

Sunday 26th January 2025: 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or some other suitable time.

Theme for today is “There is power in the name of Jesus”

Our call to worship Psalm 19:

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

There is no speech, nor are there words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

Hymn StF 55 H&P 9: Immortal, invisible God only wise

Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

God of grace and glory, to this worried world, you reveal your presence in radiant glory and in gentle whispers, on mountain tops and in shadowed valleys, in classrooms and hospital beds, in homes and churches, in the quiet of nature and on busy streets. Yours is the presence that pushes past our fear to calm us; yours is the love that transforms our doubt with reassurance. We come to dwell in your goodness and offer you the praise you deserve.

God of mercy and forgiveness, we confess that many things keep us from trusting fully in your love. We are often distracted by our own desires and disappointments. We cling to anger and resentment. We fear for the future rather than seek signs of hope. Forgive us. Shine your love upon us so that your glory may be seen in us and give us courage to follow Jesus wherever he leads, for we pray in his name. Amen

Hymn 264 StF Make way, make for Christ the King

Bible readings: Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10 1 Corinthians 12: 12-31 Luke 4: 14-21

Reflection

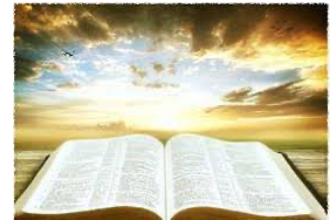
Do you look forward to new programmes on television? Or do you prefer the old films, or repeats of classic comedies, and other shows. It's not always bad to see programmes over and over again, or to read books again. They can often still be meaningful, even if they're not really fresh anymore. The scripture readings we hear in church, or read at home, are essentially 'repeats'; we've heard them all before, and they become part of us. It was the same for the people in the synagogue, listening to Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah. Did the people really take in the words, or did it just wash over them in its familiarity? They were perhaps more focused on the 'preacher', fascinated by this 'local boy' returning home after gaining popularity elsewhere. As he began to speak on the passage, all eyes were on him, not their ears, necessarily. But his first words were a startling statement, which got their attention. "Today, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing". This was a very personal announcement that, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me".

When Jesus read the passage, he was not just reading it but enacting it. The word had become flesh. He was not just telling people but giving a challenge to all who listened. In the verses that follow, we find the people could not accept his words. They didn't expect familiar scriptures to come to life in a new way. This was only the beginning of God's gracious fulfilment of his promise through the prophet; to them, to us and to the world. The words of freedom and release, began with Jesus in person, who would call others to continue the work through his church. We can all use our gifts, that the scriptures may be fulfilled in the present day. When we hear the Word of God, it is not a repeat, but fresh every time, always a personal, present and gracious word from God to us; for the 'Word of God is living and active'.

The reflection is brought to us by Elsie Warby one of our Local preachers

- Thinking about what Elsie has said, when you hear the opening words of a familiar passage of scripture, do you switch off? Or do you listen intently, waiting to hear something new that God is saying to you?
- "All their eyes were upon him" the person reading the word of God can be as important as the word itself. Have you heard a familiar passage and been inspired by the reader?
- Do you ever make a note of Bible readings and look at how different translations interpret the word. If using a computer there is a vast range of different versions available on <https://www.biblegateway.com/> why not look again at the readings and allow God to speak to you through the Word.

Hymn: StF 164 H&P 482 Your words to me are life and health,



Prayers of Intercession

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

We give thanks for Christians in other countries, especially where there is suffering, danger and persecution; those sent out as missionaries Christians to serve you in far off lands. Strengthen your people for their witness and work in the world. Fill your ministers with your Spirit, that they may faithfully preach the gospel and administer your holy sacraments. Unite in the truth all who confess your name, that we may live together in love and proclaim your glory in all the world.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We give thanks for the peoples of the world and their leaders, remembering countries in crisis. We pray for all who suffer and for those in power who have the authority to change life to make a fairer and more peaceful world.

Give wisdom to those in authority in every land, and give to all peoples a desire for righteousness and peace, with the will to work together in trust, to seek the common good and to share with justice the resources of the earth,

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We give thanks for one another; our local community; those caring for people in need; those who teach in our schools, our neighbours and friends.

We commend to your keeping, Father, ourselves and each other, our families, our neighbours, and our friends. Enable us by your Spirit to live in love for you and for one another.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We give thanks for those in need: those who suffer; the sick; the poor; the distressed; the lonely; the unloved; the persecuted; the unemployed; those who grieve; and those who care for them.

Comfort and heal, merciful Lord, all who are in sorrow, need, sickness, or any other trouble. Give them a firm trust in your goodness; help those who minister to them; and bring us all into the joy of your salvation.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We praise you, Lord God, for your faithful servants in every age, and ask that we may share with them Christ's resurrection glory, through his death and rising again for our salvation. Hear us, Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

Offer to God your offertory for the week, and say the Lord's Prayer...

Hymn: StF 693 Beauty for brokenness

Closing blessing –

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. *(Romans 15:13)*