

## **ORDER OF SERVICE SUNDAY 13th February 2022**

Welcome to our Service this morning on this year's Racial Justice Sunday and the worship material which has the theme - What's it got to do with me?'

Is it something that on the whole people consider does not apply to them? I ask you this have you held a Racial Justice Sunday Service before? I have never delivered a Service of worship on this subject and I do not recall hearing one before.

### **Let us Pray**

Our call to worship for this morning

Ever present God,

You called us to be in relationship with one another and promised to dwell wherever two or three are gathered. In our community, we are many different people.

God our maker

You call us here to worship you together. To bear witness to to your creativity seen, heard and found in all who gather. We are all your children, bearing your divine image. Shaped by your imagination and breath.

You have gifted us with the beauty of difference

The blessing of diversity the pleasure of individuality and the bond of love and peace. We join together saying

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.  
Amen.

1st Hymn 166 Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all Joy

1st Reading Ephesians: 2:19-22

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to

become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

2nd Hymn 360 Jesus Christ is waiting

2nd Reading Acts 13: 1-3

Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

### **THOUGHT FOR THE DAY**

We are all one in Christ or are we (Ephesians 2:19-22)

In life, if we are honest with ourselves, we know all too well, that there are insiders and outsiders. The welcome mat is dusted off and laid out for some and not for others. Some people are accepted others rejected. If you know and experience acceptance, it is a nice and secure feeling. On the other hand, maybe you have experienced rejection and exclusion, and it's not so nice, its frustrating, disheartening, disillusioning and hurtful. We can equate with that to a degree when someone who had come into rural villages and even after 20, 30 or forty years later unless you were born there you are still referred to as an incomer – it can be expressed with these words 'Aye see these interlopers!'

But how does that feel when you are excluded, an outsider because of the colour of your skin, because you look different? We read in Ephesians of how we are all one in Christ. Interesting concept or a reality or non-existent when it comes to our Church communities? As we reflect on this passage from Ephesians and how God's word speaks to you, maybe we are thinking what significance does it have on Racial Justice Sunday? Perhaps we may think what has Racial Justice Sunday to do with us? The answer is everything. For it is about acceptance before God and acceptance of one another. How often have we heard the phrase 'We should all be one in Christ irrespective of the colour of our skin.'

We cannot use this phrase to our own ends when we use it to cover over uncomfortable discussions.

Jesus walked and shared by example, we are tasked to do the same, to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to go in faith in what unites not what divides. It is up to us as Christian communities to set a good example, to walk the talk, putting our faith into action in fighting racial injustice.

I moved from Kingussie to live in Bedford in 1963 and attended school there, it was a fascinating change from Kingussie. I went to school in Bedford and the pupils who attended were from many different countries, India, Pakistan, African countries and several European countries too, many of them came with their families to work at the brickworks. In Scotland we have that great saying 'Wur aw Jock Tamson's Bairns'. In faith 'Wur aw God's bairns – children of God. In Genesis 1:27 it says that we are all made in God's image, and as such there is only one race, the human race. We may have different skin colours, but we are one people. God does not have a problem with ethnic difference, some humans do, and the history of our world is sadly full of instances where people have been separated or treated unfairly on the basis of their skin colour.

3rd Hymn 263 God of freedom, God of Justice

### **Prayers of Intercession**

God our Maker, in whose image and likeness each of us has been created, with a human dignity worthy of respect. Listen to the cry that rises from every corner of this fragile earth, from our human family.

To world leaders and decision makers, grant the wisdom to reach beyond boundary and border. May our common humanity drive policy and foster peaceful dialogue and constructive collaboration.

To those who misuse their power or take power from others, through violent action or hateful speech. Grant mercy and grow in them a humble heart of compassion, peaceful dialogue and constructive collaboration. To the innocent ones robbed of dignity, possession, or shelter, to the victims of these forces who have had life taken from them, we entrust them in your everlasting arms, O God, that are wide enough to embrace all of your creation.

Amen

PRAYER FOR JUSTICE

Mighty, and everlasting God.

As Your people come into your presence, we are thankful for your graciousness, your mercy, and your love. We continue to remember all those adversely affected by the COVID pandemic, We pray that your Holy Spirit will be present with them, to comfort and to heal; to sustain and be reconciled, one with another.

On this special day, we remember the family of George Floyd, we remember all those who are hurting, disadvantaged, and impacted by racial prejudice. We also remember all those who have suffered at the hands of injustice, may your Holy Spirit be present with them, to comfort and to heal; to bring justice and reconciliation, one with another.

Faithful God, we commit this service into your hands, we pray for every participant and every listener, that you will empower them with your strength, that they might be courageous to say and do what is right and just, and that your good and glorious, magnificent and righteous name might be praised, we pray in the name of your selfless son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Amen

Our closing Hymn this morning is Hymn 694 Brother, sister let me serve you

## BENEDICTION

Go in the strength of God. And the blessing of God, Father Son and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you now and always.

Amen