

Sunday 16th May 2021
Order of Service

Opening Music

Stewards Welcome

Call to Worship

READING: Isaiah 61:1-3 The Year of the LORD's Favour

61 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners,^[a] ² to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn,
³ and provide for those who grieve in Zion— to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour.

HYMN: StF 228 Hail to the Lord's anointed

Hail to the Lord's anointed;
Great David's greater Son!
Hail, in the time appointed,
His reign on earth begun!
He comes to break oppression,
To set the captive free,
To take away transgressions,
And rule in equity.

He comes, with succour speedy,
To those who suffer wrong:
To help the poor and needy,
And bid the weak be strong:
To give them songs for sighing,
Their darkness turned to light,
Whose souls, condemned and dying,
Were precious in His sight.

He shall come down like showers
Upon the fruitful earth:
And love, joy, hope, like flowers,
Spring in His path to birth:

Before Him, on the mountains,
Shall peace the herald go;
And righteousness in fountains,
From hill to valley flow.

Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring;
All nations shall adore Him,
His praise all people sing;
For he shall have dominion
O'er river, sea, and shore,
Far as the eagle's pinion
Or dove's light wing can soar

O'er every foe victorious,
He on His throne shall rest;
From age to age more glorious,
All blessing and all-blest.
The tide of time shall never
His covenant removes
His name shall stand for ever
His changeless name of love.

PRAYER: (Psalm 139)

LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me. You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away. You know everything I do. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too great for me to understand! You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvellous – how well I know it. You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. You saw me before I was born. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. How precious are your thoughts about me, Lord? They cannot be numbered; I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me! Thanks be to you, our Lord, and our God. **Amen**
Creator God, forgive our moments of ingratitude, the spiritual blindness that prevents us from appreciating the wonder that is this world, the endless cycle of nature, of life and death and rebirth. Forgive us for taking without giving, reaping without sowing. Open our eyes to see, our lips to praise, our hands to share and may our feet tread lightly on the road. **Amen**

Lord's Prayer

READING: Luke 4:14-21

Jesus Begins His Work in Galilee

¹⁴ Then Jesus returned to Galilee, and the power of the Holy Spirit was with him. The news about him spread throughout all that territory. ¹⁵ He taught in the synagogues and was praised by everyone.

Jesus Is Rejected at Nazareth

¹⁶ Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures ¹⁷ and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written, ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed ¹⁹ and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people."²⁰ Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, ²¹ as he said to them, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read."

REFLECTION:

Nowadays, Nazareth is a big, bustling town of about 78,000 people. It was all very different in the time of Jesus. In those days it was a tiny little hamlet. The experts tell us that there were probably only between two hundred and four hundred people living there at the time. It was suggested that just about everyone in the village was related to everyone else. Added to that was the fact that several uprisings had started in that area, which were brutally put down by the Romans and caused a lot of suffering for a lot of people. Nobody from outside of the village seems to have had a good word to say about the place, and the common attitude was pretty well summed up by Nathanael when he was introduced to this new wandering preacher, Jesus of Nazareth. Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Now Jesus returns to this seedy village. For him it's home. He goes to the synagogue on the sabbath, as he always does. Luke tells us that his fame has been spread around pretty widely so, given the fact that the whole village must be proud that Jesus' fame is rubbing off on them, the place must be crowded. Amongst them all you'll surely see his mother Mary, his four brothers and several sisters.

I wonder if Jesus has called in on his family before he goes to the synagogue. Did he pop in for afternoon tea and catch up with the neighbours? As they gather in the synagogue, they can have no idea of what they'll hear. Now his status as a preacher and teacher are recognised officially by the attendant of the synagogue as he asks him to read from scripture and to address the congregation.

He reads from Isaiah chapter 61. It gives a message of hope and a new beginning. It tells them that, through his messenger, God will bring hope to those who are poor and insignificant. He will bring healing to those who feel crushed. He will give freedom to those who feel trapped and imprisoned. He will proclaim it to be 'the acceptable year of the Lord' - or, as the Good news Bible has it, 'that the time has come when the Lord will save his people'.

Jesus rolls up the scroll and gives it back to the attendant. Then he sits down, which signals the fact that what he's about to say isn't just a human opinion but a message direct from God. The whole place is hushed as he looks around and declares: "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read."

Here, in this seedy little backwater where nothing good ever happens, people are hearing a message that will change the world. Jesus is telling them that he, himself, will be the one through whom will come new life, new beginnings and hopes fulfilled.

The message is all the more staggering because of where he is. He is the neighbour's son that they saw growing up and playing in the street with his friends. He's the eldest son they saw learning the builder's trade at his father's workbench. Can anything this remarkable come from Nazareth?

We may ask a similar question about our own lives. We see the ordinary, the mundane, all around us. We assume that we know and understand everything and everybody all around us. We expect nothing to disrupt or challenge our assumptions. Everything is just the 'same old same old'. Then God challenges and disrupts our outlook and opinions in startling, spectacular ways. Maybe it's someone we've known for years that we took little account of suddenly revealing some truth to us. Or perhaps it's a message God's giving us through reading, or prayer, or experiencing the world anew, or an unexpected assurance of his presence. The mundane and ordinary world is

transformed into a reflection of heaven. The presence of an ordinary person in a mundane place may be the declaration to you or me that 'the time has come when the Lord will save his people'.

The people of Nazareth were so sunk in their own outlook, their own opinions and beliefs, that they hauled Jesus out of the synagogue and tried to do away with him. When we're confronted with God revealing his will for us and his world will we be so set in our ways that we try to cast him out, or are we prepared to listen, hear and celebrate the message of hope, new life and God's will being done?

HYMN: StF 663 I the Lord of sea and sky

I, The Lord Of Sea And Sky,
I Have Heard My People Cry.
All Who Dwell In Dark And Sin,
My Hand Will Save.
I Who Made The Stars Of Night,
I Will Make Their Darkness Bright.
Who Will Bear My Light To Them?
Whom Shall I Send?

Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?
I Have Heard You Calling In The Night.
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.
I Will Hold Your People In My Heart.

I, The Lord Of Snow And Rain,
I Have Borne My People's Pain.
I Have Wept For Love Of Them, They Turn Away.
I Will Break Their Hearts Of Stone,
Give Them Hearts For Love Alone.
I Will Speak My Word To Them
Whom Shall I Send?

Prayers of Intercession:

HYMN: StF 364 O for a thousand tongues to sing

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and king,
The triumphs of His grace!

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease—
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He speaks, and listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,

Blessing

Deep peace of the running wave to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the gentle night to you

Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?
I Have Heard You Calling In The Night.
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.
I Will Hold Your People In My Heart.

I, The Lord Of Wind And Flame
I Will Tend The Poor And Lame.
I Will Set A Feast For Them,
My Hand Will Save
Finest Bread I Will Provide,
Till Their Hearts Be Satisfied.
I Will Give My Life To Them,
Whom Shall I Send?

Here I Am Lord, Is It I, Lord?
I Have Heard You Calling In The Night.
I Will Go Lord, If You Lead Me.
I Will Hold Your People In My

The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Hear him, ye deaf, his praise, ye dumb,
Your loosened tongues employ.
Ye blind, behold the Saviour come.
And leap, ye lame, for joy!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim
And spread through all the earth abroad
The honours of thy name

Moon and stars pour their healing light on you
Deep peace of Christ the light of the world to you
Deep peace of Christ to you

EXIT HYMN - StF 238 - Lead us, heavenly Father, lead us