

This, and all other Broadway 'virtual services' since Easter, are available online at <https://urcwalsall.uk/virtual-church.html> .



Service for the 10th Sunday after Trinity, 8th August 2021

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

This service includes Holy Communion.

CALL TO WORSHIP

Then I heard the Lord say, "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger?"
I answered, "I will go! Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8)

HYMN: Fill thou my life

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

1 Fill thou my life, O Lord my God,
in every part with praise,
that my whole being may proclaim
thy being and thy ways.

2 Not for the lip of praise alone,
nor e'en the praising heart
I ask, but for a life made up
of praise in every part:

3 Praise in the common things of life,
its goings out and in;
praise in each duty and each deed,
however small and mean.

4 Fill every part of me with praise:
let all my being speak
of thee and of thy love, O Lord,
poor though I be and weak.

5 So shalt thou, glorious Lord, from me
receive the glory due;
and so shall I begin on earth
the song for ever new.

6 So shall no part of day or night
from sacredness be free,
but all my life, in every step,
be fellowship with thee.

H Bonar (altd)

PRAYERS

Let us pray

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you have provided for your children. In the wilderness of this world, you give us the Bread of Life. May we always put our hope and trust in you.

Loving Father, we give you thanks and praise for all you are and for all that you have done for us. We give you thanks that you have called us to know you and to love you. You have drawn us to you with bands of love. Help us to listen and to obey your word. Open our ears to your call and our hearts to your love.

Forgive us that so often we fail you. We have not listened for your voice or responded to your call. We have not loved one another as you have loved us. Forgive us we pray. Inspire and strengthen us, that we may follow you more nearly every day.

We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord, and as we pray in His name, so we pray together in the words He taught us....

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 READINGS

St John 6: 35, 41-51

³⁵ "I am the bread of life," Jesus told them. "Those who come to me will never be hungry; those who believe in me will never be thirsty.

⁴¹ The people started grumbling about him, because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." ⁴² So they said, "This man is Jesus, son of Joseph, isn't he? We know his father and mother. How, then, does he now say he came down from heaven?"

⁴³ Jesus answered, "Stop grumbling among yourselves. ⁴⁴ People cannot come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me; and I will raise them to life on the last day.

⁴⁵ The prophets wrote, 'Everyone will be taught by God.' Anyone who hears the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ This does not mean that anyone has seen the Father; he who is from God is the only one who has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ I am telling you the truth: he who believes has eternal life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, but they died. ⁵⁰ But the bread that comes down from heaven is of such a kind that whoever eats it will not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If you eat this bread, you will live forever. The bread that I will give you is my flesh, which I give so that the world may live."

Ephesians 4:25 – 5:2

²⁵ No more lying, then! Each of you must tell the truth to the other believer, because we are all members together in the body of Christ. ²⁶ If you become angry, do not let your anger lead you into sin, and do not stay angry all day. ²⁷ Don't give the Devil a chance. ²⁸ If you used to rob, you must stop robbing and start working, in order to earn an honest living for yourself and to be able to help the poor. ²⁹ Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed, so that what you say will do good to those who hear you. ³⁰ And do not make God's Holy Spirit sad; for the Spirit is God's mark of ownership on you, a guarantee that the day will come when God will set you free. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, passion, and anger. No more shouting or insults, no more hateful feelings of any sort. ³² Instead, be kind and tender-hearted to one another, and forgive one another, as God has forgiven you through Christ.

5 Since you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him. ² Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us as a sweet-smelling offering and sacrifice that pleases God.

Thanks be to God.

HYMN: Break thou the bread

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

1 Break thou the bread of life,
dear Lord, to me,
as thou didst break the loaves
beside the sea:

2 beyond the sacred page
I seek thee, Lord;
my spirit pants for thee,
O living Word!

3 Bless thou the truth, dear Lord,
to me, to me,
as thou didst bless the bread
by Galilee:

4 then shall all bondage cease,
all fetters fall,
and I shall find my peace,
my all in all!

Mary A Lathbury

ADDRESS: *Mrs Nancy McOnie*

For some weeks now, I have been thinking about ministry in our churches and concerned that we have such a shortage of trained ministers in our denomination. When I looked at the lectionary readings for today, the theme 'The Bread of Life' presented some challenges, which I would like to share with you now.

Jesus said "I am the Bread of Life": bread which is to be broken and shared with all humankind. The Bread of Life is the food, the nourishment for our faith; a faith which brings fullness of life for all people. So why is it that so few people feel called to ministry – to the sharing of this faith to those who are so much in need today?

Of course it takes several years to train a minister, so perhaps we failed to give the right challenge and encouragement to our congregations then. Is it because the call has not been given from the pulpit or because people have not been drawn – have not heard God calling them? Let me share with you three ideas which come from today's readings....

1 – We do not think we are worthy of the task

That is what they thought of Jesus. "This man Jesus, son of Joseph isn't he? We know his father and mother." They did not understand that Jesus was not only a carpenter's son: He was God's Son, chosen and called by God to redeem His people and bring them back to the God and Father of us all. I could say that I am only a blacksmith's daughter, but I have felt called since my teenage years to be a lay preacher. Now I say to you, "Is anyone here being called by God to train for ministry, perhaps from your families or friends or from our Youth Fellowship?" Do they just need a nudge in the right direction?

A poem by E E Hale inspired me at one time. Let me share some of its words with you...

Is there some desert or some pathless sea
where thou, good God of angels, wilt send me
some handful of His corn to take
and scatter far afield, till it in turn
shall yield its hundredfold of grains of gold
to feed the waiting children of my God?
Show me the desert Father, or the sea.
Is it Thine enterprise? Great God, send me.

No-one from Broadway URC has gone to train for ministry for a number of years now.
Whom should we send?

2 – Resisting the call

Jesus spoke about us being drawn to Him: “I have drawn you with cords of love”. The word used for ‘drawn’ is one which implies there is a lot of tugging going on and much resistance to the call. Is that because we spend a lot of time talking **about** God and not enough time talking **to** God? Is God tugging at someone here today? What can we do to encourage them?

3 – Christian behaviour

Jesus continues by telling them to stop grumbling and then reminds them of the Bread of Life, words which are very appropriate for us today as we share Holy Communion together. The bread we share is symbolic, ‘We feed on Him through faith’, and just as daily bread nourishes and strengthens us, so also the heavenly food strengthens our faith. But it does more than that: it changes us and our behaviour as Christians. Paul reminds us that we are all God’s dear children when we accept Him as Lord. So we must also try to be like Him and work in love.

If we ourselves are not able to be ministers of word and sacrament, we can all demonstrate in our own lives what God is like – and how much we are all loved. Our ‘calling’, our resistance to the call and our behaviour as Christians are all challenges on our Christian journey. So, above all, we need to remember that Jesus is the Bread of Life, our strength and our companion throughout our lives.

To Him be the praise and glory. Amen.

PRAYERS of intercession

Let us pray

Dear Lord, we come to you today with our prayers, knowing that you will hear us, guide us and help us.

We pray for your church throughout the world. We think especially of those who can be persecuted for their beliefs. We are so lucky to be able to worship openly and without fear. Lord, may justice flow like a river, reaching barren and sun-scorched deserts.

Where people feel forgotten, let your water of life comfort them.

Where children are abandoned or abused, let your water of life protect them.

Where communities suffer at the hands of prejudice, let your water of life shield them.

Lord, we ask for a mighty downpour from Heaven. May we hear your voice, live as you lead us to live, go as you bid us to go, serve as you inspire us to serve, and give as you teach us to give until the earth is covered with the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea.

God of grace: **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for this congregation and the fellowship that we enjoy. The past months have been challenging and restrictive and some of us have experienced loneliness and isolation as a result of this. We think of all those who are struggling with mental health

issues. Thank you for all those workers who help with people's mental well-being. Let us rejoice and give thanks that the restrictions are starting to lift and we can begin to enjoy the company of family, friends and neighbours in the flesh, rather than through a device. Let us hope that we shall soon be able to use our voices to sing your praises.

God of grace: **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the skills of all the doctors, nurses, scientists, care workers and volunteers who have worked so hard throughout the pandemic to deliver vaccines and to care for the sick and the dying.

May grieving and struggling families and individuals feel your love surrounding them, upholding them and carrying them from the darkness into your healing light.

Let us remember those of our fellowship who are unable to be with us today. You know each and every one of them, Lord, and you understand their needs. May they feel your presence with them, comforting and supporting them.

God of grace: **hear our prayer.**

In a moment of quiet together we bring before you those known only to ourselves who are in need of our prayers at this time. Let them feel your presence in their lives as we name them in our hearts and commit them to your care.....

Every morning a new world is born, every day a new chance. Lord, here we are, such as we are, and into your hands we commend ourselves; take us today, teach us today, guide us today, use us today, for your sake.

Amen.

HYMN: Author of life

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

1 Author of life divine,
who hast a table spread,
furnished with mystic wine
and everlasting bread,
preserve the life Thyself hast giv'n,
and feed and train us up for heav'n.

2 Our needy souls sustain
with fresh supplies of love,
till all Thy life we gain
and all Thy fullness prove,
and strengthened by Thy perfect grace,
behold without a veil Thy face.

Charles Wesley

HOLY COMMUNION

Let us pray

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your Holy Name, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Yours, Lord, is the greatness, the power, the glory, the splendour and the majesty; for everything in heaven and on earth is yours. All things come from you and of your own do we give you.

It is right to praise you, Father, Lord of all creation; in love you made us for yourself. When we turned away, you did not reject us but came to meet us in your Son. In Christ, you shared our life that we might live in Him, and He in us.

On the night He was betrayed, at supper with His friends, He took bread and gave you thanks; he broke it and gave it to them saying "Take, eat, this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

At the end of supper, taking the cup of wine, he gave you thanks and said "Drink this, all of you: this is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

As we proclaim the death and celebrate His rising in glory, send down your Holy Spirit; that this bread and wine may be to us the symbols of His body, healing forgiving and making us whole, loving and caring in the world until your kingdom comes. Amen.

Jesus took bread, broke it and said "This is my body. It is broken for you. Do this to remember me." Let us eat and remember.....

Later, he took the cup of wine and said "This is the new relationship with God, made possible because of my death." Take this, all of you: drink and remember.....

Let us pray

We thank you, Father, that you have fed us in this sacrament, united us with Christ and given us a foretaste of the heavenly banquet prepared for all people. To you be glory and praise for ever.

Amen.

HYMN: I, the Lord of sea and sky

If you would like to listen to this hymn, click the icon on the webpage or visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqLwH5RdtPk> .

BLESSING

Let us pray

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep our hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And may the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rest upon us and abide with us and with all whom we love, this day and always.

Amen.