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## Service for the 13<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020

*A warm welcome to all who share in worship with us today.*

### CALL TO WORSHIP

Jesus comes fulfilling the hope of healing to wholeness: He shows that mercy has triumphed over judgement.

Praise the Lord. Amen.

### HYMN: New every morning

*If you would like to sing this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1. New every morning is the love  
our wakening and uprising prove,  
through sleep and darkness safely brought,  
restored to life and power and thought.
2. New mercies each returning day,  
hover around us while we pray;  
new perils past, new sins forgiven,  
new thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven.
3. If on our daily course our mind  
be set to hallow all we find,  
new treasures still, of countless price,  
God will provide for sacrifice.
4. Old friends, old scenes, will lovelier be,  
as more of heaven in each we see,  
some softening gleam of love and prayer  
shall dawn on every cross and care.
5. The trivial round, the common task  
will furnish all we ought to ask.  
Lord, help us, this and every day,  
to live more nearly as we pray.

*John Keble*

### PRAYERS

*Let us pray.*

Merciful God, sometimes it is difficult for us to understand why things happen in the ways that they do: why people carry out plans to hurt others, why we find ourselves facing danger when we thought all would be well, why challenges seem to follow us everywhere we go.

Give us faith to recognise the plans You make for our good, Your design for a world where wellbeing, safety and harmonious living are the concern of all Your people for each other.

Help us to believe that all is possible when we are obedient to Your will and follow Your ways. Help us to live confidently, love generously, and trust that wherever life may lead your loving presence forever goes with us.

**Amen.**

## THE LORD'S PRAYER

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.**

## SCRIPTURE READING

St Mark 7: 24-37

<sup>24</sup> Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. <sup>25</sup> In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. <sup>26</sup> The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

<sup>27</sup> "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

<sup>28</sup> "Lord," she replied, "even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

<sup>29</sup> Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

<sup>30</sup> She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup> There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

<sup>33</sup> After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue. <sup>34</sup> He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "*Ephphatha!*" (which means "Be opened!"). <sup>35</sup> At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

<sup>36</sup> Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. <sup>37</sup> People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

*Thanks be to God.*

ADDRESS: *Preacher Mrs Kathleen Phillips*

Today's Gospel relates to two miracles. The first was the demon-possessed daughter. Naturally, we would expect this first account to focus on a conversation between Jesus and the girl's mother. How fraught that mother would have been!  
The second account focuses on the earthly means through which Jesus gave hearing and speech to the deaf man.

There is so much to learn from the account of the woman who was pleading for her daughter. Jesus wanted her to learn so much more about the great gift of faith that she had

already received from the Holy Spirit. So he tested her. “Let the children be fed first, for it’s not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs...”

With those words, Jesus not only tested her faith but also gave a hint of the cruel attitudes that many Jews had against the Gentiles. Sadly, much like we are witnessing today against those fleeing war-torn & violent situations and landing upon our beaches. We cannot know what fear they have suffered. Only a couple of weeks ago, I received massive abuse from a young man serving in our navy over my appeal for us Christians to offer love and hope rather than hate. His response was “Do you know they are mainly Muslims?” I explained that Jesus’ love is for *all*, is it not?

It is likely some of the crowd secretly hoped this woman would go away. Many of the people there did not know the power of the Holy Spirit. But this woman was not going to give up. She answered “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” The Holy Spirit had created a deep faith in this woman. If the Lord said she was a dog, then she would take a dog’s share of the blessings. She was happy to take whatever crumbs the Lord sent her way.

When Jesus drove out the demon that possessed this woman’s daughter, He was not just driving out a demon. He was opening salvation to people of every tribe and nation. Here, He was illustrating many of the barriers we have in our lives today – and He broke down those barriers. He was saying loud and clear that He was for *all* people in *all* times and in *all* places.

Maybe from our point of view, a deaf man might not be as dramatic as a demon-possessed daughter. But nevertheless the man’s inability to hear was still seen as a result of sin in the world. Paul wrote to the Romans, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”. Since the deaf cannot hear the proclamation of Christ through their ears, someone must make the proclamation of Christ’s word visible for them.

People are deaf for many reasons. The real tragedy is not for those who are physically deaf, but for those who are spiritually deaf. Many choose not to hear God’s message. There are mounds of excuses. Some people think they know all there is to know. Others don’t care what God might say to them. There are those who don’t want to hear what God has to tell them. Whatever the excuses, there are no good reasons to ignore God’s word. At this moment in our history, our nations need God more than ever. Spiritual deafness comes from the devil. God has promised that He will always provide faithful people to proclaim His word. These people are like the friends of the deaf man who brought him to Jesus.

God places His word in our ears. He touches us in Holy Baptism. God’s process for sustaining Christ’s church in this world is amazing. Just as the mother pleaded for her daughter and just as friends of the deaf man brought him to Jesus, so also God works through His people to bring His word into our lives. He brings this word to our ears. He uses Holy Baptism to join us to Christ. The Holy Spirit works through us and brings us into the Church.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Angel voices

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment.*

1 Angel voices ever singing  
round Thy throne of light,  
angel harps, forever ringing,  
rest not day nor night;  
thousands only live to bless Thee  
and confess thee Lord of might.

2 Thou who art beyond the farthest  
mortal eye can scan,  
can it be that Thou regardest  
songs of sinful man?  
Can we feel that Thou art near us  
and wilt hear us? Yea, we can.

3 Lord, we know that Thou rejoices  
o'er each work of Thine;  
Thou didst ears and hands and voices  
for Thy praise combine;  
craftsman's art and music's measure  
for Thy pleasure didst design.

4 Here, great God, today we offer  
of Thine own to Thee;  
and for Thine acceptance proffer,  
all unworthily,  
hearts and minds and hands and voices  
in our choicest melody.

5 Honour, glory, might, and merit  
Thine shall ever be,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
blessed Trinity:  
of the best that Thou hast given  
earth and heaven render Thee

*Francis Pott, atld*

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

*Let us pray to our loving and merciful God.*

Lord, we thank you for the richness and diversity of each unique identity.

We pray for the separate members of this Body of Christ, and our corporate nature, that we may be filled at every level with the living breath of God.

Father of mercy: **let your kingdom come.**

We thank you for the beauty and variety of our landscapes and cultures, all over the world, for stars and the wideness of space.

Teach us to cherish and respect the universe we inhabit and all those who look or sound different to ourselves.

Father of mercy: **let your kingdom come.**

We thank you for the hope each new-born child brings, for the gentle gifts of laughter and friendship, thoughtfulness and sympathy. We pray that our eyes will see all others with God's affection.

Father of mercy: **let your kingdom come.**

We thank you for the patient endurance of so many who suffer so much: for them we pray for your wholeness and refreshing, for your upholding and healing.

Father of mercy: **let your kingdom come.**

We thank you for the promise of mercy triumphing over judgement, and commend to your love forever our loved ones and friends who have died.

Father of mercy Father of mercy: **let your kingdom come.**

We thank you for all our many blessings and pray that we take none for granted, but that we might commit ourselves to live out our thanks each day.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ.

**Amen**

HYMN: O Jesus Christ, grow thou in me

*If you would like to **sing** this hymn, click the icon on the webpage for organ accompaniment*

1 O Jesus Christ, grow thou in me,  
and all things else recede:  
my heart be daily nearer thee,  
from sin be daily freed.

4 Fill me with gladness from above,  
hold me by strength divine!  
Lord, let the glow of thy great love  
through my whole being shine.

2 Each day let thy supporting might,  
my weakness still embrace;  
my darkness vanish in thy light,  
thy life my death efface.

5 Show me thy glory more and more,  
Lord, holy, wise, and true!  
Thy living image I would be,  
in joy and sorrow too.

3 Let faith in thee and in thy might  
my every motive move;  
be thou alone my soul's delight,  
my passion and my love.

6 Make this poor self grow less and less,  
be thou my life and aim;  
O make me daily, through thy grace,  
more worthy of thy name.

Johann Lavater *tr* Elizabeth Smith

**BLESSING**

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all, evermore.

**Amen.**