

**Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2025:** 7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

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

**Theme for today is “Blessed are those who ...”**

**Our call to worship Psalm 37: 1-11**

**Hymn StF 481: The Lord’s my shepherd.**

**Prayer of Adoration and Confession:**

Praise be to you, O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whose love we are redeemed and forgiven.

Praise be to you, O God, the source of all holiness, by whose Spirit we are made whole and brought to perfection.

Praise be to you, O God, Source of all being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and shall be forever. Amen.

Let us confess our sins.

*Silence*

Loving God,

We have sinned against you in what we have thought, said and done.

We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbours as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and turn away from what is wrong.

Forgive us for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

*Silence*

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

This is his gracious word: ‘Your sins are forgiven.’ **Amen. Thanks be to God.**

**Hymn 470 StF Lord for the years,**

**Introduction:**

The Church of Christ in Great Britain is experiencing difficult time, some of the communities we have loved throughout our lives are slowly dying, and Churches are closing. Many churches across the mainstream denominations are struggling as people get tired and the purse strings tighten, and we find ourselves wondering what the future holds for our church communities. We are experiencing this at a time when our villages and towns are increasing in size with new homes being built and we can feel lost and helpless. Look at these three Bible readings and see if they give you any confidence.

**Bible readings: Genesis 45: 3-11, 15 1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 Luke 6: 27-38**

**Reflection** *brought to us by Quentin Stephen one of our Local Preachers.*

Have you ever wondered why something very unpleasant has happened to you? Joseph may have wondered why his brothers hated him so much they wanted to kill him. However, they decided on a more lucrative way of getting rid of him, by selling him as a slave. Even if Joseph did realise that his boastful behaviour was the cause of his brothers becoming so jealous and angry toward him, he might have wondered why he landed up in prison after serving his Egyptian master so faithfully. His spell in prison may well have caused him to wonder whether God was really bothered about him being in such dire circumstances. The words of William Cowper’s hymn come to mind; “God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform;” (StF104). The fact is, we are seldom, if ever, aware of how God is acting to bring about a particular event or outcome. In this passage we hear about the reversal of fortune for Joseph. It is a story of from prison to prime minister rather than rags to riches, although it seems that definition is relevant too. Unlike the story of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:23-34), Joseph does not exact revenge on his brothers when they appear before him requesting a supply of grain. Rather, he reveals who he is and wants to rescue them along with the rest of his family.

So, what can we learn from this passage of scripture?

1. God’s servants/people experience hardship and ill-treatment.
2. God’s servants/people depend on God through the good and bad times in their life. (StF638 Through all the changing scenes of life)
3. God’s servants/people are willing to take on very challenging jobs.



4. God's servants/people are able to forgive their adversaries even when they have suffered badly as a consequence of their action and behaviour.

5. God's servants/peoples' trust is based on a definitive experience of his presence in their life.

6. God's servants/people should use their God-given gift(s) for the benefit of others not to show off.

**Hymn: 465 StF 437 H&P      Guide me O thou great Jehovah**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

God our Father, grant us the help of your Spirit in our prayers for the salvation of all people.

We pray for the Church throughout the world for this church and all its members for . . . that in faith and unity we may be constantly renewed by your Holy Spirit for mission and service.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the peoples of the world for the leaders of the nations for . . . that they may seek justice, freedom and peace for all.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for our country for those who have authority and influence for . . . that all may serve one another in wisdom, honesty and compassion.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for those among whom we live and work for all our neighbours for . . . that we may so use your gifts that together we may find joy in your creation.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for all in sorrow, need, anxiety or sickness for . . . that in their weakness they may know your strength, and in despair find hope.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In you, Father, we are one family on earth and in heaven.

We remember in your presence those who have died . . . giving thanks especially for those who have revealed to us your grace in Christ. Help us to follow the example of your saints in light and bring us with them to the fullness of your eternal joy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

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

**Hymn: 615 StF      Let love be real**

### **Closing blessing –**

The love of the Father enfold us, the wisdom of the Son enlighten us, the fire of the Spirit enflame us; and the blessing of God, the Three in One, be upon us and abide with us now and forever. Amen.