**Westfield 10.30 am 14th February 2021**

**Call to worship -** 2 Corinthians 4:5-6

For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. For God, who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ.

**Hymn No. M.P. 50 Be still for the presence of the Lord**

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

the Holy One, is here;

come bow before Him now

with reverence and fear:

in Him no sin is found

we stand on holy ground.

Be still, for the presence of the Lord,

the Holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord

is shining all around

He burns with holy fire,

with splendour He is crowned :

how awesome is the sight -

our radiant King of light!

Be still, for the glory of the Lord

is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord

is moving in this place:

He comes to cleanse and heal,

to minister His grace -

no work too hard for Him.

In faith receive from Him.

Be still, for the power of the Lord

is moving in this place.

Evans, David J © 1986 Kingsway's Thankyou Music – CCLI 150801

**Prayer and Lord’s Prayer**

Great and loving God, we can find ourselves wondering .. what happens next? Will everything go back to normal? And what does that even mean? What’s normal? Working has become more and more isolated, and socialising hard than ever despite the new technological ways of meeting. Some might think that the normal we had was not that good.

We are at a crossroads with an opportunity to take stock, take notice of you speaking to us and look for the changes that are needed for each one of us for body, for mind and for spirit.

You made us in your image and despite the changes all around us you are the constant one, the same yesterday, today and forever and we can depend on your presence with us and the power of your love surrounding and upholding us.

As we worship you today open our hearts and minds to the prompting of your Holy Spirit that we may hear your voice and respond to your call and may you be glorified in all we do as we serve you day by day. We ask all our prayers in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as we share together in the prayer he taught..

**The Lord’s Prayer**

**Notices, Mission Prayer, Dedication of the Offering**

**Reading Mark 9:2-9** The Transfiguration

**Hymn No. M.P. 37 As the deer pants for the water**

As the deer pants for the water,

so my soul longs after You.

You alone are my heart’s desire

and I long to worship You.

You alone are my strength, my shield,

to You alone may my spirit yield.

You alone are my heart’s desire

and I long to worship You.

I want You more than gold or silver,

only You can satisfy.

You alone are the real joy giver

and the apple of my eye.

You alone.....

You’re my friend and You’re my brother,

even though You are a king.

I love You more than any other

so much more than anything.

You alone.....

Words and music by Martin Nystrom CCLI 150801

**Sermon** The light of Christ - light for the world

What does it take for you and for me to really understand what God is trying to say to us?

Today’s reading was part of the struggle that Jesus had to help his disciples understand who he really was. Mark’s gospel is a gospel of action because it was written to Christians young in their faith who were being persecuted and scattered and there is an urgency about his writing to help them hold on their faith. To do that he recorded the events that showed how Jesus tried to lead his disciples along their road of discovery and faith.

In the previous chapter in Mark Jesus went to Caesarea Philippi with his disciples and there was that wonderful moment when, having asked who did people think Jesus was, he asked the disciples who they thought he was and Peter, inspired by the Holy Spirit, proclaimed that he believed Jesus was the Messiah. However, when Jesus then told the disciples that he was going to Jerusalem to die He had to rebuke Peter for trying to stop him. It clearly shows the way the disciples struggled with who Jesus was and so there was a real need for some sort of mountain-top experience that would make it more clear so Jesus took just three of them, Peter, James and John, perhaps the only ones he knew were ready for such an experience, and went up the mountain where he was transfigured before them. His clothes shone whiter than white and he was joined by Moses and Elijah, the great Law Giver and the prophet given the task of preparing the way of the Messiah. A clear confirmation of who Jesus was and of his role.. as a prophet bringing God’s word.. as a Priest offering the perfect sacrifice.. and as the Messiah fulfilling the Law and the Prophets by coming to free his people from their sins. A revelation of who Jesus was but only to the three and as they left the mountain Jesus commanded them to tell no one, not even the other disciples.

You might say it was easy for them to believe because they were there, they were eye witnesses to it but they still struggled with what Jesus said was going to happen and remember it was Peter who nearly began the uprising against the Romans when, in the garden of Gethsemane, he cut off the ear of one of the men come to arrest Jesus. As with the disciples, we don’t all understand the same things, we can read a passage and pick up different thoughts from it.. we can hear God saying different things through it. So what is God saying to us this morning from that passage?

**Is he saying something about light?** Are we needing his light to show us the safe passage through what might seem like the murky waters of the things we are unsure about? Are we looking for his light to warn us of the dangers if we take a particular path? The brightness of his transfiguration was not to dazzle the disciples but to shine through their darkness of doubt and lack of understanding and to let them see his beauty and perfection as the Messiah, the Son of God. It was a light to make clear who it was who was calling them to follow him.

**Is it about 3 out of twelve?** Is it a reminder that some of us are more clear than others about what we believe God is saying what ever path we believe we should follow and what ever decisions that would lead us to make?

**Is it a passage which reminds us of our need for different spiritual experiences?** I’m sure we will all have had those Mountain top experiences those times of great spiritual blessing which help to sustain us when we come back down to the valley and face the trials and tribulations as well as the joys of our daily lives. There will have been many high’s in the life of this fellowship and many challenges too. So as we look to the future does that mean we need another inspiring moment, another faith challenging event, another time of spiritual blessing, and if we believe we do then what sort of experience do we need to take us forward as a church?

**What sort of challenge are we ready for?**

Is the challenge God is setting for us about buildings or mission and how do those two things come together?

Is the challenge about money in struggling financial times or trusting in God’s provision?

Is the challenge about what we want or what we need as a church?

How do we see the challenge of the consequences of our decisions.. by the light of the current events going on in our world or the light of the Saviour of the world?

As we look forward to life getting a bit more back towards normal with the opportunity to come together for worship, prayer and bible study we will need to look to the future. However, making decisions about the future of the church is a responsibility that can make church exciting to be a part of and also daunting to face up to. So as we have come together this morning our worship is about acknowledging what a wonderful, merciful, forgiving, gracious and generous God he is and about preparing ourselves as together we prayerfully listen to God prompting each one of us and seek to faithfully respond in his way. We are on a journey together, and coming out of lockdown this year is another step on that road, so let us in the power of the Holy Spirit seek to find together what that next step may be.

**Prayers of Intercession**

Please use Neil’s Prayer Bulletin for the Intercessions.

**PRAYER BULLETIN 153: FEBRUARY 2021**

Thank you for your continued prayers for our church, our people and our community. Please include the following with your own prayers this month:

**WESTFIELD \ OUR FUTURE**

We thank and praise God that the life of our church continues, despite the pandemic. We remember that special encouraging scripture for Romans Chapter 8, verses 37 to 39:

***No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*** (NIV)

As Marjorie encouraged us in her Newsletter message this month we must remember through all our lives to trust and obey that Jesus and God will look after us, and we must keep trusting in them and obey their instructions.

Please keep using our important Church Mission Prayer - may be you can focus on one line each day of the week as we think about what this prayer means for our church and our community:

**God of Mission Who alone brings growth to your Church, Send your Holy Spirit to give Vision to our planning, Wisdom to our actions, and power to our witness.**

**Help our church to grow in numbers, In spiritual commitment to you, In service to our local community, And to increase in love and unity within the fellowship Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

(modified from LyCIG prayer)

Please keep praying for the friends and families that have been connected with our church through *Shine, Toddler Church, Brownies-Guides-Rainbows and Rangers, Faith and Food, Craft and Chat and Film Night*.

We pray for the Rev'd Jamie Kissack, the URC's Yorkshire Synod Moderator, as he leads our Synod. We pray for his and his families protection and all the work that goes on in the Yorkshire Office by the team there.

**WYKE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL**

Please remember the work and witness of each church in our community and especially in this latest lockdown period. We pray for all our church leaders as they are having to adapt in these ever changing times. We pray for their faith to be kept strong and that they will always be encouraged (like we should all be) through the inspired word of Father God found in scripture.

As always please keep the Wyke Foodbank in your prayers particularly with the challenges that Covid-19 has brought. We pray that everyone would sense the love and grace of Christ in the fine work that continues there, and that King Jesus would always receive the praise and honour from all the this fruitful work.

**MISSION AVIATION FELLOWSHIP (MAF)**

Prayers are from MAF’s January to March 2021 Prayer Diary - this months theme is about "Kindness":

* Praise God for His loving kindness to all the nations. The government in Guinea has approved the entry of aid workers into the country, and Emil and Margrit Kundig travelled there in 2020 to establish an MAF programme.
* Give thanks that MAF planes in programmes, such as South Sudan, Timor Leste and Arnhem Land have been able to resume normal flying operations in the wake of coronavirus. Ask God for many more flights and opportunities to reveal His loving kindness to the poor, the outcast and the vulnerable.
* Matthew 5:45 reminds us that our Father in heaven extends kindness to all by providing sun, rain, food and life. Pray that, through His great love, the offer of salvation will be accepted by many of the people we seek to serve in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region.
* Our programme in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo ministers to internally displaced people in camps containing more than 15,000 refugees. Pray that God will use our team through the conversations, acts of kindness, counselling and sewing classes that they provide.
* The Baptist minister Alexander Maclaren once said, *'Kindness makes a person attractive. If you would win the world, melt it, do not hammer it.'* Lord, give us the faith to win the world through prayer and the loving kindness we show by sharing the Gospel with those who dont know you. Pray for MAF's many missionary partners as they reach the remote and isolated with the love of Jesus.
* Ephesians 4:32 tells us, *'Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you*.' Consider what being 'kind' might look like to those around you, then jot down the names of anyone to whom you can show practical love. Then do so!

**PLEASE CONTINUE TO PRAY FOR GOD TO SEND US WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST. MATTHEW 9 VERSE 38**

**Hymn No. M.P. 16 All my hope on God is founded**

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 man 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.

Joachim Neander (1650-80) CCLI 150801

Blessing

May the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be with each one of us today and for ever more. Amen.