

LETCHWORTH – SUNDAY 22 AUGUST 2021

Welcome

Call to Worship

Hymn 409 Let us build a house

Prayers

Prayer of Approach

Living God, Loving God, we find such joy as we meet and gather in your presence.

You make space and offer welcome for all, and you value each of us equally.

All of creation is held in your hands, the parts we value that inspire us and the parts we fear and feel indifferent about.

You hold the earthworm and the beetle, the mighty mountain ranges
The rolling rivers and endless plains,
Even as you hold us, cherish us, inspire us and transform us.

You know all names, our names, strangers' names, names of friends and enemy and you love us all.

You call each of us by name and tell us we are welcome, we are cherished, special in your sight and that we are all your children.

You give us strength and peace. Our faith brings courage and new life.

We rejoice that we are your people.

Amen

Prayer of Confession.

Compassionate and loving God we come before you and admit our fault and share our regrets.

There have been times when we have chosen not to listen to people and used our business as an excuse.

There have been times when we have chosen not to help people because it was inconvenient.

There have been times when we have made people do what we want.

For these and other failings we say sorry and we carry regret.

We ask you forgiveness and we thank you for the words of grace.

In the name of Jesus our sins are forgiven.

Give us Lord the sensitivity to be aware of your spirit, respond to your touch in our lives and may you lead us gently as we seek to serve you, the living God.

Amen.

Reading

Joshua 24: 1-2a, 14-18

The Tribes Renew the Covenant

24 Then Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem, and summoned the elders, the heads, the judges, and the officers of Israel; and they presented themselves before God. ²And Joshua said to all the people, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel: Long ago your ancestors—Terah and his sons Abraham and Nahor—lived beyond the Euphrates and served other gods.

14 'Now therefore revere the Lord, and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness; put away the gods that your ancestors served beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. ¹⁵Now if you are unwilling to serve the Lord, choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served in the region beyond the River or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.'

16 Then the people answered, 'Far be it from us that we should forsake the Lord to serve other gods; ¹⁷for it is the Lord our God who brought us and our ancestors up from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, and who did those great signs in our sight. He protected us along all the way that we went, and among all the peoples through whom we passed; ¹⁸and the Lord drove out before us all the peoples, the Amorites who lived in the land. Therefore we also will serve the Lord, for he is our God.'

Hymn

489

All I once held dear

Reading

Ephesians 6: 10-20

The Whole Armour of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his power. ¹¹Put on the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armour of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. ¹⁴Stand therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. ¹⁵As shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. ¹⁶With all of these, take the shield of faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 Pray in the Spirit at all times in every prayer and supplication. To that end keep alert and always persevere in supplication for all the saints. ¹⁹Pray also for me, so that when I speak, a message may be given to me to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, ²⁰for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it boldly, as I must speak.

John 6: 56-69

⁵⁶Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them. ⁵⁷Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me. ⁵⁸This is the bread that came down from heaven, not like that which your ancestors ate, and they died. But the one who eats this bread will live for ever.' ⁵⁹He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum.

The Words of Eternal Life

60 When many of his disciples heard it, they said, 'This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?' ⁶¹But Jesus, being aware that his disciples were complaining about it, said to them, 'Does this offend you? ⁶²Then what if you were to see the Son of Man ascending to where he was before? ⁶³It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh is useless. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. ⁶⁴But among you there are some who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who were the ones

that did not believe, and who was the one that would betray him.⁶⁵ And he said, 'For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father.'

⁶⁶ Because of this many of his disciples turned back and no longer went about with him. ⁶⁷ So Jesus asked the twelve, 'Do you also wish to go away?' ⁶⁸ Simon Peter answered him, 'Lord, to whom can we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.'

Hymn 486 Who would true valour see

Pause for Thought

Hymn 663 I the Lord of sea and sky

Intercessions

When I say 'Lord in your Mercy...

Response **Hear our Prayer**

Hymn 397 The Spirit lives to set us free

Blessing