

Order of Service 22nd February 2022

**Communion**

***Naming your Demons***

Welcome

Hello and welcome to Hearsall at Home for 22nd February 2022. Today we consider the topic of facing our demons so we can live in the freedom of Christ's love. We also share Holy Communion, so you might like to pause now and locate some bread and wine or juice to share later.

We come to worship God.

Call to Worship

*What you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms will be proclaimed from the roofs. (Luke 12:3)*

We bring all of our heart to worship, so that our entire beings will be flooded with the pure light and love of Christ.

Hymn (BPW 65) **Praise, my Soul, the King of Heaven**

Praise, my soul, the King of heaven;  
To his feet your tribute bring.  
Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven,  
Who like me his praise should sing:  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise the everlasting King.

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.  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Glorious in his faithfulness.

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.  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Widely as his mercy flows.

Frail as summer's flower we flourish,  
Blows the wind and it is gone;  
But while mortals rise and perish,  
Our God lives unchanging on.  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise the high Eternal One!

Angels, help us to adore Him,  
You behold Him face to face,  
Sun and moon, bow down before Him;  
Dwellers all in time and space,  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise Him, praise Him,  
Praise with us the God of grace.

#### Prayer of praise

For the beauty of the natural world,  
generous God, **we bless you.**  
For animals, birds, plants and trees,  
generous God, **we bless you.**  
For planets and comets, stars and galaxies,  
generous God, **we bless you.**  
For the affection of family and friends,  
generous God, **we bless you.**  
For the kindness of strangers,

generous God, **we bless you.**

For the food on our table,

generous God, **we bless you.**

For the teaching of Jesus,

generous God, **we bless you.**

For the power of the cross,

generous God, **we bless you.**

For the hope of heaven,

generous God, **we bless you.**

For the gift of your Holy Spirit,

generous God, **we bless you.**

Loving Lord, every good and perfect gift comes from you, the Father of the Heavenly Lights, and you do not change like shifting shadows.

For all of your gifts, generous God, **we bless you.**

### The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,

hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come;

thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

as we forgive those who 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.

### Update

Our Festival of Hope continues apace, and we have two exciting events near our church just this coming week. On Wednesday 23rd February at 7:30pm, we will

explore the poetry of hope at Earlsdon Methodist Church. We'll hear poems read by a few local poets, along with some classic poems of hope. There's also an opportunity for anyone to come and share a poem about hope on the night - either one they've written, or one they've found elsewhere - old or new. Or just come and sit back and enjoy a feast of language! There'll be refreshments, so come along and join in what promises to be an enjoyable and happy evening. That's *A Thing with Feathers* on Wednesday evening at 7:30pm.

Then on Saturday (26th February), come and share the power of light to bring hope to human hearts at our ground-breaking Festival of Light. This de-LIGHT-ful event is for all the family; and for single people; and for people of any religion or no religion... Everyone is welcome. Explore what light has meant in various traditions through craft activity, visual displays and music. It promises to be a light-hearted event of communal joy!

After a time of darkness and misery, it's time to share the light, and the joy, and the love and the peace! Let's sing together, *Peace, I give to you...*

Song (WT 344) **Peace I Give to You (as a round)**

Peace I give to you, I give to you My peace. X2

*Chorus:*

*Let it flow to one another, let it flow, let it flow.*

*Let it flow to one another, let it flow, let it flow.*

Love I give to you, I give to you My love. X2

*Chorus*

Hope I give to you, I give to you My hope. X2

*Chorus*

Joy I give to you, I give to you My joy. X2

*Chorus*

Grace I give to you, I give to you My grace. X2

*Chorus*

Power I give to you, I give to you My power. X2

*Chorus*

Offertory prayer

Lord, for the chance to give! Use the gifts we share through our church to bring peace, love and joy in our world. Amen.

Our prayers of intercession this week are led by Eric Bremner.

Prayers of Intercession

Almighty God, who can do all things, you reign over all the Universe. Power and might are in your hands, when you decree it, it happens. We praise you today and all days and thank you for being our God.

We pray for all of the countries of the world for wisdom and concern of leaders for their citizens. Our thoughts in particular centre on the peoples of Ukraine, Russia and those countries in close proximity. May the problems there be solved by diplomacy not force. We pray they all will have opportunity to learn and understand your love for them in Jesus Christ. We pray for all who don't know you, that they will become part of your family. We pray for your Christian family that are carrying some sort of burden in their lives. Enable them, God, to be freed of outside influences constricting them and help them to master those internal forces that can control them. God, show us the part we are able to play in helping solve the problems of others; strengthen and motivate us to do all that we are able.

We pray for the health of all peoples and in particular those countries where health care is very sparse and often inaccessible. We think of the health needs of our people in the UK. Help all of us to do our part in restricting the spread of covid 19. We think also of the many millions of people waiting for surgical procedures. We pray for the many we know caught up in this trap. God, give wisdom and insight to those tasked with solving this problem, that there will be a speedy resolution, and for all workers within healthcare that they be strengthened and supported to be able to undertake the many tasks that come their way.

We think of the many peoples in countries throughout the world whose lives have been turned upside down by extreme weather events, from floods in many island nations, to storms in Scotland, droughts in Africa and cyclones in America and many others. May the moves to solve the global warming issues gather greater momentum. Thank you for the leaders in this area. May they display wisdom, give their guidance and be supported by us all.

God, we focus all of the above in prayer to our own Hearsall friends and fellowships. Hold us up and sustain us in playing our part in supporting our own Church family and all those with whom we are in contact.

Amen

Many thanks Eric for those prayers. We hear now our Bible readings from the Psalms and from Luke.

### Bible Readings

#### **Psalm 55: 1-8**

*For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David.*

<sup>1</sup> Listen to my prayer, O God,

do not ignore my plea;

<sup>2</sup> hear me and answer me.

My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught

<sup>3</sup> because of what my enemy is saying,

because of the threats of the wicked;

for they bring down suffering on me

and assail me in their anger.

<sup>4</sup> My heart is in anguish within me;

the terrors of death have fallen on me.

<sup>5</sup> Fear and trembling have beset me;

horror has overwhelmed me.

<sup>6</sup> I said, 'Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!

I would fly away and be at rest.

<sup>7</sup> I would flee far away

and stay in the desert;

<sup>8</sup> I would hurry to my place of shelter,  
far from the tempest and storm.'

### **Luke 8: 26-39**

*Jesus restores a demon-possessed man*

<sup>26</sup> They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. <sup>27</sup> When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. <sup>28</sup> When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, 'What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!' <sup>29</sup> For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?'

'Legion,' he replied, because many demons had gone into him. <sup>31</sup> And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

<sup>32</sup> A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. <sup>33</sup> When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

<sup>34</sup> When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, <sup>35</sup> and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup> Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. <sup>37</sup> Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.

<sup>38</sup> The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup> 'Return home and tell how much God has done for you.' So the man went away and told all over the town how much Jesus had done for him.

Hymn (BPW 105) **Speak Lord in the Stillness**

### Sermon

#### ***Naming your Demons***

Think of a classic horror film, or a film about aliens, or simply a classic suspense film. What generates the fear in the viewer?

Quite simply, it has to be the fact that the object of fear - whether a ghost, or a Martian, or a serial killer - remains a mystery for most of the film. The viewer is largely left in the dark about the true nature of the threat that is being faced. And such films will often have a lot of darkness about their cinematography. It's that sense of darkness, of uncertainty, of mystery that generates the fear or the horror in the viewer.

Once the beast is brought into the open, well, it tends to lose its power. Perhaps this is partly why sequels often disappoint, because too much of the monster or the ghoul or the threat is already known from the first film.

To a large extent, evil is disempowered when it is brought into the light. An inquiry into some national scandal brings the facts into the public domain, and then healing can begin. A wound to the skin usually heals better if exposed to fresh air and light. And, whilst some horticultural processes begin in darkness, plants need the light of the sun in order to grow and thrive.

And in spiritual terms, we all need the light. As we heard at the top of our service, Jesus once said, what you have said in the dark will be heard in the daylight. It has to be so, because what lurks unseen in the darkness still has power over us.

If we are honest, most of us have good days and bad days. Some days we skate along through life and everything just seems to fall right. Other days we get out of



bed on the wrong side, everything seems to trip us up, and we feel like we're playing catch-up all day.

In the private space of our head, we might some days feel sunny and bright and wish everyone peace and love. Other days we feel like a stormy ocean. Secret fears swirl around in our psyche, dark feelings pollute our mood, and anxieties old and new become like deep rooted thorns in our hearts.

And it's true that often the worst anxieties beset us in our beds when we're awake in the small hours. To disempower these thoughts, things need to be brought out into the light.

We may occasionally find ourselves identifying with the deep lament of Psalm 55:

*My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught because of what my enemy is saying... My heart is in anguish within me; the terrors of death have fallen on me. Fear and trembling have beset me; horror has overwhelmed me. I said, "Oh that I had the wings of a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. I would flee far away and stay in the desert. I would hurry to my place of shelter, far from the tempest and the storm."*

What's the use of a Psalm like this? Well quite simply, it's a model of bringing things into the light. The poet, troubled by dark thoughts on his bed in the night, makes them explicit. In other words he brings them into the light. Having done that, having examined the root of all of his fears, the Psalm ends with a simple statement of trust in God. If we bring our secret fears, upsets, anxieties, and angers into the light, to an extent, we disempower them. If we pretend they aren't there, they can still control us.

The familiar story of the Gerasene demoniac suggests a similar approach. This unfortunate man is self-harming, and is tortured by the impure spirit within him. He could not be chained and he haunted lonely places, creating terror wherever he went.

But notice Jesus' approach to the impure spirit. He asks, "What is your name?" As the Psalmist **expressed** the nature of his distressing thoughts, the disturbed man must name that which troubles him.

He gives the impure spirit the odd name, Legion. This spirit was not one spirit, but many. In New Testament times, a legion contained 60 centurions, and each centurion commanded 100 men, so a Legion would comprise around 6000 men.

No doubt 6,000 was an exaggeration as to the number of demons in this man, but it powerfully expresses that sense that we might sometimes recognise - that we have a storm of conflicting feelings within us, a tempest of various unhelpful thoughts. In New Testament days, a demon was seen as a separate spiritual entity, so, to convince this man of his cure, a whole load of pigs embodies his numerous demons and rushes into the lake. In a similar way today, some people like to open a window after some evil spiritual entity has been discerned, as if the spirit needs an open space in order to leave a room.

To name something is, to some extent, to take control over it. Any school teacher will know the vital importance of naming their students in order to help inspire and control the class. In the tradition of Genesis, Adam named the animals, thereby expressing his authority and stewardship over them.

To name a dark feeling is to bring it into the light. The power of a troubling emotion is greatly exaggerated by darkness, because we imagine things to be a lot worse than they really are, when we can't see them clearly. To name something, to describe it, to look at it in the light of day, is to begin to control it, to disempower it.

After his rescue, the man who had had the legion of demons within him, becomes clothed and in his right mind. He wants to go and follow Jesus around, but Jesus tells him to stay. He longed to escape, like the Psalmist, on the wings of a dove and be somewhere away from all his troubles. But Jesus sends him home.

He must have the courage to live again with the people who had rejected him. Real healing comes from living where we belong, repairing broken relationships, refusing to be a screen onto which others can project their own irrational fears, and living among them with our head held high. As we all know somewhere deep down, we don't exorcise our demons by running away to a new place. When we get to the new place, we find we have taken the demons with us. Usually we need to stay where we are, and work through any problems with self-respect and with honesty.

So, name your demons. Spend a day when you jot down the feelings that trouble you in the day or the night. Write down the thoughts that may accompany these feelings. Make them explicit. In this way, by naming our demons, we bring them into the light, and we disempower them.

According to John chapter 8, Jesus called the devil the father of lies. When we write down, or talk through, the feelings that trouble us, we may find that behind our uneasy feelings there lurk thoughts that are quite simply untrue.

Thoughts like these:

- nobody cares about me;
- everything I do goes wrong;
- I am useless at everything;
- I'll collapse if I can't eat a biscuit;
- I don't even have time to cook properly;
- my partner misreads everything I say...

At best these thoughts are gross exaggerations; at worst, they are barefaced lies. When they are brought into the light, they lose their power. And who is the Father of lies? Not Jesus!

A couple of weeks ago I promised we'd look at the topic of spiritual discipline. This is the first of these talks. Spiritual hygiene involves bringing painful feelings and dubious thinking into the light. You can spend a day and a night just writing them down as they arise - those unsettling feelings and dubious thoughts. Name your demons! Then, watch them dissolve as you rest in the truth of God. Often simply naming them disempowers them, because, for the Christian, they are self-evidently untrue.

You are God's beloved one. You have the right to be called his son or his daughter. Nothing at all can separate you from God's love. You have been created to bring something beautiful and good into this world. You bear the image of God. You are a princess or a prince in his kingdom. You are a lamp; you are an integral part of Christ's own body; you are a citizen of heaven; you are the apple of God's eye.

And the lies? Well, they come from someone else.

### Hymn (BPW 5) **Be Still**

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here.

Come bow before him now with reverence and fear.

In him no sin is found; we stand on holy ground.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around;

He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned.

How awesome is the sight; our radiant King of light!

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace.

No work too hard for Him. In faith receive from him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

## **Holy Communion**

### Invitation

Sisters and brothers in Christ, it is right that we call to mind the meaning of this Supper. It is a remembrance of the sacrifice of Christ for the sin of the world; an encounter with the risen Lord; a feeding on him in faith; a communion with one another in his body, the Church; and a looking forward to the day when he will come again. Therefore, we need to come in faith, conscious of our weakness, renouncing our sin, humbly putting our trust in Christ, and seeking his grace.

### Prayer of Preparation

Heavenly Father, your love for us is eternal and offered freely to us today. We acknowledge our sins. Our feelings and thoughts often seem so unworthy of you. Our deeds can be a long way from being a fitting expression of your love. Forgive us.

We know you can see right into our hearts by the power of your Holy Spirit. Indeed, you see what is invisible even to ourselves, and yet your love is constant, and you save us through the death and resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. You

draw us into your life, you embed us in your heart, and you send us as ambassadors of your gospel.

Lord, we surrender our hearts again to your perfect love. Call once more, cleanse us, renew us, inspire us, make your home within us, and, in this intimate moment, meet with us in the sharing of bread and wine.

Amen.

### Gospel Words

*We had all strayed like sheep, each of us had gone his own way; but the Lord laid upon him the guilt of us all. He was pierced for our transgressions, tortured for our iniquities; the chastisement he bore is health for us, and by his scourging we are healed.*

Isaiah 53: 6, 5

*I am that living bread which has come down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread he shall live for ever. Moreover, the bread which I will give is my own flesh; I give it for the life of the world.*

John 6: 51

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

Matthew 11: 28-29

### Words of Institution

*The disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, 'I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me.' They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, 'Surely not I, Lord?' While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, 'Take and eat; this is my body.' Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of*

*this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.'*

Matthew 26: 19-22, 26-29

### Prayer of Thanksgiving

For bread and for wine, we give you our thanks.

They speak of the fruitfulness of the earth; the skill of human hands; and the delight of eating and drinking with those we love.

They foreshadow the great feast of heaven, when people from every tribe and tongue will gather in loving fellowship and adoration of the Lamb.

And, most of all, they intimate the saving work of Jesus, whose body was broken on the cross to make us whole, and whose blood was spilt to bring us forgiveness. We bless you, dear Lord, for the bread and for the wine and for all they mean to us.

Amen.

### Breaking of Bread and Distribution

Jesus said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.'

Silence

### Sharing the Cup

In the same way, after supper Jesus took the cup.

Jesus said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.'

### Prayer of Thanksgiving for the Blessings received at the Table

Most gracious God, we praise you for what you have given us, and for what you have promised us, here. You have made us one with all your people, in heaven and on earth. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service.

Now we give ourselves to you and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your kingdom, and that our love may be your love reaching out into the life of the world; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Let's share the powerful words of our closing song, as we encourage one another to  
*Keep the banner of Jesus flying high...*

**Song Keep the Banner Flying High**

Verse 1

Give me strength when I'm weary, O my Lord,  
Lift me up when I fall, O my Lord,  
Light a fire in my bones  
That an ocean cannot drown,  
Give me hope, give me strength,  
Until my work is done.

*Chorus*

*O Jesus be my vision,  
O the passion and the fire in my soul.  
We'll keep the banner flying high,  
The banner flying high!*

Verse 2

In the valley of shadow, O my Lord,  
You will walk by our side, O my Lord.  
If we love not our lives,  
Rather die than to deny,  
There'll be crowns, there'll be glory  
When the morning comes.

*Chorus*

Verse 3

Those who wait on you patiently, O my Lord,  
Those who trust in your word, O my Lord,  
They will soar, they will glide,  
Like an eagle in the sky;  
They will walk, not be weary,  
Till the work is done.

*Chorus*

*O Jesus be my vision,  
O the passion and the fire in my soul.  
We'll keep the banner flying high,  
The banner flying high!*

Bridge

For His glory, standing shoulder to shoulder,  
Proud to bear His holy name,  
Sound the victory, our God is among us now!  
Sound the victory, our God is among us now!  
Among us now!

*Chorus*

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ;  
And the love of God;  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit  
Be with us all, evermore.  
Amen

Sung Blessing

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you  
Wherever he may send you;  
May he guide you through the wilderness;  
Protect you through the storm;  
May he bring you home rejoicing  
At the wonders he has shown you;  
May he bring you home rejoicing  
Once again into our doors.