

7 Aug 2022

Worship Sheet for Sunday 7 August **Always ready**

Slaves waiting for their absent Master to return, not knowing the day or the hour, tempted to play while the cat is away. It seems very strange, surreal to modern ears and yet the message is fairly simple: always be ready. Live life so that you will have no regrets – act as if Jesus is always with you (he is!) and live out of love, not fear.

Call: Unfailing. Indestructible. Giver of blessings, comfort for our fears, source of our joy; we turn our hearts to you and you meet us with grace upon grace. You are our treasure, and in you, our restless hearts find their home. We, your little flock, worship you.

Pray : God of abundance, forgive us when we live out of scarcity. God of adventure, forgive us when we live out of fear. God of risk, forgive us when we live out of safety. In our worship, may we encounter you as a God who invites us into abundance, into adventure and into risk for the sake of the world. In all our holding back, encourage us to venture farther than we imagine with your words “do not be afraid” ringing in our ears, assured that your stride matches ours every step of the way. Be near us not just as we worship in church or in our home but as we journey through life with all its ups and downs, when we are together with others, or when (humanly speaking) we are alone. Remind us that as our pathfinder you have blazed the trail for us and you come back to accompany us, guide us, protect us and to prepare us for all that lies ahead in life and beyond life. And with you we pray together Our Father...

Reading Luke 12:35-40 Watchful servants.

Thought Be prepared – you don't need to be a scout to realise that careful preparation can stand you in good stead, not just for a project but for life. It is far to be preferred (certainly for anything important) to “winging it”. But even the most meticulous preparation won't make up for a lack of interest in what we are doing. Markers can easily tell if a student is enthusiastic and interested in the material that they submit. You can tell when a knitting project has been a labour of love. And these things matter. The Master was away at a wedding (which might last days) and there was no telling when he might return, day or night. It was important that the servants continued their duties as if he were at home. There would be little sympathy if they were caught slacking. This passage has been used by Christian leaders in the past to instil a degree of fear. We do need to be faithful to Jesus but it's not as though he is a tyrant who longs to catch us out and inflict retribution on us. God LOVED the world so much – that was why he sent Jesus to be our Saviour. Our acceptance, our forgiveness is not dependent on our success, our qualifying. It is based on Jesus' love and grace. There was a real relationship between the Master in the passage and his servants – it was almost unheard of for a Master to treat his servants so kindly. The encouragement here is that we may seek to live in step with Jesus so that we might naturally benefit from his grace and blessing. He wants us to live our lives entirely in fellowship with him, knowing his love. Rather than worrying whether we might get caught out through a lapse at the wrong time, we should seek his help to walk faithfully in his steps throughout our lives BUT we can also rest secure in the knowledge that when we fail (and we all do) he is gracious and merciful and is quick to forgive. Be ready, be always ready but even the best of preparations can go awry – so when that happens rest in the love and grace of God in Christ.

Praise CH4 517 Fight the good fight

Pray Lord, we pray for all those places in the world, where your people live in fear. May your words “do not be afraid” accompany them, not as an admonition but as an anchor for hope. ay they see signs that assures them of your presence and of your love in the midst of struggle. And we, who have more than we need, may we hear your words “do not be afraid” as a challenge to use all that you have given us to bring peace, to bring healing, to spread love throughout the world. May we also be prepared to challenge all that traps people in poverty, all that deems some lives “less than” and all that seeks to limit and restrict the abundant

resources of the earth. May we not be afraid in our relentless pursuit of justice until all of creation is restored to beauty and all of your people dwell in peace and plenty. May we never give up hope that your will be done on earth. We commit to you those in need of your loving touch whether far or near and in our prayer walk this week we pray for those who live or work north to the Esk and beyond. SILENCE. Hear our prayers silent and spoken for Jesus' sake Amen.

Blessing May the Lord bless you. Amen.

Notices

- The Minister is to be on holiday. Anyone in urgent need of a minister should contact the Rev Ian Gray this week on 677126 or Rev Geoff Redmayne thereafter on 675634.

To assist those unable to access material via the internet we have established a phone line where people can phone in to hear the mini service or sermon. **No sermon recorded this week. Mini service as usual.**

01674 902624.

To hear the mini service people just need to dial in and wait. To hear the sermon, after dialling you need to press 1 then #. In either case there is a few seconds delay while the message loads so tell folk not to hang up! If folk press 1 for the sermon before the intro finishes the system doesn't pick up on it and it defaults to the mini service. The message now says wait until after the tone before pressing 1 but give it a few seconds after that and do press # after pressing 1.

Sermon, prayers and news (or links to them) will be uploaded to our website www.oldandstandrews.com and the Old and St Andrew's Facebook page. Feel free to copy this and pass it on to Church members or friends who might not use the web or social media

Please continue to pray for one another and support where you can and remember that the congregation is united in love wherever we are and however we are worshipping.

Stay safe! May the Lord bless you!

Ian

Rev Dr Ian A McLean