there are times when my world seems overloaded with opinions.
Any event is ripe for comment and analysis;
every well-intentioned effort is open to scrutiny and relentless seeking after fault.

But I also know that opinion is rarely untainted and objective,
and criticism is rarely the place where wisdom can take root and flourish.

How I long to hear amidst the clamouring commentators,
your voice, speaking soft yet clear, as once you called to Samuel in the night.
Speak, Lord, and may this servant, too be ready to listen.

Ian Foster URC Prayer handbook

Rev Rachael Wilson Reflection <https://youtu.be/g4vIZ5MDE7k>

During the last week we have celebrated the feast of the Epiphany. This is the time when the Church traditionally thinks about the visit of the Magi to the infant Jesus, bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Until last Christmas, over the last few years I have had the opportunity to do some work with classes at the younger end of primary school, talking about the Christmas story and making Christingles or other crafts. I've often taken with me a casket of gold chocolate coins, a bowl of frankincense resin and a bottle of myrrh essential oil to help when we get to think about the gifts the wise men brought.

The frankincense and myrrh are always particularly interesting to both the children and their teachers. Not many people have seen or touched or smelled frankincense and myrrh, and it makes me smile to hear the "wow!"s that are uttered when these items are passed round for them to explore.

These are strange gifts indeed to us today, and I'm sure they seemed just as strange then, even though people would have had a better understanding of what the items actually were. I've seen a cartoon depicting three wise women visiting the new baby, bringing nappies and baby clothes, a casserole and a bottle of wine - infinitely more practical for the new parents! But I often wonder what Mary and Joseph did with the gifts. They're usually depicted as having come in ornate boxes and caskets.

Did they get to hang on to the gift boxes?

Did they keep them somewhere safe?

Did they need to use the gold?

Did they ever find a use for the frankincense, and what about the myrrh? Was that saved for Jesus or did they need to use it on another family member instead?

Thinking about these gifts has reminded me of one of the icons we explored at the Women Ministers' retreat I participated in back in November. There is a traditional Russian icon called "The Women Myrrh Bearers", depicting an angel guarding a tomb, empty except for the shroud, while a group of women carrying myrrh gather around and look on in disbelief. The women are there to offer a final act of love and service to Jesus - to properly prepare and anoint his body for burial - and you can sense their confusion and disbelief when confronted with the angel and the empty grave clothes. At the top of the icon you can see Jesus walking away from the tomb but the women don't notice him, their attention is taken by the angel and the tomb.



I've known, probably most of my life, that the gift of myrrh to the young Jesus foreshadowed his death, but this connection has hit home particularly in the last week as I have had that icon in front of me on my desk, and as I have remembered what I learned about the tradition of myrrh bearers in the Eastern Church. This is what the Russian Orthodox church says about it:

Myrrh-bearing - selfless caring for the Body of Christ - is not only participating in the sacraments, preaching the Gospel and confessing the Faith, it is also doing that myriad of things which are so difficult because they require our sacrifice. For:

Those who sing in church are myrrh-bearers.

Those who clean the church are myrrh-bearers.

Those who prepare the flowers for the services are myrrh-bearers.

Those who look after the garden are myrrh-bearers.

Those who sew vestments and altar-coverings are myrrh-bearers.

Those who bake prosphora are myrrh-bearers.

Those who prepare tea or donate food or wash up are myrrh-bearers.

Those who donate icons or make offerings of money are myrrh-bearers.

Even those who simply come and pray for the salvation of all are myrrh-bearers.

All of these things are very Church-centred, and of course it is possible to think about caring for the body of Christ in this way. For a start, we often use the phrase 'the body of Christ' to describe the church - a body made up of countless Christians, all with different gifts and talents and callings. There can be a tendency in Church life to see some roles as more important than others, and although we often say that every job is valued and appreciated, we don't always show that in our actions. I like the way that the Orthodox Church gives all of these the broad title of myrrh-bearing. It feels to me like a much more concrete way of expressing something can be hard to get our heads around - that whatever we do in the life of the Church, we're doing for Jesus. If we're doing anything because we want to be noticed or appreciated, or because somebody asked us and we felt too awkward to say no, or because we felt obliged to do it - and if we're doing anything out of a sense of duty but really we resent it, and if we grumpily and ungraciously go about our business, then we're in it for the wrong reasons and we'd be much better stopping and letting someone else take over - someone who feels a calling, and who can do it with love and care. I'm sad to say that I have been the recipient of many grudgingly offered cups of coffee after a service, although I have received many more that have been given with a generous and loving spirit. When I get the bad ones I really just want to say, "Look, you clearly don't understand anything about hospitality, and you're clearly

not making drinks out of love for God or anyone else, so please just take your name off the rota and don't put everyone through the agony!"

In the last nine months many of the things that we might have usually done in practical ways for the church have not been possible. But that doesn't mean that the need for myrrh-bearers is any less. We just need to think about it a bit more broadly. I like the fact that in my icon Jesus is walking off unnoticed in the background. In the distance you can see a town or city and Jesus is pointing and walking that way, while looking over his shoulder at the women at the tomb. You can imagine Jesus incognito and anonymously taking part in the daily life of that place, slipping into the community and wondering if he will be recognised. So, yes, the Church may be described as the body of Christ, but it is by no means the only way in which we encounter Christ bodily today. As Matthew reminds us in his gospel, when we feed the hungry and clothe the naked and care for the sick and visit those in prison (and he doesn't say just those who are unjustly or wrongfully imprisoned, but everyone) we are doing those things for Jesus. We encounter Christ's body in the world today through all who are suffering, struggling, overlooked, undervalued, marginalised, misunderstood, neglected and uncared for.

It's not quite so easy to care for Jesus in the world today in a hands-on way. Close contact is necessarily very difficult at the moment, but there are ways in which we can show our love and care by supporting those groups and charities who have safe systems in place to offer the practical help that may be needed. And perhaps we all know people who are finding life in a third lockdown very difficult and appreciate a phone call or card through the post, or a little care package hygienically delivered to a doorstep.

I'm going to keep my icon prominently displayed so that I can see it every day and be reminded of those myrrh-bearers. My challenge to myself at the start of this New Year is to intentionally think about how I might take my place alongside those women in the icon. How can I change my focus so that I think about each little thing that I do for someone else as myrrh-bearing?

Will it help me to see Jesus more clearly in others if I can develop the habit of thinking of myself as a myrrh-bearer?

More than ever today the world needs myrrh-bearers! Not ones who are going to shout about it, but those who, like the women in my icon, go quietly to the tomb to show their love for Jesus in their actions, even though they thought at that point that Jesus was dead and would know nothing of it. At the start of a new year we're often encouraged to make choices and resolutions about who we want to be and how we want to live in the year ahead. Well, I want to choose to be a myrrh-bearer! Does anyone feel like joining me?

[From the URC - for online services dailydevotions@urc.org.uk](mailto:dailydevotions@urc.org.uk)

Sunday 24th January, the Rev'd Mike Walsh

Sunday 31st January, the Rev'd Nicola Furley Smith

Sunday 7th February, the Rev'd Sue Fender

Sunday 14th February, the Rev'd William Young,

Sunday 21st February, the Rev'd Samuel Cyuma

Sunday 28th February, the Rev'd Jenny Mills

[Peace begins with smile and some important philosophical questions on life ..](#)



Why isn't there mouse-flavoured cat food?
Why didn't Noah swat those two mosquitoes?
Why don't sheep shrink when it rains?
Why are they called apartments when they are all stuck together?
If flying is so safe, why do they call the airport the terminal?

[Toothill Church website](#)

