

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



Service for the fourth Sunday after Trinity, 27th June 2021

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

CALL TO WORSHIP

This is the day the Lord has made: let us rejoice and be glad in it!

HYMN: There's a wideness in God's mercy

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

1 There's a wideness in God's mercy
like the wideness of the sea;
there's a kindness in his justice
which is more than liberty.

2 There is plentiful redemption
through the blood that has been shed;
there is joy for all the members
in the sorrows of the Head.

3 There is grace enough for thousands
of new worlds as great as this;
there is room for fresh creations
in the Lord's unfathomed bliss.

4 For the love of God is broader
than the measures of our mind,
and the heart of the Eternal
is most wonderfully kind.

5. But we make his love too narrow
by false limits of our own;
and we magnify his strictness
with a zeal he would not own.

6 If our love were but more simple,
we should take him at his word;
and our lives would be illumined
by the glory of the Lord.

F W Faber (altd)

PRAYERS of thanksgiving & confession

Let us pray

Loving God, our heavenly Father, we meet together to worship you and praise your Holy Name.

As we look around us, we can see the majesty you have provided. We wake to a new dawn every day; to daylight, sunshine and rain, to the sounds of birds and the rustle of trees and bushes. We sit in our gardens and parks and watch the wonders of nature day by day. We see the bees sucking sweet nectar from the flowers, we hear the birds singing a sweet refrain and dogs barking.

Loving God, you have given us so much that we cannot thank you or praise you enough.

We thank you for the harvest of food for our tables and for water to drink.

We thank you for our ancestors who built this church and for all who work here.

We thank you for those of our family who led us to you.

We thank you most of all for sending your very own son, Jesus, to come on earth to live among us and to teach us how to truly love one another.

Help us, in all we do, to do it in Jesus' name. Let us praise God, for God's glory is everywhere and in everything, and God's love embraces all.

So often, Lord, we let you down when we ignore the homeless, the poor and the downtrodden.

Forgive us the missed opportunities to show your love.

Forgive us when we jump to conclusions that are unjust and unfair.

Teach us not to condemn, but to show compassion.

Forgive us when we become impatient.

We know in our hearts, Lord, when we have sinned. Today we plead for forgiveness: help us to know and be assured that we are truly forgiven. Teach us to love with real love as Jesus did. As we love one another as Jesus loved us, we shall truly be the disciples He wants us to be.

For the sake of our risen Lord, Jesus Christ,

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 5: 21-43

²¹ Jesus went back across to the other side of the lake. There at the lakeside a large crowd gathered around him. ²² Jairus, an official of the local synagogue, arrived, and when he saw Jesus, he threw himself down at his feet ²³ and begged him earnestly, "My little daughter is very sick. Please come and place your hands on her, so that she will get well and live!"

²⁴ Then Jesus started off with him. So many people were going along with Jesus that they were crowding him from every side.

²⁵ There was a woman who had suffered terribly from severe bleeding for twelve years, ²⁶ even though she had been treated by many doctors. She had spent all her money, but instead of getting better she got worse all the time. ²⁷ She had heard about Jesus, so she came in the crowd behind him, ²⁸ saying to herself, "If I just touch his clothes, I will get well."

²⁹ She touched his cloak, and her bleeding stopped at once; and she had the feeling inside herself that she was healed of her trouble. ³⁰ At once Jesus knew that power had gone out of him, so he turned around in the crowd and asked, “Who touched my clothes?”

³¹ His disciples answered, “You see how the people are crowding you; why do you ask who touched you?”

³² But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. ³³ The woman realized what had happened to her, so she came, trembling with fear, knelt at his feet, and told him the whole truth. ³⁴ Jesus said to her, “My daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be healed of your trouble.”

³⁵ While Jesus was saying this, some messengers came from Jairus' house and told him, “Your daughter has died. Why bother the Teacher any longer?”

³⁶ Jesus paid no attention to what they said, but told him, “Don't be afraid, only believe.”

³⁷ Then he did not let anyone else go on with him except Peter and James and his brother John. ³⁸ They arrived at Jairus' house, where Jesus saw the confusion and heard all the loud crying and wailing. ³⁹ He went in and said to them, “Why all this confusion? Why are you crying? The child is not dead—she is only sleeping!”

⁴⁰ They started making fun of him, so he put them all out, took the child's father and mother and his three disciples, and went into the room where the child was lying. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha, koum*” which means, “Little girl, I tell you to get up!”

⁴² She got up at once and started walking around. (She was twelve years old.) When this happened, they were completely amazed. ⁴³ But Jesus gave them strict orders not to tell anyone, and he said, “Give her something to eat.”

HYMN: Immortal love

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

1 Immortal Love for ever full,
for ever flowing free,
for ever shared, for ever whole,
a never-ebbing sea.

2 Our outward lips confess the name
all other names above;
love only knoweth whence it came
and comprehendeth love.

3 We may not climb the heavenly steeps
to bring the Lord Christ down;
in vain we search the lowest deeps,
for him no depths can drown:

4 But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
a present help is he;
and faith has still its Olivet,
and love its Galilee.

5 The healing of his seamless dress
is by our beds of pain;
we touch him in life's throng and press,
and we are whole again.

6 O Lord and master of us all,
whate'er our name or sign,
we own thy sway, we hear thy call,
we test our lives by thine.

J G Whittier

ADDRESS: *Mrs Kathleen Phillips*

In our Gospel reading today, we have the healing of two women from very different lifestyles. One enjoyed the centre of community life, the other lived on the streets.

Before the restrictions imposed by Covid, we were used to shaking hands – or even hugging each other. Touch is such a powerful thing. I recently read about the power of human touch. Many studies have been done on the consequences for children of being deprived of human contact. It is known as ‘detachment disorder’ and occurs commonly with foster children.

Today, we are looking at the story of two ‘touches’ and the effect they had upon the community.

Wherever He went, Jesus had a huge crowd following him. There were many reasons why Jesus was so popular. His preaching was like no other. He had power and told parables, which people loved to hear. The people loved His preaching because He taught with authority. He boldly proclaimed His message that “The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe the Gospel”.

In today’s story, the girl is twelve years old and has a life-threatening fever. The woman is older and has had a disease for twelve years. Let’s start with the girl....

This is not a girl from an ordinary family: she is the daughter of Jairus, leader of the synagogue. He’s an important man in the town. He would go to the ends of the earth to get healing for her. But he walks straight up to Jesus in the middle of a massive crowd and falls at His feet, actually begging Jesus to come with him and heal her.

So here you have a popular girl, a ‘bell of the ball’, whom everyone knows. She becomes the centre of attention as Jesus starts walking to the house. Jairus must be relieved! Then something happens: another woman is on the scene. Who is she?

This woman has had a haemorrhage for twelve years. Today, medical science would sort that out, as many of us ladies know from experience; but this was not modern times. The Jewish law states that when a woman is in her menstrual cycle, she is unclean and must live in isolation. She would live in the ‘red tent’ while she waited for her cycle to pass, then she would have to attend a ‘purification’ ceremony before becoming ‘good to go’ for another month. But this woman had been in isolation for twelve years. No-one had touched her for twelve years. She was ‘untouchable’. Has our society become one in which we also see untouchables in our towns and cities?

That very brave woman summons up the courage to push through the crowds to touch the hem of Jesus’ cloak. Doesn’t it take your breath away? Then Jesus turns, says “Who touched me?” and sees desperation in her eyes. He also sees the courage it has taken for her to do this. He stoops down with such love and says “Daughter, your faith has made you well”. What a scene!

Then comes a message from Jairus’ house: his daughter is dead. Jesus leaves the crowd, enters the room of the girl and touches her. The Law of Moses clearly states you should neither touch a woman from the ‘red tent’ nor a dead person. In those days it was believed

that, if you did, you would become unclean too. But when Jesus touched the 'unclean', power was reversed.

The kingdom of God calls for the marginalised to be brought into the community and calls upon the elite and privileged to experience the death of that status, so that we can all have life and be made clean.

So, there's the challenge for today. We say time and again that we are the body of Christ. It's for us to do God's work – to reach out to 'touch' those in need.

PRAYERS of intercession

Let us pray

Blessed are you, Lord our God, for you have called us to be your people, to represent you and to show your love. By the power of your spirit, enable us to live and work to your praise and glory, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We give thanks for all who have gone out to mission and proclaim the Good News, both in word and – importantly – in deed.

We remember especially those who brought the message of Christ to our shores. We ask your blessing upon preachers of the Word and on all who witness to you by their lifestyle and example.

We pray for those who have never heard the Good News, and for those afraid to commit themselves to Christ because of hostility.

Loving God, **hear us and help us.**

We remember all who live in a hostile environment, as the hemorrhaging woman in today's Gospel story did.

We ask your blessing upon all who work hard for peace and healing of the many divisions of our world.

We ask your blessings upon those who strive to bring freedom and justice to nations and to individuals.

We remember today especially the work of the United Nations and Amnesty International.

Loving God, **hear us and help us.**

Father, we thank you for the love within our homes.

We ask a blessing upon our families & friends.

We remember all who suffer from rejection or violence in their homes.

We pray for all who have been taken into care, especially young children, and for all those living on the streets of our cities and towns.

Loving God, **hear us and help us.**

Father, we give thanks and praise for your healing love.

We remember before you all suffering people, the sick and the hungry.

We pray for the world's poor and unemployed.

We ask your blessing upon all who are unwell, especially the terminally ill and those who care for them.

We pray for the nurses and carers, who so often feel exhausted and often are not fully appreciated.

Loving God, **hear us and help us.**

We give thanks and praise that, through Christ, the way to the fullness of your kingdom is open to us.

We pray for our loved ones departed and commend them to you, as we do for ourselves and the world.

Loving God, **hear us and help us.**

Accept these our prayers for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
Amen.

HYMN: Be Thou my vision

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

1 Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart;
naught be all else to me, save that thou art—
thou my best thought in the day and the night,
waking or sleeping, thy presence my light.

3 Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
thou mine inheritance, now and always:
thou and thou only, the first in my heart,
High King of heaven, my treasure thou art.

2 Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true word;
thou ever with me and I with thee, Lord;
thou my great Father, thy child let me be;
thou in me dwelling, and I one with thee.

4 High King of heaven, thou heaven's bright sun,
grant me its joys after vict'ry is won;
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

Ancient Irish, tr Mary Byrne & Eleanor Hull

THE GRACE

Let us pray

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

Amen.