

Sheffield United Reformed Churches
Team Ministry worship for individuals or families
Sunday 1st November 2020 at 10:30 am.
Communion

Call to worship

Today is known as 'All Saints Day'. This day we stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us. As we come to worship we give thanks to a loving God, for those who share the gospel. We remember those who introduced us to you; those who loved us, who challenged us, who nurtured us; those who answered our questions; and those who encouraged us to grow.

Hymn Praise God, I am a child of the King

Once I was clothed in the rags of my sin, wretched and poor. Lost and lonely within but with wondrous compassion the King of all kings, in pity and love, took me under his wings
Oh yes, oh yes, I'm a child of the King. His royal blood now flows in my veins and I, who was wretched and poor, now can sing
Praise God, Praise God
I'm a child of the King.

Now I'm a child with a heavenly home, my holy father, well, He make me his own
And I am washed by his blood, and I'm clothed in his love and someday I'll sing
With the angels... Oh yes.... I'm a child of the King. His royal blood now flows in my veins and I, who was wretched and poor, now can sing
Praise God, Praise God
I'm a child of the King.

Prayers of Approach, Confession and Thanksgiving

Merciful God, Lord of Life and death, we give you thanks that out of your emptiness you have filled our lives with love and grace. Out of your pain you have brought us healing and wholeness. Out of your sorrow you have brought us the joy of living in your presence and out of your death you have brought us life.

Merciful God, you wipe the tears from our eyes that we may behold the New Heaven and a New Earth. We come into your presence with praise and thanksgiving. Above all, we find strength, freedom and forgiveness. We are sorry for the times when we fail to trust in you, when we fail to love our neighbours and we fail to see your will in our lives. Thank you for your love, your sacrifice.

Thank you for the life we have made... thank you for your forgiveness and let us not forget that we belong to you. In the joyful freedom of the Holy Spirit, we come to worship. Give us a clean heart and a right spirit, so that we may see you in all we do. **Amen.**



Matthew 5: 1-12 – A mission of Hope which brings a future of promise for all who respond

1 John 3:1-3 – See what love the Father has given us, we are children of God

Revelation 7: 9-17 – Salvation belongs to our God

Reflection

With the rapid change in the world today – our lives have changed and will continue to visibly change in the foreseeable future. None of us know quite what the change will mean for us and our community. This week children have been in the headlines and they are also the theme I have chosen from the Lectionary readings.

The words from our reading in 1 John 3 are words of encouragement written to a community that is troubled by differences and splits. We are not made aware the reason or the details of the split are about -- and since we have a response from only one side we have to read between the lines to try and figure it out -- the disagreement has been serious enough that some folk have packed up and left the church. Anyone who has experienced the trauma of a congregational split can imagine how devastating this development would have been for parties on both sides of the divide.

In our communities today we have seen so many splits, they vary from those walking away from the negotiating table to those refusing to meet. We have a Tier system that not only divides the country, regions and areas. And right in the middle of it all are the children. It is half term week and the argument is about holiday hunger. Earlier on in September as they went back to school, they were seen as part of the problem with the increase in the numbers of people infected with COVID -19 and once again we have heard about the loss of life in the Channel.

Many people when talking about children describe them as our future, and we have to preserve the world for their future. I am sorry to say that they are not 'the future' but our present. So whatever action we take has to be in the here and now.

One of the primary aims of 1 John is to persuade the remaining community members that they have good reason to hold on to their faith because they have experienced its truth in their very existence as a community. The words speak to us about how our children are seen in our community.

Faith, according to this writing, is not simply a matter of cognitive assertion; it is the testimony of the real-life, embodied experience that has been given to them (and us) by God. The glue that holds the church together is God's love, which has bound them and us into one family as children of God.

Today is a reminder that God has already bestowed upon us the one thing that is most important for being the people we are called to be. We are children of God. Already. Today.

Now. Not the children of the future, but the children of now. Our faith and God's love holds us together – unconditional love.

We are children of the King. Remember when life is unfair- you are a child of the King. Think about the time when you get that diagnosis you dread, you are a child of the King. Remember when your prayers are answered or even if they go unanswered, you are a child of the King. Remember when you feel like everything is falling apart, you are still a child of the King.

Also from our reading this morning, Matthew reminds us that we have a God, who is a figure of love and care, compassion, one who knows his children inside out, and guides them. In verse 9 Matthew writes, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the **children of God**. We are those peacemakers, who are here and now the children in our community today. What does being a child of the King mean to you?

As we think about the narrative which surrounds the children in our society today, let us reflect on how we can put our faith into action to begin to address the issues, ask some difficult questions of our leaders and with courage change the present and future for all God's children. Let us embrace our life as a child of the King, be immersed in the love of God and commit ourselves to the patten of living which Jesus taught.

Music for reflection Oh, the deep, deep love

Communion

Jesus said: I am the bread of life. The table is open to all. Come let us share with one another in community.

Loving God, through your goodness we have this bread and wine to offer, which earth has given and human hands have made. May we know your presence in the sharing of this bread, so that we may know your touch in our lives.

We celebrate the life that Jesus has shared among his community through the years, and shares with us now. Made one in Christ and one with each other we offer you these gifts and with them ourselves as a living sacrifice to do your work in the world

Prayers of Intercession

Father God, in whose love we live and move, we pray for a world crying out to feel loved, wanted, cherished and unique. We remember places torn apart by conflict and war. We recall Syria, Israel and Palestine.

We pray for a world that lives uneasily in a climate of fear with no clear vision for future days, we remember, Brazil, China and India. Those are all distant places, and we draw attention to the challenges we face in our own communities.

We pray for a world that thinks less of others than of self. A world where division between nations, religion, neighbour and family leads to distrust. We pray for a world that is short on happiness, too busy to enjoy this world you have created, too preoccupied with living to appreciate life. .

Loving God, source of our salvation we pray for a world where spiritual longing is satisfied only by your love and not by fashionable notions and temporary solutions with no thought for tomorrow. We pray for a world that needs to know your love, your hope, your peace, your *shalom*, your joy and Salvation.

We pray for situations we have heard about this week, where there is injustice and where those who have little are trampled under the heels of the powerful. We pray especially for children everywhere. We ask for your light to spread into the places where it is needed most. We remember those in prayer who are in our hearts....

We seek your mercy to change our ways, and with that will come transformation, change in our world. Let us bring all our prayers together in the prayer which Jesus taught his Disciples. Our Father.....

Amen

Hymn R&S 658 For all the saints who from

For all the saints who from their labours rest,
who thee by faith before the world confessed,
thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light.
Alleluia! Alleluia!

From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,
through gates of pearl streams in the countless host,
singing to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
Alleluia! Alleluia!

Blessings

You are numbered among the saints recognise that and live accordingly. Give us your love, remember our community that we might find love in the stranger, love in the unloved and love in you. May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with us all now and forever more. Amen