

17 October 2021

The Free Church, St Ives

11 am

Opening Words

Hymn 271 *You are the king of glory*

Opening Prayer

All praise and glory, honour and power be to your name,
Lord God Almighty. You are the source of life and love.
You are holy and majestic, you are High and lifted up, nothing escapes your view.

Jesus taught us that you even know when a sparrow falls from a tree
and you tend to the flowers of the field as if each one was irreplaceable.
How much more are we, all humankind, the work of your hands and the apple of
your eye.

Such a reminder is difficult for us to comprehend,
especially when we know ourselves to be far from perfect.
Yet, because of Christ, you look past our faults to our potential,
You show mercy rather than condemn us, you express interest in what we can be
rather than what we have been; you grant grace upon grace.

Thank You, Lord that despite our waywardness and because of your compassion,
there is hope for us to be purposeful in the things of your Kingdom.
And so, we pray that you will speak to us clearly today.
May your written word be brought to life by the presence of your Living Word.

We offer you our lives and seek to follow your ways.
Hear us as we say together the prayer that Jesus taught his followers:
Our Father...

Notices

Bible Readings Psalm 104.1,5-15
 Acts 16.25-34

Hymn 32 MP *An army of ordinary people*

Sermon

Psalm 104 reveals to us how great and majestic God is not only creating the entire world in its amazing ecosystems but also enabling it to feed and shelter the birds, fish and animals upon it. We are reminded how much God cares for human beings, providing them with cattle and plants and vines for food. We learn that God has created the world in such a way that it shows us that not only is God the source of all life, that God is also the source of love. We see God's providence or care of it in the careful way that each species of animal including human beings, has the air, water, food and the company they need to flourish and propagate. And not only that, in such a way that human life can continually be renewed and restored. God provides

not only the basic necessities of life – but gives meaning, purpose and a sense of belonging. We were created to relate to God, to be co-stewards with God, to look after the world in all its beauty and harshness and to relate to each other.

‘In God we live and move and have our being.’ God did not just create the world and then leave it – God loved the world so much that he came among us in the person of Jesus, to give his life that we might have new life in him.

As God loves us our New Testament reading shows how we are to live in families and in the community of the church. When the Apostles went around preaching and teaching and someone believed, the entire family would then be baptized. We heard the story of the Philippian Jailer. A massive earthquake hits the prison, opening the cells. However, surprisingly the prisoners did not run out, they and Paul and Silas remained in the prison. The jailer thought that he would be punished for the open cells, but Paul calls out to stop him. When he runs in, and sees that they are still there, he brings them out and asks what he must do to be saved. They respond and say: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” He teaches them and then baptizes his family. The Philippian Jailer believes and then God makes a new relationship with his whole family. This is just as it was with Abraham in the Old Testament. Abraham believes and then God blesses his entire family.

I have sometimes conducted family baptisms. It might be a mother and her children. It might be a husband and wife and their children. Abraham believed and his children became the people of Israel. The Philippian Jailer believed, and his family was baptized.

Baptism is a sign of God’s love for children as well as adults in Jesus. Baptism is a sign of God’s loving power. Even though as infants they are helpless and dependent upon others, God loves them and watches over them as a heavenly parent and provides them with parents and the church to teach them about Christ, so that when they are older, they may, by God’s grace, respond in faith and love themselves. Let it be so.

Hymn 373 *Lord Jesus Christ, you have come to us*

Baptism

Hymn 420 *The Lord bless you and keep you*

Intercessory Prayers

Lord, before we pray for the needs of those whom we love
and for so many around the world whom we shall perhaps never know personally,

We pray for justice and peace in our nation and world.

Where there is conflict, bring co-operation.
Where there is unhealthy competition, encourage teamwork.
Where there is false accusation, let there be truth.
Even when we have different opinions from one another, may we still show mutual respect.

We pray for your church, that it may be unified in spirit and purpose.
In our generation, may we be faithful to our calling to show your love and mercy to our communities.

As a church family,
we bring before You the particular needs of those who are not well at present....

(Make some time to name people and situations – as appropriate – before God).

Draw very close to each one and give them your strength and peace of mind now,
and in the days, to come.

At the same time, we rejoice with the family here today of the baptism of Alby.

And, in the silence of this space, we bring to you our own needs and those of others
who have not already been or cannot be mentioned publicly at this time.

Lord, in your love for all humankind,
reach out to everyone who needs a healing touch from you this day.
Hear and answer us according to Your mercy,
In Jesus' name, we pray. AMEN.

Hymn 415 *You shall go out with joy*

Prayer of Blessing

Go in peace to love and serve the LORD,
as loving and serving others.
And, the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you today and every day. AMEN.