**Order of service: Sunday 13th June 2021**

Led by Rev Graham Locking

**Call to worship**

This is the day that the Lord has made.
We will rejoice and be glad in it!

**Hymn**: S t F 254 Seek ye first the Kingdom of God
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S1Y8Naj3RFk>

**Prayers of Thanksgiving**

God of grace and growth,

you have called us to plant the seeds of your kingdom

in the fields of your world,

and to trust you for their developing and flourishing –

and so we praise you.

For the abundance of your creativity:

we praise you.

For the transforming nature of your Spirit:

we praise you.

For the power of small beginnings:

we praise you.

For the mystery of hidden growth:

we praise you.

And for the harvest we are invited to delight in:

we praise you.

In Jesus’ name. Amen.

**Lord’s Prayer**

**OT reading**: 1 Sam 16:1-13

**Samuel anoints David**

1. **16**The Lord said to Samuel, ‘How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king.’

**2**But Samuel said, ‘How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me.’

The Lord said, ‘Take a heifer with you and say, “I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.” **3**Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate.’

**4**Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, ‘Do you come in peace?’

**5**Samuel replied, ‘Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me.’ Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

**6**When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, ‘Surely the Lord’s anointed stands here before the Lord.’

**7**But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.’

**8**Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, ‘The Lord has not chosen this one either.’ **9**Jesse then made Shammah pass by, but Samuel said, ‘Nor has the Lord chosen this one.’ **10**Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, ‘The Lord has not chosen these.’ **11**So he asked Jesse, ‘Are these all the sons you have?’

‘There is still the youngest,’ Jesse answered. ‘He is tending the sheep.’

Samuel said, ‘Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives.’

**12**So he sent for him and had him brought in. He was glowing with health and had a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the Lord said, ‘Rise and anoint him; this is the one.’

**13**So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to Ramah.

**Hymn**: S t F 407 Hear the call of the Kingdom
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65AuT49d1o8>

**NT reading**: Mark 4: 26-34
**The parable of the growing seed**

1. **26**He also said, ‘This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. **27**Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. **28**All by itself the soil produces corn – first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. **29**As soon as the corn is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.’

**The parable of the mustard seed**

1. **30**Again he said, ‘What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it? **31**It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. **32**Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.’
2. **33**With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. **34**He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

**Reflections**

Rev Graham Locking shares his reflections from 1Sam 16:1-13 and Mark 4: 26-34.

I wish to resist the temptation of preaching a full-blown sermon this morning, but instead share some reflections with you*.* I begin with a question:

What thoughts do you have about...yourself?

Too tall, too small, too fat, too thin, not clever enough, not good enough, not as clever as my sister or my brother? Have you been compared with others at work, lost a promotion to someone not half as talented as you? Have you been rejected in a relationship, had your life destroyed through illness or do you just feel inadequate?

Much research has shown that many, many people go through life with the thought that they are not good enough. This thought destroys a person’s life, confidence and hope.

And often the church adds to this feeling of not being good enough, trying to convince us that we are “miserable sinners”, and that God wouldn’t have anything to do with us until we change.

This morning I would like to look at two verses from our readings that I believe helps us to see that this is not so.

1. “People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart”. 1Samuel 16:7

God orders Samuel to anoint a new king even though the old one (Saul) is still alive.

He orders him to go to Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse. “I have chosen one of his sons to be king.”

Samuel goes on the pretext of making a sacrifice to the Lord in order to find the one to be anointed.

He looks at all of the sons Jesse has gathered, but then God does not choose any of them.

Samuel asks, “Are these all the sons you have?”

Jesse replies, “There is still the youngest, he is tending the sheep”.

David wasn’t even invited, didn’t count, wasn’t considered for an invitation.

But God knew David and knew his heart. God saw in this young man qualities, possibilities that no one else saw. God chose him to be the next King of Israel, to the surprise of everyone.

God does not look at the outward appearance of a person but he looks into their hearts.

God knows each and every one of us, not by our appearance, not by the size of our home, or the job we do. He is not impressed by the office we hold in the church, or the religious language that comes out of our mouths. He sees who we are in our hearts and loves us for who we are. He sees us in our struggles - and loves us. He sees us in our bad times - and loves us. He sees our faithlessness - and loves us. He sees us in our failures - and loves us. Richard Rohr, a Franciscan priest, talks about “The spirituality of imperfection” “For while we were sinners, Christ died for us.”

Whatever you think about yourself - God loves you.

2. “...though he does know how.” Mark 4:27

The farmer scatters the seed on the ground, and whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, and all by itself the soil produces grain - first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel. And the farmer doesn’t know how.

This sometimes happen with us - we wonder why God chose us to share in the work of his kingdom, and how can we be of any use. We echo humanity’s cry “We are not good enough”

But God knows us and has been working in our lives from the moment of conception. He has chosen us, prepared us, encouraged us, forgiven us, filled us with the Holy Spirit - and invites us to share in the work of his kingdom. And we don’t know how it happens. God works in every human heart, believer or not. Yes, God is working in every human heart. John Wesley called it prevenient grace, the grace that goes before faith, or commitment.

God has chosen you to play your part - and awaits your response.

How will you respond to God? He knows what you are like. He sees into your heart; he loves you and continues to call you.

**Music for reflection**: Jules Massenet - Meditation
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QtGOWemQhY>

**Prayers of Intercession**

God of the rich and the poor, of the powerful and the vulnerable,
we pray for the leaders of the G7 nations meeting in Cornwall,
for the people they govern,
for the people of other nations they can support,
and for the world they can protect through their decisions.
**May wisdom be planted, generosity grow, and co-operation flourish.**

We pray for a growth in resilience, awareness and togetherness
across all the nations of the world
as they continue to tackle the covid pandemic,
as they confront environmental issues.
and as they reach out to communities crippled by need, war and natural disasters.
**May integrity be planted, urgency grow and healing flourish.**

We pray for the church in this place and around the world
as we seek to serve those around us,
to reach out to those in trouble,
and to share the gospel, the good news of Jesus Christ.
**May faith be planted, compassion grow and hope flourish.**

We pray for those in the charity sector
who seek to support those in crisis,
to feed the hungry,
to embrace those displaced by war,
to protect wildlife and the environment, and planet that we all call home.
**May trust be planted, resources grow and lives flourish.**

We pray for those in sport,
for those they inspire,
for the enjoyment they bring,
especially all the nations taking part in the Football Euros,
for those preparing for and hoping that the Olympic Games will take place,
for all those at grass roots level struggling to keep their clubs going.
**May respect be planted, opportunities grow and talent flourish.**

And we pray for those whose faces we have seen on our screens
and in our papers this week.
for the family of Sarah Everard,
for little Artin and his family, and all those who have died crossing dangerous waters,
for Jimi Olubunmi-Adewole and his family and all who have died trying to save others,
for all who have enriched our world and for all who are at the mercy of others.
**May justice be planted, goodness grow and peace flourish -
in Jesus name. Amen.**

**Hymn:**  S t F 323 I will sing the wondrous story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QZo56woLsA>

**Blessing**

The blessing of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit,
remain with you always. **Amen**

**Hymns for Sunday 13th June 2021**

**Seek ye first the kingdom of God,**
and his righteousness,
and all these things shall be added unto you;
Allelu-, alleluia:
 *Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia,
 allelu-, alleluia!*

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;
seek and ye shall find;
knock, and the door shall be opened unto you;
Allelu-, alleluia:

We shall not live by bread alone,
but by every word
that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord;
Allelu-, alleluia:

*Karen Lafferty (b. 1948)*

**Hear the call of the kingdom,**lift your eyes to the King;
let his song rise within you
as a fragrant offering
of how God, rich in mercy,
came in Christ to redeem
all who trust in his unfailing grace.

Hear the call of the kingdom
to be children of light
with the mercy of heaven,
the humility of Christ;
walking justly before him,
loving all that is right,
that the life of Christ may shine through us.

 *King of heaven, we will answer the call.
 We will follow, bringing hope to the world,
 filled with passion, filled with power to proclaim salvation in Jesus’ name.*

Hear the call of the kingdom
to reach out to the lost
with the Father’s compassion
in the wonder of the cross,
bringing peace and forgiveness,
and a hope yet to come:
let the nations put their trust in him.

 *King of heaven, we will answer the call …*

*Keith Getty (b. 1974), Kristyn Getty (b. 1980) and Stuart Townend (b. 1963)*

**I will sing the wondrous story**of the Christ who died for me,
how he left the realms of glory
for the cross on Calvary:
 *Yes, I'll sing the wondrous story
 of the Christ who died for me,
 sing it with his saints in glory,
 gathered by the crystal sea.*

I was lost; but Jesus found me,
found the sheep that went astray,
raised me up, and gently led me
back into the narrow way:

Faint was I, and fears possessed me,
bruised was I from many a fall;
hope was gone, and shame distressed me;
but his love has pardoned all:

Days of darkness still come o'er me;
sorrow's paths I often tread;
but the Saviour still is with me,
by his hand I'm safely led:

He will keep me till the river
rolls its waters at my feet;
then he'll bear me safely over,
where the loved ones I shall meet:

*Francis Harold Rowley (1854–1952)*