

## 5th September, 2021 Pentecost 15B Living our Faith

Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23 Psalm 125 James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17 Mark 7:24-37

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Friends, we gather as believers in our God. Come, let us draw together in unity with joy and delight, in quietness and in one joy-filled voice.

**We come knowing we are welcomed.**

In prayer and song, we join together, sharing faith and praise that sustains our living.

### PRAYER

God of centuries past, and present day, and of times we will not ever know, come to us this day, we ask, as those seeking your Way.

We come with joy as faithful people. We come with delight to celebrate community. We come with honesty so that we may learn. We come with hope that we shall grow. In joy, we sing our thanks and praise, Our God and our Redeemer.

Song - [We have an anchor](#) sung *a cappella*

The readings are listed at the end of this document.

### Psalm 125

**CHILDREN'S ACTIVITY** concentrating on God knowing and loving us and us smiling back to God.

Collect leaves and flowers and dirt and whatever from the garden. The next part of the activity could take place on a piece of paper, a path, on top of a sandpit – use your imagination.

Draw a large picture of your face, with a big smile and place or glue on all the things that you have collected that you like.

Then hold it for God to see you smile.

God always sees our tears and smiles.

### PRAYER OF CONFESSION

Loving One, guide us.

You have made us all and called us your people. Too often we fear others who are different from ourselves and do not connect with, or even accept, them. We are so sorry. Loving One, guide us.

We too often do not try understand other customs and practices, and forget you are already there, in the midst of the people. We are so sorry. Loving One, guide us.

Help us to let go of crippling fear, and seek a heart of love, so that we are not afraid to offer support where it is needed most. We are so sorry. Loving One, guide us.

In uncertain times, we long for things to be as they were before. We know time does not go backwards, yet our fear draws shadows over the present. You go before us, and yet we forget your presence. We are so sorry. Loving One, guide us.

### WORDS OF ASSURANCE

Jesus extends his hand to us in gentle love and humility. When we do not have the words, the Spirit sounds our groans and sighs. God is present, beyond our knowing, and with us, at every step. Step out of the shadows of fear and prejudice. Live out your faith with courage and hope. Loving God goes before us.

### PRAYER OF ADORATION AND THANKSGIVING

Praise and thanks to you, our constant Friend. For when we are fearful, you stretch out your hand to us.

When we feel different from those whom we meet, you are already in the moment.

When we feel anger, turn this energy into a power of positive practice.

You, O God, are a God of wonder. We cannot ever understand the breadth and depth of your love that surrounds and upholds us. Fill us with the grace to love, the energy to give, the strength to carry, and the faith to overcome our human frailty as we follow you. For with you we come alive to the wonder of grace and goodness. Praise and thanks to you, our constant Friend.

### DISCIPLESHIP THOUGHT

Prejudice and suspicion haunt humanity. The woman risked serious consequences to be in daylight, without a male companion, because of her deep love for her daughter, and faith in Jesus' healing. Society feared 'demons' or illnesses they did not understand, typically leaving many ostracized. A female, minor, with a 'demon', from Syrophenicia, had four reasons to be set aside. The mother's faith overcame her fear and societal prejudice, to call for support for the 'least' of God's people. Jesus in gentle humility, acknowledged this, and responded in love. Later, Jesus' healing of a deaf-mute man showed focused compassion, removing the man to a quiet space (hearing impaired people's first encounter with sound is very shocking), using kinesthetic touch to communicate the healing, and groaning in agony and wonder with the Spirit. Through our faith in God, we find transformation in life, where fear and prejudice, lack of insight and understanding are overcome as we follow the Way of Jesus.

### OFFERTORY

Let us give with open hands and kindness of heart.

Generous God, teach us to share what we have, with those who have not. Lift our eyes to see those in need, and never be afraid to live in your Way.

**Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23    James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17    Mark 7:24-37**

Allan's Talk – Living our faith on the [church website](#).

Song - What the Lord has done in me [this link](#) or available on the church website

### **PRAYER OF INTERCESSION**

God of all, open our eyes to those whom we miss seeing. The hidden homeless, sleeping in cars, hiding in workplaces, moving from shelter to shelter, never finding 'home', or a space of belonging.

Those living in poverty behind closed doors, the hungry who continue to attend school or work, the hurt or broken whom we walk past unknowingly.

Those who suffer from a debilitating illness, weary from chronic pain, poor from the expense of much needed medicine, fatigued from activities of daily living.

In our wealthy nation, Generous God, we pray for those who fall through the cracks of community. It is easy to mean well, but more taxing to offer our assistance.

May our faith be continually combined with effective and caring action so that, as your people, all whom are unseen are seen, all whom are lonely and without home, find belonging, all whom suffer in their silent vigil of pain, find connection, care and a comforting companion who travels alongside them.

May our actions as Churches, raise the eyes of our community to see the difference that we can make as practical people who assist with meaningful care.

### **COMMISSIONING AND BENEDICTION**

Walk forward without fear, for Jesus walks with you. Listen with intent, for God's Spirit will alert you to prejudice. Act with practical grace and sincere kindness. We know these through God's love. May we live and love as faith filled people.

We go out, renewed in our courage to be God's practical hands and loving heart to the world.

A quote from the James passage is 'Aren't they the ones who make fun of the Lord?'

[Britain's Got Talent](#) – A gospel performance unashamed of their faith despite being made fun of.

## **Psalm 125**

(A song for worship.)

Everyone who trusts the LORD is like Mount Zion that cannot be shaken and will stand forever.

Just as Jerusalem is protected by mountains on every side, the LORD protects his people by holding them in his arms now and forever.

He won't let the wicked rule his people or lead them to do wrong.

Let's ask the LORD to be kind to everyone who is good and completely obeys him.

When the LORD punishes the wicked, he will punish everyone else who lives a crooked life.

Pray for peace in Israel!

## **Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9**

A good reputation and respect are worth much more than silver and gold.

The rich and the poor are all created by the Lord.

## **James 2:1-10, (11-13), 14-17**

My friends, if you have faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, you won't treat some people better than others. Suppose a rich person wearing fancy clothes and a gold ring comes to one of your meetings. And suppose a poor person dressed in worn-out clothes also comes. You must not give the best seat to the one in fancy clothes and tell the one who is poor to stand at the side or sit on the floor. That is the same as saying that some people are better than others, and you would be acting like a crooked judge.

My dear friends, pay attention. God has given a lot of faith to the poor people in this world. He has also promised them a share in his kingdom that he will give to everyone who loves him. You mistreat the poor. But isn't it the rich who boss you around and drag you off to court? Aren't they the ones who make fun of your Lord?

You will do all right, if you obey the most important law in the Scriptures. It is the law that commands us to love others as much as we love ourselves. But if you treat some people better than others, you have done wrong, and the Scriptures teach that you have sinned.

If you obey every law except one, you are still guilty of breaking them all.

## **Mark 7:24-37**

*Contemporary English Version*

Jesus left and went to the region near the city of Tyre, where he stayed in someone's home. He did not want people to know he was there, but they found out anyway. A woman whose daughter had an evil spirit in her heard where Jesus was. And right away she came and knelt down at his feet. The woman was Greek and had been born in the part of Syria known as Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to force the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said, "The children must first be fed! It isn't right to take away their food and feed it to dogs."

The woman replied, "Lord, even dogs eat the crumbs that children drop from the table."

Jesus answered, "That's true! You may go now. The demon has left your daughter." When the woman got back home, she found her child lying on the bed. The demon had gone.

Jesus left the region around Tyre and went by way of Sidon toward Lake Galilee. He went through the land near the ten cities known as Decapolis. Some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk. They begged Jesus just to touch him.

After Jesus had taken him aside from the crowd, he stuck his fingers in the man's ears. Then he spit and put it on the man's tongue. Jesus looked up toward heaven, and with a groan he said, "Effatha!" which means "Open up!" At once the man could hear, and he had no more trouble talking clearly.

Jesus told the people not to say anything about what he had done. But the more he told them, the more they talked about it. They were completely amazed and said, "Everything he does is good! He even heals people who cannot hear or talk."