

Sunday August 16

We have come together as the family of God in our Father's presence to offer him praise and thanksgiving, to hear and receive his holy word, to bring before him the needs of the world, to ask his forgiveness of our sins, and to seek his grace, that through his Son Jesus Christ we may give ourselves to his service.

So, let us be still as we come into the presence of God.

THE LIGHTING OF THE CANDLE

The Lord says:

'Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations;
I will be exalted in the earth.'

We light our candle as a sign of the love of God which brings light to this world.

A candle is lit

The light of Christ. **Thanks be to God.**

**Glory to the Father who has created us.
Glory to the Son who has redeemed us.
Glory to the Spirit who has empowered us.**

HYMN

Glorious things of thee are spoken,

Zion, city of our God!

He whose word cannot be broken

Formed thee for His own abode.

On the Rock of Ages founded,

What can shake thy sure repose?

With salvation's walls surrounded,

Thou mayest smile at all thy foes.

See! The streams of living waters,
Springing from eternal love,
Well supply thy sons and daughters,
And all fear of want remove;
Who can faint, whilst such a river
Ever flows their thirst to assuage?
Grace which, like the Lord, the Giver,
Never fails from age to age.

Saviour, if of Zion's city
I, through grace, a member am,

Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in Thy name.
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show,
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know.

CONFESSION

Father, you come to meet us when we return to you:

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

Jesus, you died on the cross for our sins:

Christ have mercy

Christ have mercy

Spirit, you give us life and peace:

Lord have mercy

Lord have mercy

May the Father forgive us by the death of His Son and strengthen us to live in the power of the Spirit all our days. **Amen.**

PRAYER FOR TODAY

Lord of heaven and earth, as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer, give us patience and courage never to lose hope, but always to bring our prayers before you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

CANTICLE

You are the one and only God; there is none like you, Lord; you are great and your name is holy: **glorify your name.**

By the worship of your Church in every generation, by our worship today:

glorify your name.

By the proclamation of the coming of Jesus, by his reception in our hearts:

glorify your name.

By the winning of the world and the reconciliation of all people:

glorify your name.

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by the living of our lives in faith, by the labour of our love and by the hope in the Lord Jesus Christ: **glorify your name.**

Our Lord God, you have glorified it, and you will glorify it again: glorify your name in us. Amen.

READING

The reader says

The reading is from Acts 16:1-15

After the reading, the reader says

This is the Word of the Lord

Thanks be to God.

REFLECTION

Acts 16 is an exciting chapter, it is also an historic chapter, for it records the good news of Jesus reaching Europe. Exciting though it is, today we miss out the climax; what we have today is both scene setting and informative. I don't know about you but I am always intrigued by how people, especially leaders think and reach decisions. Here we have an insight into Paul the leader, the strategist, except that he wasn't pulling the strings he was discerning the will of God.

Today in our reading we can begin to answer the question, 'How do we discern the will of God?'

Clearly and obviously for each one of us it begins with prayer. That is the bedrock and would have been the basis on which Paul selected Timothy to accompany him and how they discerned where they might set out for. But then something intervenes, in verses six and seven we see that the Holy Spirit was at work, forbidding, preventing them from speaking or proceeding somewhere. Now how did they discern that this was God? Who knows what was going on? But as we journey with Jesus we begin to detect when he is speaking through circumstances, when we stop, pray, and ask is this God?

Scripture, prayer and circumstance all need to be aligned. If something is clearly against what

is taught in scripture we don't proceed. We must pray, indeed pray at all times and then finally the intangible one is circumstance, it might be the coming together of events, words from people we trust. But if we find all three line up then we might discern that as the green light.

What happens if after prayer we seem to think in a different direction? Might this be the very thing we were praying for? For Paul as he prayed he had a vision and that moved him and his companions in a different direction. What would have happened if Paul had ignored the voice of God? He didn't and he went on to plant one of his favourite churches.

Why am I labouring the point this morning? Because in the coming days the church, our benefice, the deanery, the diocese and nationally will be called to make decisions as to how we develop mission and ministry in a post Covid 19 world, and if we are to walk the way of God then like Paul and his companions we will need to listen to the Spirit of Jesus.

HYMN

DEAR LORD AND FATHER OF MANKIND,

Forgive our foolish ways;
Reclothe us in our rightful mind;
In purer lives Thy service find,
In deeper reverence, praise,
In deeper reverence, praise.

In simple trust like theirs who heard,
Beside the Syrian sea,
The gracious calling of the Lord,
Let us, like them, without a word
Rise up and follow Thee,
Rise up and follow Thee.

O sabbath rest by Galilee!
O calm of hills above,
Where Jesus knelt to share with Thee
The silence of eternity,
Interpreted by love,
Interpreted by love.

Drop Thy still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,

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And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of Thy peace,
The beauty of Thy peace.

Breathe through the heats of our desire
Thy coolness and Thy balm;
Let sense be dumb, let flesh retire;
Speak through the earthquake, wind and fire,
O still small voice of calm,
O still small voice of calm!

INTERCESSIONS

Heavenly Father, as we mark 75 years since VJ day, we express our gratitude for the courage of the Allied Forces, and especially the Battalions from the Suffolk Regiment and units from East Anglia, who fought in the Far East for our freedom. We honour those who suffered and died that we might live in peace. We are sorry for all that hinders the coming of your kingdom, and pray that you will give us wisdom to learn from the memories of war, and a longing for the unity of all nations. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ whose fellowship of love is across the whole earth.

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear us and guide us.

Holy God, we pray that you will bless and increase all that encourages people in goodness, honesty and compassion. May all that promotes cruelty, self-seeking, prejudice and corruption wither and die. Help us to respect other cultures and human differences.

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear us and guide us.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the joy of human love, and for all those among whom we live and work. We pray particularly for loved ones who worry us with their health, or circumstances, or life direction. We pray for those among our friends and families who do not know you, or whose faith has been shaken.

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear us and guide us.

Heavenly Father we pray for those whose backgrounds make belief in a loving God impossible to imagine. We pray for all who suffer mental anguish including those of our armed forces who have been traumatised by their experiences. And we pray for those who are ill, in pain, hungry, or in despair.

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear us and guide us.

Holy God, gather into your eternal kingdom all who have come to the end of this earthly life and rejoice to see you as you really are; and comfort those who mourn their passing.

Lord, in your mercy:
Hear us and guide us.

Heavenly Father, we seek your guidance in our lives and for our country and for the world in all its turmoil. We thank you for your love which is unswerving and unending.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.**

Rejoicing in God's new creation, let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, which art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive them that 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.**

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HYMN

THY HAND, O GOD HAS GUIDED

Thy flock, from age to age;
The wondrous tale is written,
Full clear on every page.
Our forebears owned Thy goodness,
And we their deeds record;
And both of this bear witness:
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Through many a day of darkness,
Through many a scene of strife,
The faithful few fought bravely
To guard the nation's life.
Their gospel of redemption,
Sin pardoned, man restored,
Was all in this enfolded:
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

And we, shall we be faithless?
Shall hearts fail, hands hang down?
Shall we evade the conflict.
And cast away our crown?
Not so: in God's deep counsels
Some better thing is stored:
We will maintain, unflinching,
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Thy mercy will not fail us,
Nor leave Thy work undone;
With Thy right hand to help us,
The victory shall be won.
And then, by all creation,
Thy name shall be adored,
And this shall be their anthem:
One Church, one Faith, one Lord.

Orebeck Benefice Pilgrim's Prayer is a sign
of our unity in Christ and our pilgrimage
together as individuals and churches
Open our hearts to your love, Father God, as
we journey with you;
Renew us each day, as we dwell in your
presence.
Encourage us when we feel downtrodden,
Bring us comfort when we are sad.
Enlive us so that we may always be ready to
serve You, and
Care for others in the strength of God's love.
Kindle, we pray, all that works towards the
coming of your kingdom. Amen

THE BLESSING

*For those who are unable to join in this service
via Zoom, you may want to pray the words of
the grace*

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

May God the Father, by whose glory Christ was
raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk
with him in his risen life;
May Jesus the risen Lord fill you with his love
and peace for the coming days
And may the Holy Spirit equip you for every
good work;
and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father,
and the Son and the Holy Spirit be with you
and all those you love, and evermore. Amen.
Tea, coffee and biscuits may be served!

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