

+ Crowe Hill + Fordingbridge + Horton Heath + Ringwood +

Sunday Service 13th June 2021

Welcome to this Sunday's Service

Today's Lectionary Texts:

1 Samuel 15:34–16:13 Psalm 20 2 Corinthians 5:6–10 (11–13) 14–17 Mark 4:26–34

Theme: 'God sees into my heart'

This Sunday, Mike will be using this worship material at Ringwood and at Crowe Hill.

Keeping in Touch

Mike and Louise will be on leave for 2 weeks at the end of June. Mike will not be leading worship on Sundays 20th and 27th June. For these Sundays Mike has provided worship prepared by the Methodist Church. For those who receive worship by email this will be set up and circulated by email on the Friday prior to the Sunday. For those who receive paper copies of worship – three services are included in the mailing for Sunday 13th June.

Please note that this Keeping in Touch covers the three Sundays, 13th, 20th and 27th June

GENERAL

The four churches under the leadership of Revd Mike Shrubsole have opened for worship. Please refer to details under each church. Mike will continue to produce email or paper copies of the worship on a weekly basis for the foreseeable future.

As churches we continue to be conscious that the Covid restrictions are relaxing. We still await the forthcoming Government announcement leading up to the 21st June and guidance from both the Methodist and United Reformed Church before we consider changing our routines.

At present we continue to ask people to remain socially distanced, wear masks, and as yet no congregational singing is permitted.

GENERAL PRAYER

We pray for those within our fellowship who are undergoing hospital tests and await the outcome. We pray for those undergoing regular treatment for new and ongoing conditions. We give thanks for the wisdom of the medical teams both in our local surgeries and in the hospitals. We pray for those who are feeling frustrated by the long wait to see doctors or hospital consultants and who wish appointments could come sooner than later.

TRINITY RINGWOOD

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10.45am every Sunday

Sunday 13th June Worship with communion led by Revd Mike Shrubsole. Communion

Charity – Commitment for Life, URC overseas charity.

Sunday 20th June Worship led by Dr Chris Slade

Sunday 27th June Worship led by Liz Ward

Sunday 4th July Worship led by Mr Rob White

Drink-Chat-Pray each Thursday at 10.30am. Zoom details will be circulated. Each week we take time to gradually pray through the church directory. The zoom link will remain open even though Mike and Louise send their apologies for Thursday 17th and 24th.

TRINITY AND WESLEY CENTRES Both centres, Wesley and Trinity are open now for bookings and groups are meeting. Alan is pleased to meet previous hirers and to make contact with new ones.

Continue to pray for the children's activities led by Jackie as they open up again. Little Lambs is booking up quickly and proving a welcoming space for adults and young children. Eco Club starts on Tuesday 14th June with 3 fortnightly outdoor sessions. Booking is open for Eco Club.

TRINITY PRAYER FOCUS - Continue to pray for Doreen Wood who has had to have 2 operations on her ankle and lower leg following a fall. She is in Southampton Hospital; Rosie is home following her hip replacement surgery and is finding the initial recovery very painful; It is good news that Joyce H is home from hospital and the pain is under control; Andi C is home but continuing to be monitored following major surgery.

TRINITY UNITED CHURCH CONGREGATIONAL MEETING – held on Wednesday 9th. Minutes will be circulated when available.

CUPPA, CAKE and CHAT – * **NEW DATE FOR DIARY** * Tuesday 6th July 2.00 – 4.00pm in Trinity Hall. All welcome. It is hoped that this will continue through July and August on a fortnightly pattern.

CROWE HILL

SUNDAY WORSHIP on a weekly basis, alternating 10.30am and 3.00pm

Sunday 13th June 3.00pm Worship with communion led by Revd Mike Shrubsole

Sunday 20th June 10.30am Worship led by Mr Colin Besant

Sunday 27th June 3.00pm Worship led by Revd Pauline Crispin

Sunday 4th July - Church Anniversary

10.30am Worship led by Mr Brian Skelley.

3.00 pm Worship led by Holtwood Mission Band.

The Church will open for PRIVATE PRAYER each Wednesday from 2.00pm to 4.00pm. You will be made most welcome.

Bible Study group will take a short break and resume on Tuesday 22nd June.

PRAYER FOCUS - We think of Naomi and Gustav as they wait the imminent arrival of their baby. Alfie and Isaac are excited too. Still no news yet!

CROWE CHURCH COUNCIL – Tuesday 30th June at 7.30 in Crowe Church. This meeting is an open meeting.

HORTON HEATH

SUNDAY WORSHIP on a weekly basis at 10.45am.

Sunday 13th June Worship led by Mr Colin Besant

Sunday 20th June Worship with Holy Communion led by Revd Gisborne

Sunday 27th June Worship led by Pastor Yates

Sunday 4th July Worship led by Mr Colin Besant

WORDSHOP will meet by Zoom at 7.30pm on Monday 14th June and look at the Sunday's gospel reading.

PRAYER FOCUS - Give thanks for the work of Sunday School under the leadership of Kerry and the celebration worship a few weeks ago. Continue to remember those unable to worship regularly with us due to frailty and mobility: Molly, Freda and Ernie.

FORDINGBRIDGE

SUNDAY WORSHIP 10.30am on a twice monthly basis (1st and 3rd Sundays).

Sunday 20th June Worship led by Mr Andrew Hirst from Immanuel Church, Southbourne.

Sunday 4th July Worship with Communion led by Revd Mike Shrubsole. The Communion charity is Stable Family Trust

TEASTOP Support Group – each Thursday afternoon from 2.00 – 4.00pm. You will be made most welcome.

PRAYER FOCUS - We continue to pray for Eileen and David W. Eileen is now home from hospital and is grateful for the care and support of regular carers. We continue to pray for those who are getting stronger following treatment, thinking particularly of Peter B.

Call to Worship

Let me celebrate this day with affirmation.

God's love created me with holy purpose and divine image.

I was intended to be.

Hymn: 'Just as I am' (R+S 364, STF 556, SOF 1/316)

We enter a time of worship: "O lamb of God, I come."

<https://youtu.be/duTpgGI4sTU>

1. Just as I am, without one plea
But that you died to set me free,
and at your bidding, 'Come to me!'
O Lamb of God, I come!

2. Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come!

3. Just as I am, you will receive,

Will welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because your promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!

4. Just as I am - your love unknown
Has broken every barrier down -
Now to be yours, yes, yours alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!

5. Just as I am, of that free love

The breadth, length, depth, and height to
prove,
Here for a time and then above,

O Lamb of God, I come!

Words: Charlotte Elliott (1789-1871)

Prayer: (Based on Psalm 20)

Living God, in our desire for meaning and purpose in life,
You remind us that You are available to us in our hour of need.
As we reach out in our times of searching,
You promise us that You will listen and answer beyond our imaginings.
When we place our trust in our human enterprises,
You call us back to Your holy place, to meet with You, and to rest in Your presence.

Forgive us for putting our trust in the things of the world,
let us put our trust in Your ways.
When the world builds success on power and control,
let us believe in Your ways of building a kingdom of righteousness and love.
When we fall short of all You expect of us,
let us hold to Your promise that You will pick us up again,
and set out feet on Your path once more.

So we turn from human enterprise to the Kingdom of God,
from human failure to the forgiveness of God,
from human weakness to the strength of God,
from human focus to the purpose of God our Lord.
We praise Your name,
and rejoice in the love and strength,
the purpose and the success, the triumphs and growth that come,
not from our hands, but from Yours alone.

And when our time of prayers is over,
let us lift up our heads and look ahead with courage.
When our time of devotion is complete,
let us rise with confidence to service and commitment.
For You are our answer in our time of need.
You are our answer in the hour of our calling.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Song: 'Don't be afraid' (Not in our usual books.)

A lovely harmonic version. Based on the words of Jesus in verses from John 14-16.

<https://youtu.be/R5ml5RsD7jE>

Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
my love is stronger than your fear.
Don't be afraid, my love is stronger,
And I have promised, promised to be always near.

Words and music: John Bell.

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Prayer for Understanding

Gracious God, give us humble, teachable and obedient hearts, that we may receive what you have revealed, and may do what you command. Amen.

Bible Reading: 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13 (ESV)

³⁴ Then Samuel went to Ramah, and Saul went up to his house in Gibeah of Saul. ³⁵ And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. And the Lord regretted that he had made Saul king over Israel.

David Anointed King

16 The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." ² And Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me." And the Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.'" ³ And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you." ⁴ Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, "Do you come peaceably?" ⁵ And he said, "Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice." And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

⁶ When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before him." ⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." ⁸ Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ⁹ Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, "Neither has the Lord chosen this one." ¹⁰ And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, "The Lord has not chosen these." ¹¹ Then Samuel said to Jesse, "Are all your sons here?" And he said, "There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep." And Samuel said to Jesse, "Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here." ¹² And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him, for this is he." ¹³ Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

Bible Reading: Mark 4:26-34

²⁶ And he said, “The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷ He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸ The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

³⁰ And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable shall we use for it? ³¹ It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when sown on the ground, is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, ³² yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes larger than all the garden plants and puts out large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

³³ With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it. ³⁴ He did not speak to them without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything.

Sermon: ‘God sees into our hearts’

Introduction

Do you like your food well flavoured with herbs and spices? Are you a fan of chilli and umami and complex flavours? Or do you prefer food to be simple, even bland? Today, herbs and spices can be easily bought in supermarkets which come to us from all over the world. We forget the excitement of the historic discovery of these new spices from the far east, and the effort put into bringing them to our shores by ship, and the immense value these new and exciting spices had when first sold in this country. But going back before that, we have almost entirely forgotten that these eastern spices have replaced our native herbs and spices. The new spices were more intense, but the old spices had their good points too. Mark Williams of Galloway Wild Foods has been rediscovering our ancient, traditional and local herbs and spices. His research is fascinating. But people said to him: ‘But, Mark, you are suggesting that we eat plants which our modern plant guide books tell us are poisonous!’ And he replied that almost all herb and spice plants from anywhere in the world would be considered poisonous. It just depends how much you choose to eat! One of our Bible readings today is about mustard. Now I wouldn’t eat a bowl of green mustard leaf salad, nor would I heap a pile of steamed mustard leaves onto my plate beside my sausages and mash, but I do like a smear of mustard in my ham sandwich. If prepared right, and served in the right amounts, all these herbal plants are the spice of life, they make bland food worth eating, we wouldn’t want to be without them. And all this culinary delight is often concealed inside unpretentious and possibly toxic plants. We benefit from the wisdom of plant and food experts to reveal to our taste-buds the flavourful wonders of the hidden world of herbs and spices.

Our Lectionary Bible Readings

In our reading from the Book of Samuel there is a revelation of what was hidden inside a young boy. The prophet Samuel had presided over the coronation and reign of King Saul. But King Saul turned out to be a disappointment to Samuel and to God. Samuel wondered what to do now? And God spoke to Samuel and told him not to support Saul, nor to support his son Jonathan nor anyone else in Saul's lineage. God now wants one of Jesse's sons in Bethlehem to be the new king. But which one? Jesse brought all his sons to Samuel in order of seniority, starting with the oldest. Eliab was presented first, and he impressed Samuel. Samuel thought: 'Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord.' But the Lord said to Samuel: 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things human beings look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'

Next the same thing happened for all seven sons of Jesse, one by one. Each was rejected by Samuel because the Lord God had not chosen him. And so finally the youngest son, David is called to come from the fields, and when he arrives the voice of the Lord says to Samuel: 'Rise and anoint him, this is the one.'

Now there is a bit of problem here. We have been set up to believe that the Lord God is not going to look at the outward appearance, but is going to look at the heart. But when David is introduced to us in the text it seems to be all about his outward appearance. The ESV says that: 'he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome,' which sounds like a compliment, but is it? We already know that David is the youngest and the smallest of the brothers, that counts against him. He is the one who lacks opportunities and is not likely to inherit from his father, he is the one who is sent out to look after the sheep, a lowly appointment. And now he is described as 'ruddy', which perhaps means 'sunburned', he is marked out as someone who labours in the sun all day, a peasant worker. And to describe him as beautiful and handsome, is perhaps to label him as a pretty little boy, not looking like a chisel-chined muscular warrior and future king. In the next story when David stands before Goliath, the giant warrior champion of the Philistines, Goliath jeers at these same little-boy looks. (17:42) But thankfully the Lord God has told us: 'the Lord looks at the heart.' God sees the potential great king of Israel which David was to become.

In Psalm 20 the psalmist describes those who trust in the mightiness of the high-tech implements of war and destruction of their day: 'chariots and horses', and contrasts that with those who 'trust in the name of the Lord our God.'

In our reading from Mark's gospel we have two of Jesus' parables, firstly the parable of the growing seed, and secondly the parable of the mustard seed. In the first parable the sower 'knows not how' the seed grows. As the children's song says:

"Do you or I or anyone know,
how oats, peas, beans and barley grow?"

But of course, God knows. Something which is hidden from human sight and which was beyond human understanding in those days, is seen and blessed by God the creator, who of

course knows and understands every bit of what God has made. And in the parable of the mustard seed, this tiny seed contains such huge potential. Out of the growth of something so tiny comes amazing plant growth, and safe shelter for the birds, and of course – a pungent, powerfully spicy, and valuable condiment.

Finally, in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, Paul comes to a new conclusion: 'From now on we regard no-one from a worldly point of view.' (v.16) Christ died for all, so Paul needs to learn to see everyone with the same gaze of love which Christ has for each and every one of us.

Conclusion

God sees the human heart. God sees the seed in the soil. God sees the huge potential in the tiny mustard seed. God sees you and God sees me. And when God sees these things, God recognizes and blesses the potential in each thing and in each person. Remember that our first assessment of a wild plant might be to label it a poisonous and unwanted weed. But the expertise of a culinary herbalist like Mark Williams can teach us to reappraise the plant as a flavoursome and life-enhancing herb or spice. In the same way we might dismiss the lack of potential we see in some people. We sometimes label other people as a 'poisonous' influence, don't we? We need to learn to see one another through God's eyes, to see the divine spark of potential that is there in each beloved human being, to trust that when God adds God's blessing, wonderful things can happen. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayers for our World

Loving God,

faith, You tell us, as small as a grain of mustard seed is always enough.

Remind us, now, that prayers, small and feeble though we may believe them to be, will always be enough, if they are offered in a spirit of devotion and a willingness to be close to Your will and Your ways.

Remind us that Your will unscrambles our stumbling words, our wayward thoughts, our random ideas, our scattered images, and sees in them growth and purpose, and creates from them something beautiful for You.

We pray, now, for those closest to us ...

those around us in the community of faith, on-line, electronically, in spirit and in fellowship, those we see face to face, those whose images appear on our screens, those you have fixed in our mind's eye.

For family and friends, for church and community, for all who matter to us in the bonds of love, we pray today.

We pray for those who are our guides for life and faith, who point us to the ways of the Kingdom, for the teachers of our children and students, on-line or in class, for their diligence and commitment;

for those who teach us our faith, not just through what they say and do, but through what they know and are;

for all who are heroes and role models for us and those we love ...
that they might all be strengthened in the ways of righteousness.

We pray for people who serve in community and nation,
who walk in the corridors of responsibility and sit in the chambers of decision-making;
for those who stand tall for what is right;
for those who give of themselves for the benefit of others ...
that they may always place the greater good above the love of self.

We pray for all in need, broken or ill at ease in body, mind or spirit ...

And, in the silence, we name them before you ...

And what of us, small as a mustard seed, frail as a green shoot, fearful as an uncertain plant?

Strengthen us in our growth;
take us and use us for your purposes;
let us believe in Your ways and not in our own success and failures.
For we are Yours, and Yours alone.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

We each pray using our favourite set of memorised words ...

Song: 'Take, oh take me as I am' (STF 781)

Gentle harmonies from a big echoing church.

<https://youtu.be/d5CvMtHmKQs>

Take, oh take me as I am;
summon out what I shall be;
set your seal upon my heart
and live in me.

Words: John L. Bell (b. 1949)
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Communion

Lord you give us yourself, teach us to give to others in the freedom you have given us. Out of the fullness of your gifts we bring before you this bread and wine.

Accept them Lord.

Remembering our commitment to you, we offer ourselves, help us to do so freely.

Accept us Lord.

Acknowledging our dependence upon each other, we offer ourselves in service of each other.

Help us to accept each other as you have accepted us.

For though we are many, we are one body, for we all share in the one loaf.

Jesus told us to remember his death and his rising from the dead, which gives us life.

Our lives are changed by the knowledge that he is alive and is with us.

On the night that he was betrayed Jesus 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.

As Jesus took bread and wine, so he also thanked and blessed the Lord. Let us do the same.

Lord God, you loved the world so much that you gave your only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him may have eternal life. With joy and thankfulness we remember him, in whom we have life, in whom we are one. We praise and thank you for his coming, for what he said and did, for his death on the cross and his rising from death in victory. We thank you for the Spirit he sends us, the love he shares with us, and the sure hope of our eternal place with him.

And so, remembering our saviour's work and passion, we follow his example and obey his command. Send down your Holy Spirit to bless us and these your gifts of bread and wine, that the bread which we break may be a means for us of sharing in the body of Christ, and the wine we drink may be a means for us of sharing in the blood of Christ. By faith may we be made one with him and one with each other, may the world see him in us, and may the world be served by him through us. Amen.

Jesus said: "This is my body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of me."

(The bread is shared. Take and hold the bread.)

Take, eat, this is the body of Christ, which is broken for you. *(We eat.)*

Jesus said: "This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood. Whenever you drink it, do it in memory of me."

(The wine is shared. Take and hold the cup.)

The blood of Christ shed for you. Drink from it all of you. *(We drink.)*

Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given,

We praise you 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,

We ask that our daily lives may be part of the life of your kingdom.

Fill us with your love,

That through us your love may be poured out into the world. Amen.

Our Offerings

At Ringwood this month the communion charity is Commitment for Life, which mainly supports specific Christian Aid projects in Palestine. You can give via the church treasurer or give directly by bank transfer to: "URC Commitment for Life" Account name – URC Trust, Bank – HSBC, Sort code – 40-05-03, Account Number. 01191802

Please remember your local church in your giving.

Crowe Hill Methodist Church

Bank: HSBC

Sort Code: 40.38.21

Account Number: 31013629

Horton Heath Methodist Church

Bank: HSBC

Sort Code: 40.46.37

Account Number: 31396927

Fordingbridge United Reformed Church

Bank: HSBC

Sort Code: 40.21.16

Account Number: 30359920

Trinity United Church

Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc

Sort Code: 30.97.08

Account Number: 01645417

Song: 'God is working his purpose out' (R+S 573, SOF 1/135)

God works his purpose out for you and for me. We go with God, to discover God's purposes for us. Sung by the Melharmonic Music Services from Nigeria. A bit of a slow start, but stay with it as the harmonies build and soar.

<https://youtu.be/Ms9Fu-O8ZHU>

1. God is working his purpose out as year succeeds to year;
God is working his purpose out, and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

2. From utmost east to utmost west, where human feet have trod,
by the voice of many messengers goes forth the voice of God:
'Give ear to me, you continents, you islands give ear to me,

that the earth may be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea'.

3. What can we do to work God's work, to prosper and increase
love and justice throughout the world, the reign of the Prince of peace?
What can we do to hasten the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea?

4. Let us go out in the strength of God, with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious gospel of truth may shine throughout the world:
sin and sorrow let us fight to set their captives free,
that the earth may be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

5. All that we do can have no worth unless God blesses the deed
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide till God awakens the seed;
yet nearer and nearer draws the time, the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

Words: A. C. Ainger (1841-1919)

Dismissal and Blessing

Go now, in the goodness of God,
to walk God's Way,
to follow God's Truth,
to live God's Life,
and to be embraced,
now and always,
by God's blessings. Amen

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Trinity United Church CCL number: 33526

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