

Sunday 2nd February 2025: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

Theme for today is “Standing up for Christ”

Our call to worship Psalm 71: 1-6

Hymn Stf 449 H&P 699: Lord of creation, to you be all praise!

Prayer of Adoration and Confession:

For our prayers today:

Think for a moment about why God is such an important part of your life.

- What do you appreciate most about God?
- Where in your life have you caught a glimpse of the glory of God?
- Thank God for all that he means to you and all that his has done for you.

What are the things in your life that you want to offer back to God in confession?

- Things that you have either done that you now regret, or things that you had intended to do and never got around to.
- Things that you have said which now you regret.
- Maybe times that you should have spoken out and yet kept silent.
- Or even thoughts that you know weren't right.

Offer all these back to God and ask for forgiveness and let his Spirit wash over you.

Hymn 658 StF 785 H&P A charge to keep I have

Introduction:

The judge passed a 52-year life sentence on Axel Rudakubana the seventeen-year-old who killed three children and injured a further ten who were innocently enjoying a Taylor Swift Dance class. There has been an outcry why nobody had done anything to stop this happening despite there being concerns in school and with other agencies.

It is always much easier to be wise with the benefit of hindsight, but today, Steve Jones, one of our local preachers reflects on our calling to stand out against injustice. Please reflect on this as you

Bible readings: Jeremiah 1: 4-10 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13 Luke 4: 21-30

Reflection

Being a Christian and following Jesus is all about listening to what he taught us and living the truth of his teachings. “Love thy neighbour”, often gives the general impression that we are ‘nice and smiley’ people who will put up with anything because we are required to be nice to everyone. This cannot be further from the truth.

Love is so much more than being nice, putting up with bad behaviour and forgiving everyone of everything. Love is so much more. It means that we are people who are prepared to step in, right wrongs and see justice is done in the world around us and wider.

Jesus got on the wrong side of the people in the synagogue because he gave a message they did not want to hear. He said that the good news he brought, was for all people, not just the Jews. So enraged were the people, that they sought to take Jesus and throw him off the cliff! It is interesting to note that they shouted and railed against him, yet when it came to it, Jesus just looked at them and walked right through them. Face to face they could not do what they shouted from the anonymity of the mob.

Recently Bishop Marianne Budde at the National Prayer Service, pleaded with the new President to “Have mercy” on the vulnerable communities. She was brave and strong, setting out what Christians should do towards those most at risk in their society. The repost came, not as an argument against what she said, but a personal attack upon her. Before a society puts itself first it should remember that its greatness is measured by the way it looks after the weakest members of that society.

As individuals we are unlikely to be faced with such a situation. Even so, as Christians, we must be strong enough to love enough, even if it means we have to stand up and stand out for others against injustice. That is what following Christ is all about.

A prayer

Lord Jesus, you were anointed to bring new sight,



freedom and good news to all people.
Help us to share this good news of your love and care
with everyone we meet. Amen

The reflection is brought to us by Steve Jones one of our Local preachers

Please think for a moment about what Steve has said. Then ask yourself.

- Where do you see injustice in the modern world?
- Think for a moment about stories reported in the news, which ones upset and anger you the most?
- Do you just shrug your shoulders and think "there's nothing I can do"
- Or, do you challenge injustice, speak out for those who can't speak for themselves?
- Where do you find strength to stand against the oppressors?

Hymn: StF 728 O God, you search me and you know me.

Prayers of Intercession

For all those who have fallen victim to hatred and inhumanity, for those loved ones who are left behind to mourn, for the souls of those whose hearts are cold, Lord, hear our prayer.

For the children who are being born into this world of conflict and violence, for women and mothers who suffer needlessly, Lord, hear our prayer.

For all those who have been forced into unemployment, who long to return to work, for all those who struggle to support their families, Lord, hear our prayer.

For the soldiers who are misguided in thinking that their bullets will bring about peace, for those who feel called to conscientiously object to military orders, Lord, hear our prayer.

For the children who cry in their beds at night and wonder "what have I done?"

For the mothers and fathers who must try to explain the unexplainable, Lord, hear our prayer.

For all the children who have died before their time, for the soldiers who allow their uniform to strip them of their humanity, for the healers who are denied the opportunity to use their gifts, Lord, hear our prayer.

For the redemption of souls of both victim and perpetrator, for those who commit themselves to the forgiveness of sins, Lord, hear our prayer.

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)*