

## Order of Service for June 12<sup>th</sup> 2022

### ***God is in this Place***

Hello and welcome to Hearsall at Home for 12th May 2022.

Reverend David got married to the lovely Léonie on Saturday so we have decided to give him a break from presenting the podcast for a few weeks, so this week we welcome back one of the Hearsall 'old boys', the Reverend Gareth Garland, who is visiting this week from Rickmansworth Baptist Church. So let us relax and bring ourselves into the presence of the Lord.

#### Opening Prayer and the Lord's Prayer

Heavenly Father, we dedicate this time this morning to you and invite your Holy Spirit among us. Guide our thoughts and actions. We come to you in quiet adoration, praying the words Jesus taught us to pray:

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 forever and ever, Amen.

Our first hymn was written by David J Evans and is a favourite at Hearsall and it asks us to 'Be still for the presence of the Lord, the holy one is here' and it is sung and played by Nick Leonard.

#### 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.

### Offertory Prayer

Let's remember the joy of giving.

Lord, for all your gifts of creation and grace, we give you our thanks. Please accept the gifts we offer and use them to bring your light and life into our world. Amen.

Now we have two worship songs, the first written by Tim Hughes, 'Light of the world' followed closely by a Graham Kendrick song, 'May the fragrance of Jesus fill this place', both sung and played by the hugely talented Martin Prue.

### Song (WT 290) **May the Fragrance**

Verse 1

May the fragrance of Jesus fill this place. (men)  
May the fragrance of Jesus fill this place. (women)  
May the fragrance of Jesus fill this place; (men)  
Lovely fragrance of Jesus (women)  
Rising from the sacrifice (all)  
Of lives laid down in adoration.

Verse 2

May the glory of Jesus fill His church. (men)  
May the glory of Jesus fill His church. (women)  
May the glory of Jesus fill His church; (men)  
Radiant glory of Jesus (women)  
Shining from our faces (all)  
As we gaze in adoration.

Verse 3

May the beauty of Jesus fill my life. (men)

May the beauty of Jesus fill my life. (women)

May the beauty of Jesus fill my life. (men)

Perfect beauty of Jesus, (women)

Fill my thoughts, my words, my deeds. (all)

My all I give in adoration.

**Song Light of the World**

Verse 1

Light of the world, You stepped down into darkness,

Opened my eyes, let me see

Beauty that made this heart adore You,

Hope of a life spent with You.

*Chorus*

*So here I am to worship,*

*Here I am to bow down,*

*Here I am to say that You're my God.*

*You're altogether lovely,*

*Altogether worthy,*

*Altogether wonderful to me.*

Verse 2

King of all days, oh so highly exalted,

Glorious in heaven above.

Humbly You came to the earth You created,

All for love's sake became poor.

*Chorus*

Bridge

And I'll never know how much it cost

To see my sin upon that cross,

And I'll never know how much it cost

To see my sin upon that cross.

Ending

So here I am to worship,  
Here I am to bow down,  
Here I am to say that You're my God.  
You are my God.

Our first reading from the Old Testament is brought to us by Peter Fearn who reads Hebrews 11, verses 1-3 and 23-29, and the second reading is from the book of Genesis, chapter 28, verses 10-19, and is read by Graham Walker.

### Bible Reading

#### **Hebrews 11: 1-3 and 23-29**

##### *Faith in action*

**11** Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. <sup>2</sup>This is what the ancients were commended for.

<sup>3</sup>By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

<sup>23</sup>By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

<sup>24</sup>By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup>He chose to be ill-treated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. <sup>26</sup>He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. <sup>27</sup>By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. <sup>28</sup>By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

<sup>29</sup>By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

## Children's Talk

### ***Role Models***

We all have heroes. Who is yours?

On TV we see amongst others, superheroes and sporting heroes.

In God's hall of faith he lists for us a list of people we should look up to. They are heroes because of their faith in God. One of the most notable of these is Moses, who achieved incredible things, but he did so only because he maintained a faith in God throughout. But even Moses was found lacking in faith. All this goes to prove that we should never look beyond God to people, it is God who can be relied upon to give us peace, strength, resilience and many other things we need. We should admire men and women of faith, but worship the one in whom they put their faith. Put your hope in the Lord, your God.

### Prayer with children

*Let's put a hand on our heart.*

Father God, fill us with your love.

Help us to love You, and everything that You've made.

*Let's point to our eyes.*

Lord Jesus, help us to see You, and to see others the way that You see them too.

*Let's point to our ears.*

Holy Spirit, help us to hear You, and give us courage to do what You say.

Amen.

### Bible Reading

#### **Genesis 28: 10-19**

*Jacob's dream at Bethel*

<sup>10</sup> Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran. <sup>11</sup> When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. <sup>12</sup> He had a

dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. <sup>13</sup> There above it stood the LORD, and he said: 'I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your descendants the land on which you are lying. <sup>14</sup> Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring. <sup>15</sup> I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.'

<sup>16</sup> When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, 'Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.' <sup>17</sup> He was afraid and said, 'How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven.'

<sup>18</sup> Early the next morning Jacob took the stone he had placed under his head and set it up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. <sup>19</sup> He called that place Bethel, though the city used to be called Luz.

Thank you to Peter and Graham for those readings. Now we go over to Rickmansworth Baptist Church for this week's message which is brought to us by our good friend Reverend Gareth Garland.

### Sermon

#### ***God is in this place***

We've turned this morning to Genesis, Chapter 28.

I will start by filling in the background very quickly, beginning with Jacob. You will remember he had been involved in a very, very serious family row! He tried to gain the birth right and the blessing that was due to his older brother, Esau.

He dressed up in Esau's clothes, he pretended to be Esau, he deceived his aged father, and in the end, out of that lie and deceit, he created a problem with his older brother, Esau, robbed of what he thought was his right, leading

to his threat to kill Jacob. As a result, there was a family conference and they decided that the best thing to do was to send Jacob away to live with relatives in a far-off destination.

And so, in the end Jacob leaves his home in Beersheba, travels and after going for 55 miles, he arrives at a place called Luz, where he has a dream. As a result of that dream, he becomes aware of the presence of God, and he thought this when he awoke from the sleep:

‘Surely the presence of the Lord is in this place, and I was not aware of it.’

How often are we not aware of the presence of God?

Let’s look very briefly this morning at the place where Jacob was and the significance of places:

This place was called Luz in those days – the word Luz meant ‘Almond Trees’. So, it may have been a very pleasant place, although it sounds like it was a very stony place, because we know that there was rocky terrain around him, because we learn that Jacob took one of them and made it as a pillow, and he slept somewhat uncomfortably on it. But Luz for Jacob would become known as a memorable place for Jacob.

There are lots of memorable places for lots of different reasons aren’t there? There are some places that trigger memories for us that are wonderful, but also some that are not so nice.

Luz for Jacob would have been memorable at first because it was his first night that he spent having moved out of his home.

Can you remember the first night that you moved away from home?

I can... I was 18 years old at the time. My mum, dad, and brother drove with me up the M6, M54, and the A5 to North Wales to Bangor where I had decided to study at university. One of the main reasons I had chosen Bangor was the beautiful scenery that surrounded it, with Snowdonia on one side, and Anglesey and the Menai Straits on the other side. I can remember being led to my room in the halls of residence there, a place called Plas Gwyn (White

palace) and a place that a year later would be condemned and demolished. So you can imagine what the place was like, and it was allegedly modelled on a prison for women in Sweden. I can remember how horrible it was saying goodbye to my mum and dad, and how lonely I felt on that first night as I lay there in my jail cell... sorry I mean room!

But that's that, and here is Jacob. And it strikes me that he must have felt rather more alone than me and decidedly more uncomfortable lying there underneath the Almond Trees. In the first instance, this would have been a place of very troubled memories. And you can imagine him that night, as the sun is setting, he is lying down on the stone he has chosen, looking up at the stars in the night time sky. And you can imagine, can't you, as you have laid in bed trying to get sleep, that thoughts begin to run through your mind; perhaps what has happened that day. Often I find that the thoughts that run through my head are things that I wished I had or hadn't said or done, events that bother me somehow.

I wonder what was running through Jacob's head that night? Perhaps the faces and voices of home, maybe even some regrets. He knew that he was there because of what he had done and the decisions that others had made.

So to begin with, it might be fair to say that for Jacob, Luz was a place of unhappy memories and a place probably of a very troubled conscience. And secondly a place of lonely insecurity, a strange feeling for him having spent years of security inside his father's camp, with family all around.

So, Jacob is desperately alone and tremendously vulnerable. Can you imagine what noises he must have heard coming out of the darkness as he lay there defenceless? Things rustling in the undergrowth, animals calling... he must have felt so exposed. For the first time in his life, Jacob had nobody, and he had nothing by which to comfort him. But linked in with the feeling of being alone and vulnerable, also the uncertainty of life must have hit him. Questions racing through his mind like:

What's going to happen to me?

Will the relatives to whom I've been sent receive me?



How will the new people I meet treat me?

What's going to happen to me?

What are my prospects?

He must have thought, I just don't know what lies ahead for me!

And yet Jacob, when he awoke discovered that the Lord was in this place.

What place are you in today?

Perhaps it's a nice place, a comfortable place, and it's great to be where you are. There might be lots of hopeful things on your horizon.

There may be others in church today who, in their minds, are not in that place right now? Perhaps like Jacob you have very troubled memories, perhaps there are things that you would change if you could wind back time.

Or maybe today you feel very insecure about your present?

Perhaps you are thinking, 'I don't know how I am going to face my responsibilities or this particular situation that has arisen or that which confronts me?' Feeling so inadequate, feeling so alone, so vulnerable, perhaps you feel like you can't cope with the demands of life; family, business, work.

Or maybe in these times that we live in, there are people here today who are saying, 'I just don't know what the future holds.' Perhaps you can't see any future. Perhaps you don't know what your prospects are. What will happen in your personal situation?

I don't know what your situation is this morning. These are just a few pictures and possibilities. But what I want to say to you this morning and what this scripture is saying in Jacob's situation, and in yours, is that 'the Lord is in that place.'

Jacob at that time did not know how or why. He only knew that when he had awoken that 'the Lord was in that place.' He had discovered that in the midst of his uncertainty, loneliness, vulnerability, and desperation, that God is there.

And we learn that Jacob had a dream. He is there under the stars, sleeping fitfully, but he has the dream of the stairway or ladder that goes up from earth to heaven, and he sees the angels going up and coming down and he sees the Lord there seated on his throne at the top. He has a great vision it seems of all of these angels coming up and going down between heaven and earth, a constant transport between earth and heaven. And Jacob suddenly realises that he is connected, that he is not alone, that 'the Lord is in this place'.

The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 139:

'Where can I go from your presence?

If I ascend up into heaven you are there.

If I make my bed in the grave you are there.

If I take the wings in the morning and fly to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your right hand will uphold me.

If I say the darkness will cover me, the night is light about me'

God is an inescapable God! He is there! He is here!

Here this morning, in our presence, although we don't always realise it.

I think of the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy, Chapter 4, when he says that 'everybody deserted me when I stood to give my testimony in Caesar's court, there was nobody, but nobody, but the Lord stood by me. The Lord was there.'

Francis Thompson, a wonderful poet wrote, 'The Hound of Heaven', telling about how God had pursued him until he eventually caught up with him. He wrote about Jacob's ladder saying 'the traffic of Jacob's ladder is fixed between heaven and Charring Cross; the goings up and goings down between heaven and earth. Or you could say today, between heaven and Coventry, or Hearsall. Thank God that we have a God who is local, even though he is eternal, he is omnipresent. He is the God who is here.

Now it is interesting to notice how Jacob reacted to the presence of God.

There are three things to say here:

First, he said of Luz, 'this is an awesome place, because the Lord is here'. In verse 13 it says, 'God said to him, I AM the Lord, the God of your father. I am the God who led your grandfather, Abraham, and provided for him.' These stories would have been familiar to him. Jacob would have known that the reason that he was alive was because God had provided Abraham with a son (Isaac) in his old age. He would have known that this was the Lord who had told Abraham to sacrifice Isaac on the altar, and that same Lord who, when Abraham was about to follow him in obedience, even by sacrificing his own son, was the Lord who stepped in and said, 'you don't need to do this'.

And Jacob realised that that same Lord who was with Isaac and Abraham then, was also in this place – 'this place where I feel so lonely, this place where I feel so guilty, this place where I feel hopeless. That same Lord is here! And he is so holy!' 'This is an awesome place!'

Jacob is not the only one who felt this way, when they encountered God. Moses felt it, Joshua felt it. And listen to the words you sang earlier:

Be still for the presence of the Lord,  
The Holy one is here.  
Come bow before Him now in reverence and fear:  
In Him no sin is found – we stand on Holy ground.

We can be left in no doubt, God is holy.

But not only did Jacob realise this was a holy place, he also said 'this is the house of God.' This realisation for Jacob is somewhat surprising, isn't it? Jacob was not used to living in a house, he was a traveller, always living in tents and moving from place to place. He couldn't have known from his own experience what a house was, and yet he says, 'this is the house of God.' He obviously realises that he has entered a place very different to that which he has been before, a place where God is Father. A place where God lives in intimate relationship, and this is a far more secure place than any old tent.

Jacob recognises that this is God's house; he likes that this offers security, and that it is permanent. It is something that is reliable, this is something he

can rest in. He was very thankful that he now knew that such a place existed, and here it was all around him!

Finally, he said, 'This is the gate of heaven.' It is a place of unimaginable possibilities. Jacob has seen angels going up from earth to heaven with prayers and coming back down again with answers. He's seen God seated there at the top. There's access to Him, he is not shut away from us and unavailable to us. In fact, this God had said, 'I AM the God of your Father, and I will be with you, I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land.'

These are things that Jacob must have felt were out of his reach at this point, expelled as he was off to a far-off land, but because God is involved, because God is in that place with Jacob, the unimaginable can become reality through Him.

That's my message for you all this morning. What ever place you find yourself in today, whatever uncertainty there is for you today. Know that God is in this place, know that God is in your place. He is there, at home, at work, at college, in the voluntary work you do, he is with you at your doctor's appointment, at the job centre, he is in the local schools, the care home, the council meetings, and charities. He is in the church meeting, the youth club, the services, and the various activities the church is engaged in. God is in that place. In Him, through His Son, Jesus, there is hope, security, rest and unimaginable possibilities.

Thank God, our God is a local God, a God of the here and now, a God who is the same yesterday, today, and forever. You are not, and nor will you ever be, alone.

### Song Oceans

You call me out upon the waters,  
The great unknown where feet may fail,  
And there I find You in the mystery;  
In oceans deep my faith will stand.

*Chorus*

*And I will call upon Your name,  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise.  
My soul will rest in Your embrace,  
For I am Yours and You are mine.*

Verse 2

Your grace abounds in deepest waters,  
Your sovereign hand will be my guide;  
Where feet may fail and fear surrounds me -  
You've never failed and You won't start now.

*Chorus*

Interlude

Bridge x 3

Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders, let me walk upon the waters.  
Wherever You would call me, take me deeper than my feet could ever wander  
And my faith will be made stronger in the presence of my Saviour.

*Chorus x 2*

*And I will call upon Your name,  
And keep my eyes above the waves  
When oceans rise.  
My soul will rest in Your embrace,  
For I am Yours and You are mine.*

That excellent worship song is called Oceans and was sung and played to us by Martin Prue. Our intercessory prayers are brought to us this week by our own Nick Leonard.

Prayers of Intercession

We pray, O God, for the nations, for their right dealings with one another, for the breaking down of barriers of race and colour, for political freedom, for educational development, and for a more just economic structure. We pray

especially for the people of Ukraine who are displaced, living in fear or separated from their loved ones. We pray for the people and leaders of all countries currently at war such as: Afghanistan, Algeria, Ethiopia, Mexico, Yemen, Libya, Myanmar, Syria and Mali.

In the faith that your love is the healing love, your power a healing power, your peace a healing peace, we bring to you the needs of all who suffer from disease, from hunger, from unemployment, from loneliness, from confusion, from fear, from sorrow, from depression and from guilt. Enable them to turn to you in faith, so that they can receive the healing which each one needs. Show us how we can, as individuals and as a church, respond to these needs to expand your Kingdom and influence in the world.

Lord, we place before you all rulers and governors; we pray for those in authority, for leaders, for all nations, and particularly for our own country. We pray for truth, openness, and integrity to be seen as the way forward for those in positions of leadership, and that you will enable them, and us, to listen to the concerns of others and take them into consideration. May you use us to do what we can to bring about the peace and harmony that you so desperately want us to experience.

Grant to your church throughout the world, and here at Hearsall, that we may respond joyously to your love by committing ourselves in obedience and service, with a faith which is strengthened by living experience of Christ's presence, with hearts warmed to love, and with freedom and courage to follow where Christ leads.

We pray for our relationships with others, both new and those which we have had for years. May we not take them for granted or stop listening to their needs and requests.

We pray for all those who are underprivileged, those who do not have access to the essentials of life such as shelter, food, peace, and the support of others - both abroad and in this country. Please show us the best way to make a positive difference to their lives.

Dear Lord, we pray for all those who are sick or suffering with either mental or physical problems. We pray for those who are in distress, those who are coming to the end of their life here on earth and are looking for comfort which you can provide, for those who are housebound and in need of the company of others, for those who are suffering from depression or who are bereaved.

In the silence that follows we lay before you those who are known personally to us. We pray that you will lay your hands of healing and peace, and show us how we can act as your representative in their healing process.

### **Silence**

All these things we ask in your name, for you are a great and wonderful God who listens to us and cares for us, and cares for the concerns we have for others.

Thank you, Lord.

Amen

Thank you, Nick for those thoughtful prayers.

Our final worship song is written by Graham Kendrick '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*

### Closing Blessing

The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

### 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.