

# Service – Hope

## Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2026

### Call to Worship:-

We come today with many hopes:  
hope for ourselves and for our families,  
hope for our communities,  
hope for our world.  
We come with hope that may be full of life,  
or hope that may be dwindling.  
Let's give our hopes to God,  
and be present to what God is doing here and now.  
Let's be hopeful about new possibilities that are ahead of us.  
Amen

### Hymn: Lord of all Hopefulness (STF526)

Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy,  
whose trust, ever childlike, no cares could  
destroy:  
Be there at our waking, and give us, we pray,  
your bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of  
the day.

Lord of all eagerness, Lord of all faith,  
whose strong hands were skilled at the plane  
and the lathe:  
Be there at our labors, and give us, we pray,  
your strength in our hearts, Lord, at the noon  
of the day.

Lord of all kindness, Lord of all grace,  
your hands swift to welcome, your arms to  
embrace:  
Be there at our homing, and give us, we pray,  
your love in our hearts, Lord, at the eve of the  
day.

Lord of all gentleness, Lord of all calm,  
whose voice is contentment, whose presence  
is balm:  
Be there at our sleeping, and give us, we  
pray,  
your peace in our hearts, Lord, at the end of  
the day.

Jan Struther (Joyce Placzek) (1901–1953)

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In our first reading from Isaiah the original audience were a defeated and disillusioned group of exiles far from home and lacking hope. As you will hear Verse 27 suggests that they assumed that even God had given up on them. However, there is good news for them in this passage of hope, comfort and good governance.

### Reading Isaiah 42:1-9

#### The Servant of the Lord

**42** "Here is my servant, whom I uphold,  
my chosen one in whom I delight;  
I will put my Spirit on him,  
and he will bring justice to the nations.  
<sup>2</sup> He will not shout or cry out,  
or raise his voice in the streets.  
<sup>3</sup> A bruised reed he will not break,

and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out.  
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;  
4 he will not falter or be discouraged  
till he establishes justice on earth.  
In his teaching the islands will put their hope.”  
5 This is what God the Lord says—  
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,  
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,  
who gives breath to its people,  
and life to those who walk on it:  
6 “I, the Lord, have called you in righteousness;  
I will take hold of your hand.  
I will keep you and will make you  
to be a covenant for the people  
and a light for the Gentiles,  
7 to open eyes that are blind,  
to free captives from prison  
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.  
8 “I am the Lord; that is my name!  
I will not yield my glory to another  
or my praise to idols.  
9 See, the former things have taken place,  
and new things I declare;  
before they spring into being  
I announce them to you.”

Amen – thanks be to God for his word

### **Prayers:**

God of justice and resilience,  
we give you thanks for calling us by name,  
to shed your light where there is darkness,  
to lead others to your Son, our Saviour,  
to be open to the empowering hope of your Holy Spirit.  
May we never grow weary of praising you  
but serve you with all our heart,  
with all our mind and with all our strength,  
today and always.

God of hope,  
when we listen to your word, but don't take it to heart:  
please forgive us, we pray.  
When you reach out your hand to us, but we don't take it...  
When injustice needs to be challenged, but we remain silent...  
When we are lost and in darkness and don't see your hope...  
Lord, draw us back to you.

God of richness and refreshment:  
your tenderness enables us to trust you,  
your forgiveness enables us to begin again,  
your call enables us to follow you,  
your faithfulness enables us to find peace in you,  
and your Spirit enables us to live as your servants  
in the world today.

God of generosity,  
We thank you for all you have given us and,  
Thank you that we are able to give some of our richness  
Back to you with our money, our talents and our time,  
Let us always give generously, remembering that  
Everything we have comes from you

Amen

**Hymn:** All my hope on God is founded (STF 455)

All my hope on God is founded,  
all my trust he shall renew;  
he, my guide through changing order,  
only good and only true:  
God unknown, he alone  
calls my heart to be his own.

Pride of man and earthly glory,  
sword and crown betray his trust;  
all that human toil can fashion,  
tower and temple, fall to dust.  
But God's power, hour by hour,  
is my temple and my tower.

Day by day our mighty giver  
grants to us his gifts of love;  
in his will our souls find pleasure,  
leading to our home above:  
love shall stand at his hand,  
joy shall wait for his command.  
Still from Earth to God eternal  
sacrifice of praise be done;  
high above all praises praising  
for the gift of Christ his Son:  
hear Christ's call, one and all –  
we who follow shall not fall.

Robert Bridges (1844–1930) (*alt.*)  
based on Joachim Neander (1650–1680)

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Our second reading is from Matthew and describes the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, when he was around 30 years old, and he was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River but John already recognised Jesus as the messiah and was hesitant, however Jesus insisted, signifying his commitment to God's will and revealing his identity as God's Son through the voice from heaven and the descent of the Spirit. This event marked Jesus's transition from private life to his earthly mission as the Messiah.

**Reading:** Matthew 3:13-17

### **The Baptism of Jesus**

<sup>13</sup> Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. <sup>14</sup> But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

<sup>15</sup> Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

<sup>16</sup> As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. <sup>17</sup> And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Amen – thanks be to God for his word

## Talk:

As you may have gathered our theme today is 'Hope'. In our reading from Isaiah, we heard how the tired Israelites were given hope and comfort and Matthew's account of the baptism of Jesus by John it was clearly demonstrated by the Spirit of God descending on Jesus that he was being equipped to be the bringer of good news and hope for the World

The voice also confirms Jesus's identity – something John already knew, hence his reluctance to baptize him. It marked Jesus out not only as God's servant but God's king. We often sing of Jesus being a servant king. This story read with Isaiah 42 shows how this works: Jesus is anointed as king to serve his people and the world through his ministry, death and resurrection.

'Hope' is a great word and so often used – hope you are well – hope to see you soon – hope you had a good time – and then there is the hopes that we hold inside – hopes that our children will have good lives, that our health holds up and hopes that we can achieve what we set out to. These hopes can be large or small and it is so important that we who believe can bring our hopes and dreams to God in prayer and know that we can be positive in our hopes as we know God's power and that Jesus brought us the good news and hope for the World - H O P E in my mind stands for "Heavenly Optimism Provided for Everyone". There is no one excluded from that love and care that the servant Jesus brought to earth and we, as his people, are here to share it within our family, our town, our country and the wider world

Sometimes we can all get weary when we hear the News on the TV or read a Newspaper or hear members of our families and friends falling out – that is when we need to remember the message of Isaiah and why Jesus came to the earth.

I would just like us to sit and listen to the words of this song which rumbles around in my brain when I am wearied ..... 'What a Friend We have in Jesus'. It was written by Joseph M. Scriven in **1855** as a poem to comfort his mother in Ireland and then music was added to it – let's sit and listen to 'What a Friend We have in Jesus'.

Amen

Now it is our turn to sing and I could not resist including the lovely Hymn .....

## Hymn: The Servant King (STF272)

From Heaven, You came helpless babe  
Entered our world, your glory veiled  
Not to be served but to serve  
And give Your life that we might live  
This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King

There in the garden of tears  
My heavy load he chose to bear  
His heart with sorrow was torn  
"Yet not My will but Yours", He said  
This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King

Come see His hands and His feet  
The scars that speak of sacrifice  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered  
This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King

So let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone Him  
Each other's needs to prefer  
For it is Christ we're serving  
This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King

Graham Kendrick (b. 1950)

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### **Prayers of intercession:**

Almighty God, surrounded as we are by the troubles of the world, where paths are not straight and where justice does not prevail, where so much pain and anguish is in evidence, we bring our prayers for those in need, knowing you hear our prayers

We pray for those we know whose needs seem so overwhelming, those whose pain finds no relief, those who feel submerged by their worries. May we offer words of comfort where we can, a listening ear to those who will talk, a gentle touch for those who need companionship, a smile that restores their belief in humanity.

We pray for those who are alone and feel all at sea in this troubled world. Those who cannot see the way ahead, cannot see God's hand at work among them, around them and within them. For those for whom Christmas was no more than a time for Santa and food, those for whom Baptism is a meaningless unknown ceremony, those who have not felt the touch of God's Holy Spirit, or felt the touch of Jesus or seen the hand of God. For those for whom the church has no meaning and no purpose, no relevance and no place.

For those experiencing flooding in our country, those snowed in in America and Canada, those countries with searing heat and no rain and no harvests. Those countries already suffering dreadfully from climate change and all its ramifications.

For those suffering injustice beyond our imagining and understanding. Those exploited or abused because of gender or colour, race or creed, social standing or disability. Those who feel marginalised, ignored, cast aside.

We pray for whole nations that are being torn apart by war and violence, those who keep making headline news and those who slip from memory but not from the aggressor's hand.

We give thanks for those who have changed the world for the better, those whose lives have meant so much to us and others. For those we know and love who have died and for those who we know of who have changed the lives of us and many more besides.

We pray for all aspects, providers and users of the NHS. For politicians who decide on planning and the way forward, for the treasury who decide on how much can be afforded, for nurses, doctors, cleaners, administrators who all bear the brunt of shortages and live with chaos daily while they themselves feeling the pressures of our economic crisis. For patients and relatives who need care, attention, love and support.

We pray for ourselves, our family members, our neighbours and communities, that together we may live lives that are good, true and honest. That we may support and love each other as Jesus loves us. That we each may see the needs around us and respond in Jesus' name.

Almighty God, we bring our prayers to you. Amen.

Let us join in **the Lord's prayer** .....

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin

against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and for ever. Amen

Our closing hymn is one of my favourite as it reminds me of all the wonderful gifts God has given to us and how amazing his love is – He sent his Son to die for us and give us eternal hope

### **Hymn: How Great Thou Art (STF82)**

Oh Lord, my God  
When I, in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
When through the woods and forest glades I  
wander and hear the birds sing sweetly in the  
trees; when I look down from lofty mountain  
grandeur, and hear the brook, and feel the  
gentle breeze:  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

And when I think that God, His Son not  
sparing Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it  
in That on the cross, my burden gladly  
bearing He bled and died to take away my sin  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
When Christ shall come, with shout of  
acclamation  
And take me home, what joy shall fill my  
heart  
Then I shall bow, in humble adoration  
And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou  
art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

Stuart K. Hine (1899–1989)

vv. 1, 2, 4 based on *O store Gud* 1885by

Carl Gustaf Boberg (1859–1940)

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### **And now the blessing**

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all this day and evermore Amen.

### **Acknowledgements**

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