

Sunday January 9th 2022: First Sunday in Ordinary Time
For use by the Central Norfolk Circuit at 10.30 am or other suitable time.



Hymn StF 20 / MP 50

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here;
come bow before him now, with reverence and fear:
in him so sin is found – we stand on holy ground.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;
he burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned:
how awesome is the sight – our radiant King of light!
Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place;
he comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace:
no work too hard for him – in faith receive from him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

David J Evans (b 1963) CCL no. 5365402



Prayer

Thank God for all his blessings and say sorry for the ways in which you have let God down.

Readings with Reflections

Old Testament Reading set for today: Isaiah 43 v 1 – 28

Isaiah 42 ended with God's sorrow over the spiritual decay of his people. In Isaiah 43, God said that despite the people's spiritual failure, he would show them mercy, bring them back from captivity, and restore them. He would give them an outpouring of love, not wrath. Then the world would know that God alone had done this. We can be grateful that God also treats us mercifully even though we sin and have many shortcomings.

Gospel Reading set for today (1): Luke 3 v 15 – 17

The people of Israel had not seen a prophet for more than 400 years. It was widely believed that when the Messiah came, prophecy would reappear (Joel 2:28-29; Malachi 3:1; 4:5). When John burst onto the scene, the people were excited. He was obviously a great prophet, and they were sure that the eagerly awaited age of the Messiah had come. Some thought John himself was the Messiah. John spoke like the prophets of old, saying that the people must turn away from their sin and turn to God in order to avoid punishment and find his mercy. This is a message for all times and places, but John spoke it with urgency—he was preparing the people for the coming Messiah.

Gospel Reading set for today (2): Luke 3 v 21 – 22

Theologians have long been troubled by Jesus' allowing John to baptise him. Wasn't baptism for sinners? Why, then, did Jesus receive it? Luke emphasises the human nature of Jesus. Jesus was born to humble parents, and his birth was unannounced except to shepherds and foreigners. He underwent baptism and even death as only a human could; he lived a sinless life and rose from the dead as only God could. This baptism by John in the Jordan River was another step in Jesus' identification with us sinful people, and the arrival of the dove signified the Father's approval. Now Jesus would officially begin his ministry as God's beloved Son walking the dusty roads of Israel. When you are hurting, depressed, or broken, remember that you have a Saviour who understands your humanity. When you sin, remember that he has paid the price for your disobedience. Amen.

Cliff Shanganya (Minister in the Central Norfolk Methodist Circuit)

Hymn StF 233

When Jesus came to Jordan / to be baptised by John,
he did not come for pardon / but as his Father's Son.
He came to share repentance / with all who mourn their sins,
to speak the vital sentence / with which good news begins.

He came to share temptation / our utmost woe and loss,
for us and our salvation / to die upon the cross.

So when the Dove descended / on him, the Son of Man,
the hidden years had ended / the age of grace began.

Come, Holy Spirit, aid us / to keep the vows we make;
this very day invade us / and every bondage break.

Come, give our lives direction / the gift we covet most:
to share the resurrection / that leads to Pentecost.

Fred Pratt Green (1903 - 2000) CCL no. 5365402

Prayers of Intercession

We pray for all those who are hurt, depressed or feeling broken today. We ask that all those who feel alone, and on their own, may know the comforting, understanding presence of Jesus.

We pray for schools, teachers and schoolchildren as education resumes after the Christmas holidays. We pray for the smooth outworking of new covid measures in schools and for the safety of staff and pupils alike.

We pray for our world, our country, our communities, our churches, our neighbours, our families and our friends.

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

Hymn StF 564 H&P 745

O thou who camest from above / the pure celestial fire to impart,
kindle a flame of sacred love / on the mean altar of my heart!

There let it for thy glory burn / with inextinguishable blaze,
and trembling to its source return / in humble prayer and fervent praise.

Jesus, confirm my heart's desire / to work, and speak, and think for thee;
still let me guard the holy fire / and still stir up thy gift in me –

Ready for all thy perfect will / my acts of faith and love repeat,
till death thy endless mercies seal / and make the sacrifice complete.

Charles Wesley (1707 – 1788)

May the blessing of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us, and all those we love, this day and always, Amen.

Circuit News

We are running online Tuesday evening informal gatherings on zoom again – just for January. 'Tuesday at 7' is a session on Luke's Gospel on January 11th, a quiz run by Pippa Cook on January 18th, and an illustrated talk by Rev Jacqui on her trip to America 3 years ago on Jan 25th. Contact us if you would like the zoom link.

Our 6 pm zoom services continue on a Sunday evening with an 11.15 am morning service on the 4th Sunday – the next one is on January 23rd. The next 'Big Sunday' will be on February 27th when the morning zoom will be at 10.30 am and churches all over the Circuit will once again be following the same material.