

Messages of Hope

Sunday 22nd March 2020 St Nicholas Wilden

Welcome to this Act of Worship and thank you for joining us wherever you are, from Geraldine, David and myself being filmed at St Nicholas Wilden during this time of suspension of services of public worship due to the coronavirus outbreak.

We were due to hold our 10:30am Mothering Sunday service here with our Junior Choir.

Today is the 4th Sunday in Lent - Mothering Sunday.

A time when we thank God for all those who love and care for us, especially our mothers, grandmothers, aunts and godmothers, all parents, carers and especially God our loving Heavenly Father, His Son Jesus who showed his love for us in giving His life for us, and God's Holy Spirit who comforts and strengthens us.

We are just over ½ way through Lent,

so this Sunday has always been a bit of a break from Lent, when in former days servants often not much past childhood were allowed to go home and visit family, and often picked flowers for their mothers on the way.

So this Sunday is also known as Refreshment Sunday.

As we begin this short act of worship which we are calling 'messages of hope', we're lighting a Candle, and you might like to do the same thing at home...

A prayer from the Mothers' Union:

Heavenly Father,

we rejoice with thanks for all those who have mothered us in our lives.

In a world that is broken, and in need of Your motherly love,

please use us to aid others as You do us in providing comfort, nurture, protection and support.

We ask that You grow us as carers to those who need us,

so that we might celebrate Your goodness together

even through our own brokenness. Amen

and the collect for this Mothering Sunday:

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself:

strengthen us in our daily living that in joy and in sorrow we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our

Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.

Our Junior Choir were due to sing with us today a version of the hymn

'Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so':

'My mum loves me, this I know, for her sweet smile tells me so;
When I'm feeling really sad, she is there to make me glad.
Yes, my mum loves me; yes, my mum loves me;
Yes, my mum loves me; and I love her too.

Jesus loves me, and my mum, holds our hands to make us strong;
From His shining throne on high, He will watch us where we lie.
Yes Jesus loves us; yes, Jesus loves us;
Yes Jesus loves us, the Bible tells us so.

A reading from the first book of Samuel, chapter 1, reading verses 20-28

In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I have asked him of the LORD."

²¹ Hannah's husband Elkanah and all his household went up to offer to the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and to pay his vow. ²² But Hannah did not go up, for she said to her husband, "As soon as the child is weaned, I will bring him, that he may appear in the presence of the LORD, and remain there forever; I will offer him as a nazirite^[a] for all time."^[b] ²³ Her husband Elkanah said to her, "Do what seems best to you, wait until you have weaned him; only—may the LORD establish his word."^[c] So the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴ When she had weaned him, she took him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull,^[d] an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine. She brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh; and the child was young. ²⁵ Then they slaughtered the bull, and they brought the child to Eli. ²⁶ And she said, "Oh, my lord! As you live, my lord, I am the woman who was standing here in your presence, praying to the LORD. ²⁷ For this child I prayed; and the LORD has granted me the petition that I made to him. ²⁸ Therefore I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he lives, he is given to the LORD."

She left him there for^[e] the LORD.

This is the Word of the Lord!

All: Thanks be to God

Hannah was a faithful wife who thought she would never have children.
She prayed earnestly, saying that if she had a child she would devote Him to the Lord, and God heard her prayer.

Hannah bore a son whom she named 'Samuel' which means 'the Lord hears'.

I have 4 children whom I love dearly, one of whom is called Samuel, and they are all a great gift from God.

I don't think I could ever give any of them up, although they have all now all grown up and left home.

God has given us His Son Jesus which means saviour, and he has given Him up for us as Jesus died for each one of us.

We are conscious at this time that many in our nation and world have already died from this coronavirus outbreak including mothers and children.

We sometimes have to let go of those close to us.

Mothering Sunday is a difficult day for many people, as they remember mothers and others who have cared for them.

If you've lit a candle yourself, maybe it can be a reminder of those who have been very special in your life.

But these streamed acts of worship we want to be messages of hope.

God loves us and gave us Jesus who died for us but we remember that God also raised Jesus from death,

and by faith in Him we too can have a hope in our Saviour Jesus Christ even beyond death itself.

Hannah faithfully gave up her son Samuel to the Lord.

Samuel served God as a child in the Temple,

and grew up to be a great prophet to teach people about God's love, care and provision, and anointed Kings to lead God's people.

God gives us very special people whom we love and are always concerned for, especially when they are ill, older, vulnerable or suffering in any way.

some words from St Paul also set for today reminding us that God is with us in our sufferings, and we stand with others in their sufferings too, as they stand with us in ours.

A reading from Paul's second letter to the Christians at Corinth, chapter 1 reading verses 3-7

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, ⁴ who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. ⁵ For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. ⁶ If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. ⁷ Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation.

and now let us pray

We pray Dear Lord for our Church in the call to care for and love all the people in this world You have made.

We pray for Justin our Archbishop as he leads our Nation in prayer today;

For our Bishops in this Diocese of St Albans, Alan, Richard and Michael

And today in our Diocesan cycle of prayer we pray for the People of the Parish of Nettleden, thanking You Lord for the work of faithful parishioners and for the Friends of The Church. We pray for the Chaplaincy in Ashridge College and its work which supports Nettleton, and ask your blessing on all their work and ministry in the Name of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

We pray for our world that is so affected by this present crisis. For the leaders of all the nations especially in Europe, in Italy, Spain, France and Germany, and for our own leaders, Elizabeth our Queen and our Prime Minister and Government for wisdom and right judgment at this time as they work with our many valued advisors at this time.

And some prayers that we have included on our church website:

A prayer in this time of the Coronavirus outbreak:

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy
in this time of uncertainty and distress.

Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,
and lift up all who are brought low; that we may rejoice in your comfort
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord.
Amen.

For those in isolation

God of compassion, be close to those who are ill, afraid or in isolation.
In their loneliness, be their consolation; in their anxiety, be their hope;
in their darkness, be their light; through him who suffered alone on the cross,
but reigns with you in glory, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For hospital staff and medical researchers

Gracious God, give skill, sympathy and resilience to all who are caring for the sick,
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.
Strengthen them with your Spirit, that through their work many will be restored to
health; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

For those who are ill

Merciful God, we entrust to your unfailing and tender care,
those who are ill or in pain, knowing that whenever danger threatens
your everlasting arms are there to hold us safe.
Comfort and heal them, and restore them to health and strength;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

And we end our prayers by saying together the words of the Lords Prayer using the traditional form of words:

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.

One of the hymns we often sing on Mothering Sunday is:
For the beauty of the earth, for the beauty of the skies,
for the love which from our birth, over and around us lies.
Lord of all to Thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

And verses 4 runs

For the joy of human love, brother, sister, parent, child,
Friends on earth, and friends above, pleasures pure and undefiled:
Lord of all to Thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

We end this act of worship with the Blessing used in many churches across the world on this Mothering Sunday,

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary, fill you with His grace to trust His promises and obey His will, and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, be with you and remain with you this Mothering Sunday, now and always.
Amen.