

**North West Wiltshire Pastorate**  
**Worship for Sunday June 28<sup>th</sup> 2020**  
**Led by the Revd Sarah Simpson**

Good morning and welcome to worship today.  
Let us join together as the people of God.

From the beginnings of a conversation,  
From the opening of a door,  
From the tentative reaching out of a hand-  
We seek to be welcomed.  
We come in your name,  
Offering your love, hope, mercy and grace.  
In the hope of beginning a new relationship,  
In the trust that as we go in your name,  
So too will we be received as the same.  
Let us worship God.

***We will now sing together, 'Let all the world in every corner sing'.***

Let us pray,  
Welcoming God,  
We enter into your house to worship you,  
Searching and finding a welcome,  
Knowing your delight in our presence.  
From the open door to the smiles of those gathered  
We know we are in a place we can call home.  
We acknowledge the blessing that this gives us  
And even though, at this time  
It is a memory, nonetheless  
It is a memory that sustains us,  
And reminds us  
That there will be a time, once again  
When we are gathered in your name. Amen.

**Our readings come from the book of the prophet Jeremiah, chapter 28, verses 5-9 and from Matthew's gospel chapter 10, verses 40-42**

Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the Lord. He said, "Amen! May the Lord do so! May the Lord fulfil the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the Lord's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon.

Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: from early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognised as one truly sent by the Lord only if his prediction comes true."

*And from Matthew's gospel,*

"He who receives you, receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward."

*This is the word of the Lord,*

*Thanks be to God.*

**A few thoughts ...**

Anyone wanting a bit of respite from the current political arguments will not welcome our Old Testament reading. Jeremiah and Hananiah are at loggerheads and neither is prepared to give way. The work of a prophet was never easy, often the message was uncompromising, hard to deliver, even harder to hear – but when a fellow prophet was

in opposition then matters were much worse. Jeremiah actually wanted Hananiah to be right but the proof would come only in the way things worked out, then sadly one would be proved right, the other wrong. What would have interested those involved would be the ease, or not of the message, would they offer a greater welcome to the prophet whose message advocated a better outcome? Would the prophet who preached the harder message be rejected because of it? Our gospel is also focussed on prophets, in this case the newer style of prophet as modelled by the disciples and it follows from last week's gospel, dealing with how they will be welcomed or not, how the message will be received and how, by their actions, character and words they will be identified as belonging to Jesus. There is even some talk as to a reward for those who react in the right way – think less a prize in school, or something of monetary value and more on a spiritual level ...so how does that happen?

How can we make it happen?

If we say “we come in the name of “ then clearly, like the prophets and the prophetic role of the disciples then we are judged by both the expectation of the recipient and by our words and actions. However, if the recipient has a fixed idea in their mind then our response, however correct in terms of our faith, may be seen to be less than expected or wanted. We have only to look at the reaction to the churches during this pandemic to see that, even to one weekly periodical seemingly running a campaign to that end – and no matter how many times we have pointed out it is only the building that is closed, and that the church is busier than ever, it seems for many who have no understanding, who see only a building closed that the church has sat back and done nothing, and that July 4<sup>th</sup> signifies the end of some luxury time off ... We know the reality, partners like the Trussell Trust know, local community groups also, just because we haven't compiled and posted lists on social media or nailed them to the doors of our buildings doesn't mean we haven't continued our work, and whilst we don't greet people saying “we come in the name of” – we **do** what we

do because we are shaped by the teaching of our faith and we don't turn that off and on as it suits us.

Unlike those who received the prophets, we don't look for or want a reward – but the courtesy of some understanding of who we are and what we do and why we do so would go a very long way.

Amen.

***We will now sing together, 'For the fruits of all creation'.***

### **Our prayers of Intercession.**

As the 'new normal' emerges,  
Less with hesitancy and more with haste,  
We pray for our country;

Living Lord,  
Change is never easy,  
It challenges and it can be fearful;  
We pray for those returning to work  
Who worry about risk,  
Who worry about government promises  
Which seem only to work on paper.

We pray for those who can't wait to return,  
Who have missed being with other people,  
Those for whom this time has been a challenge  
And one they do not wish to repeat.

Yet we are aware of those who must wait longer;  
We pray especially for our theatre industry,  
For those who bring joy to so many;  
For their skill, talent and amazing ability;  
For performers and producers,  
Musicians and maestros,

Actors and artisans,  
Singers and sound - engineers  
We miss them all –  
We pray for them, we understand  
Their real worries for the future.

In amongst all the joy of return,  
We pray for families still separated by country  
And regional government;  
We think of those shielding still,  
Many of whom feel forgotten-  
Lumped together under a label,  
Forgotten –  
Too big a responsibility right now,  
We pray for a plan,  
We pray for cohesive, well planned government,  
An end to false promises and  
Small concessions sold as big deals,  
We pray for unity – for trust – for hope.  
Amen.

**We say together the Lord's Prayer,**  
Our Father,  
Who art in heaven,  
Hallowed by 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.

Let us share remotely in the grace, to and for each other,  
May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
The love of God  
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
Be with us,  
And remain with us,  
Now and forever  
Amen.

Until we meet again, remember,  
you have never stopped working  
and serving.  
Amen.