

Candlemas

29 January 2023 – Team Services

Led by Michaela McNeill, ALM
<https://zoom.us/j/82311473640>

Welcome

The Team Service that is being held today at St Mary's, Comberton, includes contributions from WCCYM and the Lordsbridge Singing Project. Those contributions will be reflected in the Team Zoom Service today.

WCCYM (West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries. Pronounced Wic-um) is a partnership of churches in villages to the west of Cambridge, working together for young people in a manner that they could not do individually. They write:

We've been working with young people in villages west of Cambridge since 1992. There's loads going on; youth services, socials, courses, residential... work in schools, churches and the community. Most of our events and groups are for young people from school years 7 to 13. We believe Jesus is good news, and we're passionate about sharing that good news with people. We also believe young people are worth listening to and this is one of the reasons why we are involved in mentoring and pastoral work. Explore [the website](#) for more information.

The Lordsbridge Singing Project is a new initiative in partnership with Meridian Primary School, and is headed up by Emma Cooper, who is part of the Church in Toft and a professional musical educator. She leads Key Stage 2 Singing

Assemblies each week, based on Christian themes and values.
Once a half term a few children from the school share their singing in a local church service.

Today, on Zoom, we will hear one of the songs the children have been learning, and we will hear from Nick Slater who works for WCCYM.

Gathering and Greeting

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

God in Christ has revealed his glory.

Come let us worship.

From the rising of the sun to its setting
the Lord's name is greatly to be praised.

Give him praise, you servants of the Lord.

O praise the name of the Lord!

Hymn – Praise My Soul, the King of Heaven

1 Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;
to his feet thy tribute bring;
ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,
who like me his praise should sing?
Alleluia, alleluia,
praise the everlasting King.

2 Praise him for his grace and favour
to our fathers in distress;
praise him still the same for ever,
slow to chide, and swift to bless:
Alleluia, alleluia,
glorious in his faithfulness.

3 Father-like he tends and spares us;
well our feeble frame he knows;
in his hands he gently bears us,
rescues us from all our foes:
Alleluia, alleluia,
widely as his mercy flows.

4 Angels, help us to adore him,
ye behold him face to face;
sun and moon, bow down before him,
dwellers all in time and space:
Alleluia, alleluia,
praise with us the God of grace.

Henry Francis Lyte (1793-1847)

Prayer for Penitence

When the Lord comes,
he will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness,
and will disclose the purposes of the heart.
Therefore in the light of Christ let us confess our sins.

God be gracious to us and bless us,
and make your face shine upon us:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

May your ways be known on the earth,
your saving power among the nations:
Christ, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.

You, Lord, have made known your salvation,
and reveal your justice in the sight of the nations:
Lord, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Psalm 36.5–10

Your steadfast love,
O Lord, extends to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the clouds.
Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,
your judgements are like the great deep;
you save humans and animals alike, O LORD.
How precious is your steadfast love, O God!
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.
O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,
and your salvation to the upright of heart!

The Lordsbridge Singing Project - Sharing a Song

This half term the Lordsbridge Singing Project has been teaching / learning the song Beni Ngyeti. It will be shared with those in St Mary's this morning. As we listen to a version of it, do join in as you pick it up...

[Bani Ngyeti](#) is traditionally sung in the Munga'ka language, a native dialect from Cameroon.

Bani Ngyeti ba Yewu – Let us sing and praise the Lord

Bible readings by Fiona Whelan

Hebrews 2:14-end

¹⁴ Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,
¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death. ¹⁶ For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to become

like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested.

Luke 2:22-40

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord’), ²⁴ and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, ‘a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.’

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. ²⁷ Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸ Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying,

²⁹ ‘Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace,
according to your word;
³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation,
³¹ which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,
³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles
and for glory to your people Israel.’

³³ And the child’s father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, ‘This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵ so that the

inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.’

³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸ At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

³⁹ When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth.

⁴⁰ The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Reflections by Nick Slater from WCCYM

Hello there, I am Nick Slater. And I am currently working for WCCYM as a youth worker with a focus on Outreach and Discipleship.

WCCYM, which stands for West Cambridge Christian Youth Ministries, is a partnership of churches working together to see young people come to know Jesus in the area West of Cambridge. The WCCYM team is currently made up of myself, Susie Thomson – who is our team leader, and Cherie Williamson, who oversees all of our chaplaincy and schools work.

Let me ask you a few questions to think about briefly:

- How daring are you?
- Would you dare stand up for an injustice by yourself?
- Would you dare stand out from the crowd?
- Would you Dare to Hope?

WCCYM is in its 30th year and we have taken on the motto ‘Dare to Hope’ to help us celebrate the year. Why? Because we believe that the phrase is at the core of WCCYM.

30 years ago, individuals from the local churches dared to hope that young people would be reached. Ever since then, youth workers, volunteers, students, have dared to hope that young people would come to know Jesus. Today, in all we do, we dare to hope that it will bring young people closer to Jesus, we dare to hope that young people will find light in their life.

Also, dare to hope is biblical. You can see the actions of several biblical greats who were willing to 'Dare to Hope'. Abraham dared to hope that God's promise would still come true as he laid Isaac down as a sacrifice. David dared to hope that God would deliver Goliath to him as he stepped forward to fight. Anna and Simeon dared to hope that Jesus was the promised messiah, the one going to bring about the redemption of Jerusalem, as they prayed over him in the temple.

Even more, the phrase itself is found in Lamentations 3.

Lamentations is a small Old Testament book that has Jeremiah, the author, crying out in anguish for Israel and its people. Just 5 chapters of negativity but bang in the middle – you get this in the New Living Translation:

¹⁹ The thought of my suffering and homelessness
is bitter beyond words.^[a]

²⁰ I will never forget this awful time,
as I grieve over my loss.

²¹ Yet I still dare to hope
when I remember this:

²² The faithful love of the LORD never ends!^[b]
His mercies never cease.

²³ Great is his faithfulness;
his mercies begin afresh each morning.

²⁴ I say to myself, "The LORD is my inheritance;
therefore, I will hope in him!"

²⁵ The LORD is good to those who depend on him,
to those who search for him.

²⁶ So it is good to wait quietly
for salvation from the LORD.

²⁷ And it is good for people to submit at an early age
to the yoke of his discipline:

It then goes straight back to misery and darkness. But right in the middle of this sad, depressing book, Jeremiah was willing to *DARE TO HOPE*.

This still holds true today. We can have hope because God's love never ends, we can have hope because his mercies never cease, we can have hope because his faithfulness is great, we can have hope because his mercies – the ones I just said never come to an end – they are new each morning.

And how do we know this to be true? Because we can find it in the rest of the bible... time and time again people mess up and God is merciful on them, time and time again God makes a promise – and he keeps it. Time and time again God shows himself to be loving.

But even more, God sends his only son, Jesus, to be born on the earth, to live the perfect life as an example to us. Showing himself, and God, to be faithful, loving, merciful. Jesus shows love, faithfulness and mercy all through his life, death and resurrection. And that wasn't just for then. When Jesus died on the cross, he did so for you and for me. To extend to us faithfulness, mercy and love. As humans we have messed up the relationship we have with God. And when Jesus died, the love and mercy that he poured out – through his physical death – allowed us to have a relationship with God. All the mess and damage that was caused – that is all forgiven, it is all made new.

And that is what we can hope in. That Jesus died for us. That the offer of great faithfulness, never ending love, and new mercies, is for us, right now, today.

But you will notice I didn't say "as WCCYM we Hope..." I didn't say we encourage young people to "hope"... Jeremiah in lamentations didn't say just "hope"...

Let me tell you a story:

I planned the perfect proposal for my now wife, it included serenading her from her bedroom window, it included a romantic walk in the woods, a whole day of pampering her. But the night before, she was dropping me off, I looked into the face of this woman I loved, and I bottled it, I jumped out of the car, grabbed the ring, dragged her into the middle of the road and proposed. I hoped she would marry me. I hoped we would live a long life together. But while I sat in the car just hoping nothing changed. I had to do something about my hope, I had to be bold. I had to 'Dare to Hope'.

And it's the same for faith, for the hope we have in Jesus. We must dare to hope. Our hope should be bold and at the forefront of our life. It requires courage and strength to do.

And that is where the dare comes in. I am sure you are well aware that it isn't commonplace to say you have hope in Jesus nowadays. It might even make those in school or college for the young people we work with – or wherever you are day-to-day – think you are a bit weird. It might mean not following the crowd. It's tough. But to step out in your hope, to dare to hope in Jesus will bring so much more than you could imagine.

And that comes out in all the work we do as WCCYM. I won't go into loads detail for the activities and events, or the schools work we do, as we've just had our annual report printed for the last academic year, so you can find out more in there.

But throughout the year we run a collection of socials to help connect young people to each other and us. We also run our Christmas, Easter and Summer parties to help young people explore the hope we can have in Jesus. We encourage young people to be daring in who they will invite to all of these.

At different times throughout the year, like the parties we just

mentioned but also at our Weekend Away, we give young people an opportunity to respond to the hope we can have in Jesus and encourage them to live out a bold faith.

We also provide tonnes of opportunities for young people to grow in their hope and support each other in being daring. We have a monthly youth service, interest based small groups throughout the year, regular bible study groups and a sixth form disciple group that is exploring how to be daring leaders for Jesus.

We also Dare to Hope in all our schools work. We work in Comberton Village College, Cambourne Village College and Comberton Sixth Form in many different ways including lunchtime groups where young people come to explore more about Jesus and is a great opportunity for them to be daring as they tell their friends what they are doing. We lead assemblies and Religion Philosophy and Ethics days where we share about a topic from the Christian perspective.

Cherie and Susie both deliver 1-to-1 pastoral support as well as running groups to help support students. Recently we have also been asked to support some of the staff in a similar way and have even had the chance to pilot a chaplaincy project allowing us to develop this work further.

And we dare to hope for you as well.

Please dare to hope in your daily life. Dare to hope for young people. Dare to hope for our work. And there are many ways to do this.

Firstly, pray for us – you can even sign up for our mailing list to receive monthly prayer diaries to guide your prayers.

Secondly, volunteer – no matter your age or ability, we would love to have you with work with us.

Thirdly, financially support us. As Lordsbridge Team you contribute to our work, but we are being bold this year. In our 30th year we dare to hope that 30 new supporters will begin giving to WCCYM. So if you are able to, please consider supporting our work.

Thank you for your time.

Affirmation of Faith

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty.
**Maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.**

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father.
**God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,**
begotten not made,
of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
**he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge**

**the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.

**With the Father and the Son
he is worshipped and glorified.**

He has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession by John Crang

This morning, I have taken a framework from John Pritchard to give us silent spaces in which to bring to mind and to pray about the things we have seen and read in the daily newspapers and television news.

As ever, this week we have been bombarded with news - home and overseas, political and personal, tragic and trivial. Our minds easily close down, resisting the assault of so much news. But some images, stories and issues get through our defences and linger in the mind. We can take this as God's call to us to pray for these issues. Let us think what news stories are on our minds this morning. Pray for them now in the silence, asking God to be fully present there, in judgement, mercy or grace. pause.

Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

Last week there was other news, some earlier chapters of long running stories, some one-day wonders, some tragedies, easily forgotten by us, but just as sharp and painful for the sufferers now as then. Let us try to remember what stories were on our mind last week .

The needs go on, and so should our prayers. Let us pray now that God's grace may continue to be at work there, healing and renewing ... pause.

Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

This time next week the papers will be full of new stories, the TV giving us new images. New faces will be looking out at us; there will be new incidents for the pundits to debate. Let us pray now for one such area of concern or one section of society that is likely to crop up in next week's news - the Government, our church leaders, countries in difficulties, people in trouble. Pray for whatever God gives you to pray about as you look ahead to next week ... pause.

Lord, in your mercy **hear our prayer.**

And now a personal prayer for ourselves using words attributed to Thomas Aquinas who the church remembers today:

Most loving Lord, grant me
a steadfast heart which no unworthy desire may drag downwards;
an unconquered heart which no hardship may wear out;
an upright heart which no worthless purpose may ensnare.
Impart to me also, O God,
the understanding to know you,
the diligence to seek you,
a way of life to please you,
and a faithfulness that may embrace you,
through Jesus Christ my Lord. **Amen.**

O God, set your blessing on us all as we begin this week together - on our world, our church, our community, our family and friends. Heal your suffering ones, raise up your broken ones, inspire your joyful ones. And give yourself afresh to us, as with all our sisters and brothers, we stand before you in hope. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.

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

Collect

Almighty and ever-living God,
clothed in majesty,
whose beloved Son was this day presented in the Temple,
in substance of our flesh:
grant that we may be presented to you
with pure and clean hearts,
by your Son Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Let us pray for the coming of God's Kingdom
in the words our Saviour taught us.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.**

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

**Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.**

Amen.

Hymn – Great is thy faithfulness

1 Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
there is no shadow of turning with thee;
thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not,
as thou hast been thou forever wilt be.

Chorus

Great is thy faithfulness!

Great is thy faithfulness!

Morning by morning new mercies I see;
all I have needed thy hand hath provided -
great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me!

2 Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
sun, moon and stars in their courses above,
join with all nature in manifold witness
to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

Chorus

3 Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow,
blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside!

Chorus

Thomas O Chisholm (1866-1960)

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Notices

Conclusion

May God the Father,
who led the men by the shining of a star
to find the Christ, the Light from Light,
lead you in your pilgrimage to find the Lord.

Amen.

May God who has brought us out of darkness
give us a place with the saints in light
in the kingdom of his Son.

Amen.

May the light of the glorious gospel of Christ
shine in your hearts and transform your lives,
to bring his light to others.

Amen.

And the blessing of God be with us all for evermore **Amen.**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ. Amen