



EMMANUEL CHURCH – WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 15TH NOVEMBER 2020



Make some space at home to read and pray through the following, if possible, on the morning of Sunday 15th November 2020.
If you are able, join in this service on Zoom – contact Rev. Paul for details of the service, login and password.

Opening Prayer:

Creator God, we praise you for bright crisp mornings,
for leaves crackling underfoot
and wisps of cloud in a pale sky.

We praise you for the night-time rain, for the wind buffeting the city
and streetlamps reflected in wet pavements.

We praise you for the season's labours,
for the smell of new-turned earth and smoking bonfires.

We praise you for the season's gifts, for fruitfulness beyond measure
and time to reflect and remember.

CREATOR GOD, WE PRAISE YOU THIS AND EVERY DAY. AMEN.



Readings: Nehemiah 1: 1-4, 10-11 'Nehemiah's Concern for Jerusalem'
Nehemiah 2: 1-2, 4-6 'Nehemiah's Gets Ready to Build'
... or if you can, even better, simply read the first two chapters of Nehemiah!

Address: 'God's People in the Right Place at the Right Time'

Prayers of Intercession and The Lord's Prayer:

Lord, we pray to you today, because of your love for us, and your love for all people everywhere; because you hear all our prayers, and you call us to be people ready to listen and to follow where you lead us.

So Lord, today we pray for those whose hearts are sore, who cannot lift their hands or feet from weariness or who cannot lift their heads from sadness or grief;
We ask you to bring them rest and hope, to tend to their hurts, whether these are old scars or fresh wounds. God of love and peace: hear our prayer.

We pray for those longing for a new beginning, who feel heavy at the idea of another day in lockdown; We pray for those who feel anxiety and uncertainty in these days.
May all people know the reality of your love for them, and the power of your Spirit refreshing and renewing once again. God of grace and kindness: hear our prayer.

We pray for those on journeys to which they were driven, not called; those who have been uprooted, violated, exiled; for those whose journeys have been forgotten or neglected, as if they are unimportant. May your redemptive power be at work even in the darkest of places and on the hardest of roads. God of the deepest compassion: hear our prayer.

And for ourselves: Lord God, help us to be in the right place at the right time;
to be the right people that you would have us be.

We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen. OUR FATHER...**

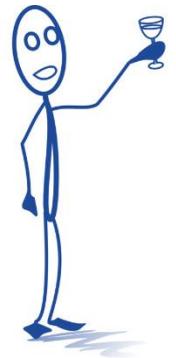
Blessing: May the love of God dwell within us, and flow from us as his people,
as we serve him with everything we have.

And may the blessing of God: Father, Son and Spirit, be with us today and every day, Amen.

Address: 'God's People in the Right Place at the Right Time'

What's the worst job in the world to have? Window cleaner for The Shard? 31 acres of glass to clean dangling 78 floors up! Demolition Expert? It must be a nightmare, being the last person connecting the wires and fuses, legging it from thousands of tonnes of concrete just waiting to turn into rubble at the touch of a button, right on top of you. I heard recently that someone has to wear Queen Elizabeth's shoes in... what a job, to get sore feet for a living!

Thinking of grim jobs, this leads us nicely to Nehemiah – who is the 'Cupbearer to the King'. Your main task each day is to taste the King's food and drink in case His Majesty is about to be poisoned – marvellous! Nehemiah gets word that the city and walls of Jerusalem are in ruins. The people are grieving there and although he serves the king some 800 miles away in Susa, amazingly, he manages to speak to the King and get permission to leave his job, leave the Persian capital, return to Jerusalem, and re-build



So what is God doing asking Nehemiah to undertake this task?

- † He had no great qualifications for the job – he's no architect, surveyor or engineer.
- † As cup-bearer to the King he was completely expendable – he could get poisoned anytime.
- † He was 800 miles away from Jerusalem – and given that we're in the 5th Century BC here, HS2 is about 2500 years away...

But! What we do know from the opening of this book is that Nehemiah was sensitive to the needs of the people, sensitive to the importance of Jerusalem, and he was committed. We do know what Nehemiah did *nothing without prayer* – most of Chapter One is just one long prayer in which he asks God to give him a sense of what is needed, what to do and when. With God's help, this unusual character could begin to contemplate great things. You and I are an unlikely collection of people aren't we, about to embark on a phase of the building that will see the church and community space physically come to life. Some of us are too young for school, some retired thirty years ago; some of us know buildings, budgets, fundraising, and large-scale projects; some of us work full-time in our hospitals and schools; some of us care full time for others; some hold everything in prayer.

Yet God calls us *all* to work each in their own way for the good of the Kingdom – and in doing so, God gives us the best job we could ever have. Our job descriptions may be very different from one another, but the purpose is the same – to play our part in God's kingdom of love becoming a tangible reality in the lives of God's people.

So you and I *are* the right people, in the right place, and in the right time too. And what times are we in! Would you like some over-used adjectives to describe the pandemic? How about 'unprecedented', 'extra-ordinary', 'not-in-my-lifetime'...the list could go on! They're true though. What is abundantly clear is that we are *not* in control of the times we are in, the seismic events which shape nations and peoples and the era to which we belong – all out of our hands. But we *are* in control of what we do with the gifts we have, in the times that we are living in. In these years ahead we can be pretty sure that there will be much grief within our communities, an impact on the education and social development on our children; an economic hardship for many, and consequences for the mental health of many affected by repeated isolation.

Like Nehemiah, we have a choice – to stand still and stay away, or we can be God's people in the right place at the right time – and live out lives which resemble God's kingdom of love for all.