

Sunday 21st June 2020

Call to worship

The steadfast love of the Lord is good. God's mercy is abundant. Let us draw near to God's presence

Hymn MP465 Meekness and Majesty.
Prayer and Lords

O Lord, we enter into your steadfast love, asking that you will respond to our prayers; we trust in your abundant mercy and ask that you will come to us. Lord, make your presence known to us; draw near to us; redeem us, set us free; for we seek to be your faithful disciples.

We are sorry for the times we get our priorities wrong – when we do not put you first; when we fail to see the needs of our neighbours; when we lack the courage and faithfulness of true disciples. Grant us forgiveness; grant us perseverance; grant us vision; that we may serve you as you desire, and play our part in establishing your kingdom. Lord, you have called us to be your disciples. Thank you for trusting us with this privilege. Thank you for empowering us in the ways of service. Thank you for giving us courage when we are fearful. Thank you for your strength when we are vulnerable. Thank you for knowing us, loving us, enhancing our lives. Thank you, Lord. Let us join together in the words that Jesus taught us saying Our Father, Amen.

Good morning! This morning I want you all to look at the back of your hand. I want you to count the number of hairs you have on the back of your hand. I'm going to count to ten o give you a little time to do this and Okay? Ready, steady go! How many did you count? How many did you say 10, 50, 100? Wow! That's a lot! Now, what if I asked you to count the hairs on your hand and your arm? Maybe not today. What if I asked you to count the hairs on your head? Well that is a lot of hair! More so at the moment as we cannot get our hair cut. In our Gospel reading today, Jesus says that God knows us so well that even all the hairs on our heads have been counted. He made us and knows us inside and out -- even right down to the littlest detail. Why did Jesus want us to know that? Why would it matter that God knows us that well? Well I think it is because we are special to God. He cares about us enough to know everything about us. He also takes good care of us, especially when things get really hard in our lives. No matter what happens to us, God is there, watching over us and giving us what we need. Jesus told his disciples know that there were going to be hard times for them when they began to tell all the people about God. Have you ever known the right thing to do but it seemed like you were the only one? The disciples were in situations like that all the time. Jesus wanted them to know that they could be brave and do the right thing because God was backing them up. God knows us. and there is a song which just came into my head When the going gets tough the tough get going. By Billy Ocean. This is when we know that when times get tough; God stands with us and helps us do the right thing. It's good that he has counted all the hairs on our heads. It makes me feel good to know that he knows me so well.

Prayer: God, thank you for knowing us so well. You made us inside and out and are always taking good care of us. Amen.

MP 272 I have decided to follow Jesus

Prayer of Intercession

Lord, we are your disciples: **make us one in you**. We pray for those whom you have called to service far from their homes – doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, and many more...

We are your disciples: **make us one in you**. We pray for those who serve you in the church – those who clean, make tea and wash up, arrange flowers, offer a welcome, and many more...

We are your disciples: **make us one in you**. We pray for those who serve you by telling your story – those who teach, lead assemblies, speak at meetings, preach the gospel, and many more... We are your disciples: **make us one in you**. We pray for those who engage in a ministry of prayer – We pray for own faith, that we may face our challenges with courage. We are your disciples: **make us one in you**. May our united love and faith further your work and help to establish your promised kingdom. In your name, we pray. **Amen**.

MP 988. How deep the Fathers love for us?

Reading Mathew 10, 24-39

"You don't have to anymore talented, any richer, any slimmer, any smarter, any more or less of anything to partner with God. All you have to be is willing to be used by him in everyday ways - "Quote by Bill Hybells form his book Just walk across the room (2006)

We all have fears, some real, some imaginary, yet real to us; some healthy, some unhealthy; some known to us, others unknown to us. But we do have them. How can we tell the difference between each of our fears how can we tell someone else about them? Let's just think of what our fears may consist of. We may fear that others don't like us, and certainly wouldn't like us if they knew our inner thoughts and outer behaviours. So we do what most people do. Instead of showing them, we keep everything bottled up inside, thus avoiding true intimacy. Some fear what might happen to our families if anything ever happened to us. We may also fear the loneliness and isolation of growing old and becoming worn out, unable to care for ourselves. So, we tend to hide away our fears in the corner, of our lives we may spend a lifetime of fear hiding behind our criticism of others who refuse to live up to our standards. Or, we may hole up in our comfortable little communities by revolving our life around our immediate family. Or, in our social groups, we talk about everything under the sun, except who's hurting, who's in pain. So, is there a brave way to be scared? Ashley Montague, in his book On Being Human, says, "Yes," because "to be human is to be in danger." No one ought to be more willing to take risks for the right reasons than the person of faith. Jesus offers a powerful response to our usual fears. "Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell." The early church took that literally, as "the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church." Despite their fears about getting tossed to the lions, nailed to crosses, they stood and died in the power of the risen Christ. They acted upon the strong belief that the final judgment of life's issues is made, not before human courts, based on personal opinions, even on

those made by political and religious gurus, but before the court of God. "Fear not!" Jesus' words echo down the corridor of time. Fear not, for our lives consist, not in the abundance of our plentiful possessions, or personal opinions, or political decisions, but by every word that proceeds from God's mouth. In the power of Christ, we can discard our false fears of power, pride, prejudice, planning, yes, even peace-making. We do so because we know that we are of infinite worth in God's sight. Fear not! God has more concern for us, the highest creation, than for the hairs on our head and for the birds of the air.

Perhaps more than anything we need to learn how to distinguish between essential and nonessential fear. It's a fact that while our forefathers and mothers looked forward to automation, we are almost threatened to death by it. Someone has begun a group called "The Lead Pencil Society," as a protest against the mechanical devices of our age. Life and reality lie in the realm of knowing what to fear, and what not to fear. Again, the Scripture instructs us "not to fear those who can kill the body, but cannot kill the soul; but rather to fear (revere) him who can destroy both soul and body in hell." We may well destroy each other, if not physically, then psychologically. We've seen plenty of each kind of destruction on both sides of every conflict, as we announce to the world, in the words of Bob Dylan, "God's on our side." Yet, we humans cannot destroy the spirit, the real self, try as we do. The answer lies with our relationship to the living Lord of history. For Jesus' final words from the Cross were not, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" but, "Into your hands I commit my Spirit." A woman complained bitterly about her minister who ministered to her in a time of deep sorrow. "He had nothing new to tell me, just the same old business about Christ, the resurrection, nothing different, just the same old thing." What a contrast with a little boy sitting alone on the train. The pastor, noticing him, took a seat beside him and asked, "Aren't you afraid traveling alone like this?" "Oh, no," he replied. "My father is driving." Of course, no matter how deeply committed to our faith, we will have bad days. Sometimes, in our agonizing, debilitating fears, we will cry out with Job, "Why was I born?" However, the Lord is in the driver's seat. God still controls the universe. Christ continues to care, more than we care for us, and for the world. He is Lord. We turn to him in our fears, because he first turned to us with his love. Amen.

MP 769 Who is on the Lord's Side.

God goes before us to show the way. God goes behind us Let us not stray. God goes with us Bless us we pray and may God grant his blessing to us as we go forward, keeping alive our faith day by day. Amen.