

**Coventry and Nuneaton Circuit
Worship Sheet
22nd August 2021**

Theme: To Whom Shall We Go?



Our God offers us hospitality, and God's welcome is generous. God is here among us, meeting with us in our worship and in our fellowship. God longs to meet our needs as we come with hands open, and arms outstretched. **Amen.**

Hymn 40 StF: Blessed be the name of the Lord



Prayer of Adoration, Confession and Thanksgiving.

O God, your Word became flesh and lived among us. Holy God, you are worthy to be praised. Holy Spirit, we worship you. Living bread, we adore you.

When we turn away from you, O God, and go our own way:

forgive us and turn us back to you.

When we make wrong decisions and our actions hurt others:

forgive us and turn us back to you.

When we turn away from you because we find your words impossible to understand or accept or your tasks too burdensome to carry out.

forgive us and turn us back to you. Amen.

Pause for Reflection

God's Assurance

We are assured Lord by your love Lord, that despite going our own way, our doubts and fears, you are there gently leading us, reaching out your arms of healing and forgiveness. **Amen.**

Thank you, Lord, for your unfailing love.

Thank you that even with all our doubts and fears and worries about the journey ahead, you are there by our side. Where else can we turn? To whom shall we go? Thank you that you are our rock and our salvation, our strength and our high tower. **Amen.**

Hymn 736 StF: In Heavenly Love Abiding



Scripture Readings: Ephesians 6:10-20 & John 6: 56-69.

Reflection: The Gospel reading is a follow on from last weeks' wherein John presents Jesus teaching the people about his divine self and purpose. Jesus said, "I am the Living Bread that came down from heaven". This cause significant trouble amongst the Jews who firstly, struggled to see Jesus Christ anything other than a Carpenter's son but most abominable was the thought of eating Jesus' flesh and drinking his blood. 'The Words of Eternal Life' are however a significant aspect of Jesus' message and so he chose a formal setting – the Synagogue in Capernaum.

Following on, Jesus also expounded on his teaching by saying, "whoever eats of his flesh and drinks his blood will abide in Him just as he abides in his living Father who sent him". **(Vs 56)**. In verse 58 Jesus shifted from mystical to practical by referring to himself as 'the bread that came down from heaven' in contrast to manna that fell from heaven when their ancestors were stranded in the wilderness. He said, those who ate manna in the wilderness did die but whoever eats his flesh will have eternal life. In doing so, his message became eschatological – the promise of the afterlife for all who are in Christ!



Does that mean (a) we will never hunger for physical food or (b) we will not die and will go on to live forever?

Jesus is our sustenance in our journey of life. When we believe in him and make him the centre of our faith – by celebrating Holy Communion, in our fellowship and worship, our mission all that Jesus means to us and the Church. When we are weary of the tasks before us; when we are wary about the impact of the word of God to us today; when we question where Christ is our pain and suffering, life and death situation, the Lord will keep us and guide us, ever replenishing us with his living body and blood which he willingly gave up for our sake.

The close association Jesus makes with feeding on him and living suggests that every day we need Jesus to nourish our lives – hence the graphic imagery **(vv.53-56)**.

This conflict nonetheless between tradition and spiritual was ever so strong that the some of the disciples missed the point Jesus made about his resurrection - pointing them to the life - giving moment when he will resurrect as he said, "it is the spirit that gives life and not flesh". It is in his dying that we have eternal life! They missed it! In verse 64, Jesus said 'no one will come to him unless it is granted by the Father'.

Perhaps this was the straw that break the camel's back? Perhaps the disciples could not envisage how on earth this would be possible or perhaps they had ruled themselves out of God's amazing plan for them by daring to think themselves worthy. Nevertheless, Jesus' disciples found his teaching very difficult to understand and accept and many turned away from following him and he was only left with the twelve.



How often have you seen yourself unworthy of God's amazing plan for you?

The Father is loving and merciful to grant us access to His amazing plan for us. We all worthy just as we are in God's eyes – all we must do is open our hearts and spirits to acknowledge God Almighty as Creator of heaven and earth, the One True God and by so doing, we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour who has paid the ultimate price for us.

As Simon Peter puts it, "Lord to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life". Therefore beloved, by faith let us all 'come to believe and know that Jesus is the Only One of God'.

Finally, Paul calls the Ephesians to struggle for the values of God's kingdom in Caesar's world. He calls them to stand and to be strong and bold to be resolute in living the values of the kingdom. Paul teaches about right living and relationships, peace, proclaiming the way of salvation, inspired by and speaking the word of God in a world in which we face a daily choice about our allegiance. Therefore, Paul urges us to pray, stay alert to what is going on around us, and to pray especially for one another. **Amen.**

Hymn 526 StF: Lord of All Hopefulness, Lord of All Joy



Lord God, we pray for the leaders of the nations. Give them your wisdom and support. We pray that justice will reign in our world, and we lift to you now, countries and places where we know that this is not happening. We cry out to you for the people of Afghanistan and Haiti. We lift the grieving people of Plymouth to you. We ask, Lord, for a new determination amongst the world leaders to put the needy at the heart of their decision making, particularly refugees.

Lord, who shall we turn to but you:
for you have the words of eternal life.

We pray for those in our churches, the circuit and our communities who are suffering from physical or mental illness, those dealing with serious diagnosis; we pray for the families and friends who are coping with such difficult circumstances. In the stillness, we bring our own troubles, worries and sorrows to you, knowing that you care about everything that bothers us however great or small.

Finally, Lord, we pray for this circuit and ask that you nourish us with your wisdom and presence in every situation. Help us to go about our mission knowing that we have met with you and have been fed by you. Lord, who shall we turn to but you, for you have the words of eternal life. Help us to keep our eyes fixed on you. **Amen.**



Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen**

Final Hymn 272: From Heaven you came helpless babe



Lord Jesus Christ, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God. Go with us into your world to love and serve others in your name. **Amen.**