

# Order of Service



**Eaglesfield 25th February 2024**

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## **Call to Worship**    People Of The Way

Come, people of The Way

Let all gather who walk in the light

And praise the Lord with heart and voice

Come those who seek the way

Find welcome out of the darkness

And open your hearts to the love of God

Come gather in that love

And let us blend our voices in praise

## Hymn

## CH4 515 Soldiers Of Christ Arise

Soldiers of Christ, arise, and put your armour on,  
Strong in the strength which God supplies through His eternal Son.  
Strong in the Lord of hosts, and in His mighty power,  
Who in the strength of Jesus trusts is more than conqueror.

Stand then in His great might, with all His strength endued,  
But take, to arm you for the fight, the panoply of God;  
To keep your armour bright attend with constant care  
Still walking in your Captain's sight and watching unto prayer

From strength to strength go on, wrestle and fight and pray,  
Tread all the powers of darkness down and win the well fought day.  
That, having all things done, and all your conflicts passed,  
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone and stand entire at last

## Approach

## Earthbound Citizens

Lord we praise you for all that we are  
You have made us and we are fearfully and wonderfully made  
You have given us intelligence and compassion.  
You have given us language and a sense of beauty  
You have given us a sense of right and wrong  
A sense of what is good  
You have made us in your image  
As your children - as citizens of your kingdom  
We are fearfully and wonderfully made  
And we praise your creative will that made us  
Your children - citizens of your kingdom  
That's what we are meant to be - what you made us to be  
So often though we embrace the values of this world  
We are beguiled by possessions  
Sometimes to the point we think a new gadget is so important to us  
More important than the needs of those who beg on our streets  
We are consumed by greed  
Sometimes to the point where we think that all's fair in business  
And that lying on our tax returns isn't really lying  
We divide your children into classes and races  
And we cleave to our own and fear the other  
Worrying that they may take our jobs  
We cling to our badges and our colours and our flags  
Our hearts are thrilled by the drums of war  
And we send to children into the fire of the gun  
Lord, we are meant to be citizens of your kingdom  
But often we cling to the values of this world  
Forgive us

Forgive us, cleanse us, renew us  
Fill our hearts with your Holy Spirit  
That we may truly be your children and citizens of your kingdom  
Living here and now by its values and principles

Caring for those in need  
Standing up for what is right and true  
Seeing all as our brothers and sisters  
Living in peace with others  
In all things following our example  
The touch of your kingdom on Earth  
Your son, our Lord Jesus Christ

## Address

## The Road Is Too Rough

The road is too rough," I said,  
"Dear Lord, there are stones that hurt me so."  
And He said, "Dear child, I understand,  
I walked it long ago."

"But there's a cool green path," I said;  
"Let me walk there for a time."  
"No child," He gently answered me,  
"The green path does not climb."

"My burden," I said, "Is far too great,  
How can I bear it so?"  
"My child," He said, "I remember the weight;  
I carried My cross, you know."

But I said, "I wish there were friends with me  
Who would make my way their own."  
"Oh, yes," He said, "Gethsemane  
Was hard to bear alone."

And so I climb the stony path,  
Content at last to know  
That where my Master had not gone,  
I would not need to go.

And strangely then I found new friends,  
The burden grew less sore;  
And I remember--long ago  
He went that way before.

## Hymn

## CH4 537 We Do Not Hope To Ease Our Minds

We do not hope to ease our minds  
By simple answers, shifted blame  
While Christ is homeless, hungry, poor  
And we are rich who bear his name  
As long as justice is a dream  
And human dignity denied  
We stand with Christ, disturb us still  
Till every need is satisfied

We cannot ask to live at peace  
In comfort and security  
While Christ is tried in Pilate's hall  
And drags his cross to Calvary  
As long as hatred stifles truth  
And freedom is betrayed by fear  
We stand with Christ; give us no peace  
Till his peace reigns in triumph here

We will not pray to be preserved  
From any depths of agony  
While Christ's despairing cry rings out  
God why have you abandoned me  
As long as we have hope to share  
Of life renewed beyond the pain  
We stand with Christ all through the night  
Till Easter morning dawns again



## Readings

### Romans 4:13-25

For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the righteousness of faith. If it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there violation. For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations") --in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become "the father of many nations," according to what was said, "So numerous shall your descendants be." He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith "was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now the words, "it was reckoned to him," were written not for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be reckoned to us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was handed over to death for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.

### Mark 8:31-38

Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them

to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

## Hymn

## CH4 527 Lord Make Us Servants

Lord make us servants of your peace  
Where there is hate may we sow love  
Where there is hurt may we forgive  
Where there is strife may we make one

Where all is doubt may we sow faith  
Where all is gloom may we sow hope  
Where all is night may we sow light  
Where all is tears may we sow joy

Jesus, our Lord, may we not seek  
To be consoled, but to console  
Nor look to understanding hearts  
But look for hearts to understand

May we not look for love's return  
But seek to love unselfishly  
For in our giving we receive  
And in forgiving are forgiven

Dying we live and are reborn  
Through death's dark night to endless day  
Lord make us servants of your peace  
To wake at last in Heaven's light

## **Intercession**

## **From A Spark To A Flame**

**Lord and Father come change our love**

*From a spark to a flame*

Father of all

There is so much wrong in the world

So much hurting, so much sorrow

Sometimes we despair that anything can be done

And so we limit our care

**Lord and Father come change our love**

For there are so many who need warmth of love

We think of the lonely and the forgotten

We think of the bereaved and those facing death

We think of those who are sick in mind or soul or body

We think of those who are broken by stress

As we hold them in our hearts

**Lord and Father come change our love**

For there are those who need the light of truth

We think of the exploited and the enslaved

We think of the outcasts and the homeless

We think of the poor and the hungry

We think victimised and the demonised

As we hold them in our prayers

**Lord and Father come change our love**

For there are those who need the fire of justice

We think of those who are sold and trafficked

We think of those who are beaten and tortured

We think of those who are caught up in violence

We think of those who are spat on because they are different

As we hold them in our thoughts

**Lord and Father come change our love**

For the world needs the warmth of love  
Send us, Lord, to be your touch of care  
And the world needs the light of truth  
Send us Lord to be your word to the world  
And the world needs the fire of justice  
Send us Lord to be your challenge of righteousness  
And when we become despairing or limit our care  
**Lord and Father come change our love**

All this we ask in the name of Jesus  
Who has kindled a fire in humanity, in our hearts  
Calling us to follow him  
In showing your love to all humanity  
In his name we ask  
**Lord and Father come change our love**

## Hymn

## CH4 535 Who Would True Valour See

Who would true valour see,  
let him come hither;  
one here will constant be,  
come wind, come weather;  
there's no discouragement  
shall make him once relent  
his first avowed intent  
to be a pilgrim.

Whoso beset him round  
with dismal stories,  
do but themselves confound;  
his strength the more is,  
No lion can him fright;  
he'll with a giant fight,  
but he will have a right  
to be a pilgrim.

Hobgoblin nor foul fiend  
can daunt his spirit;  
he knows he at the end  
shall life inherit.  
Then, fancies, fly away;  
he'll not fear what men say;  
he'll labour night and day  
to be a pilgrim.

## Sermon

## The Upward Climb

**But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.” (Mark 8:33)**

Twenty-odd years ago went to in Portugal and we visited the religious site of Bom Jesus. It's part of the pilgrimage trail that finishes up at Santiago de Compostella. I remember a massive church at the top of a hill. Leading up to the church was a stone staircase of twenty thousand step. At least that's what it felt like as we climbed. Still, I was younger then. And we didn't climb it the way that pilgrims climb it - on their knees.

Which must be pretty uncomfortable. At the time I didn't get it. It seemed a bit self-flagellatory. I mean, why would you do that. I mean, I know we're all sinners to some extent and I know that when we approach God we're supposed to accept that - especially in Lent. But still, they could surely have installed some escalators, right? Now maybe I get it a bit more - though I'm not sure my knees could take it these days.

Let's take our text this morning. Jesus has been teaching that he would have to suffer, be rejected and be killed. Peter takes him aside and says, “What are you talking about? Don't talk like that!” Maybe Peter has in mind a different outcome when they get to Jerusalem. Maybe he sees a triumphal entry of the Messiah into the city. Just before the passage we heard today Peter proclaimed Jesus as the Messiah. Maybe, in his mind, it's all going to be plain sailing. They'll rock up in Jerusalem and the crowds will flock to their cause. Easy. Jesus will take on his role as great High Priest and be proclaimed king - the successor of David. Easy. Then it'll be time to drive out the Romans. Easy. This is, after all, what a lot of Jews were expecting from the coming Messiah.

Jesus's response is shocking. He turns to Peter, the man he renamed as “The Rock” - the rock on which he will build his following, and says “Get behind me Satan!” That's a bit steep, isn't it? Maybe not. When Mark wrote about the

baptism of Christ he talked of him being driven into the desert to be tempted by Satan. The gospels of Matthew and Luke go into more detail about those temptations. “You’re hungry?”, asks Satan. “Turn those stones into bread.” Easy. “You want to convince folk you’re the Son of God? Jump from a high tower and bring in the angels to save you” Easy. You want to bring the world to God? I’ll give you an army to make it happen.” Easy.

But life isn’t easy. You know that. I know that. We all go through hard times. We all have tough choices to make sometimes. When God came into the world he shared the life of a human being and faced all the hard times we face; knew tougher choices than any of us here, I hope, will ever have to face, including going to the Cross for the salvation of humanity and, throughout his ministry, issued the challenge to his disciples: take up my cross and follow me. A challenge he makes to his disciples today.

Maybe we’ve forgotten that. Maybe we’ve made Christianity too easy. I remember when I first became a Christian and was attending communion classes and the Minister said that what was asked of me was that I read the Bible, that I come to church on a Sunday and that I contribute some of my cash to its work. Even then I found myself thinking, “Is that it? Read the book, plant my bottom on a pew and stump up the cash?” Where’s the challenge in that? Where’s the “Take up my cross and follow me” in that?

We talk about temptation, especially during Lent, and sometimes we think it’s all about the stuff we mostly avoid succumbing to - axe murder and that sort of thing. But perhaps the most insidious temptation - the temptation Peter offers to Jesus - is to take the easy way, to have an easy life, to not make the hard choices. I’m not sure I’ve always avoided that temptation. No. Strike that. I’m sure I haven’t. But when I have leant on God’s strength to do it, it’s made me stronger. I used to be a union rep and there were times when I had to face down my boss and just say, “You can’t do that.” That was never easy but every time I leant on God’s strength and did it it made me stronger.

We face choices in our everyday lives. Do we drop some food in a food bank or save up for an iPhone 14? Do we call out our friends when they are casually



hateful of those whose skin colour is different, or those with different beliefs, or those - heaven forbid - who support the wrong football team. Maybe that's the point of the staircase at Bom Jesus. The climb is supposed to be hard. The Christian life is supposed to be challenging - it's calling us after all to reach for Heaven, for God. It's supposed to make us climb. Not because we have to 'earn' our place in Heaven, but because we are supposed to yearn for it and to want to live here and now as its citizens

Every time we take up the Cross and stand up for what's right we take a step toward Heaven. We climb. With every time we trust in God in hard times we take a step toward Heaven. We climb. With every time we take the hard choice because it's the right thing to do we take a step toward Heaven. We climb. And maybe we do it on our knees because of all those times we succumbed to the temptation Peter offered Christ, but we climb.

We climb in the faith that when gather in glory we will look back and see that every time we did what was right - however hard that was - and every time we took up Christ's cross, we were light to the world and salt to the Earth. And we encouraged those around us to climb.

*Lord, we do not pray for an easy life, but for a life in which we reach for you.  
Step by step may we walk in the world bearing your Son's cross and so revealing  
him to others in us*

## Offering

## In Our Lord's Footsteps

Lord God

We try each day to walk in your son's footsteps

And we thank you that they're deep

Because he was weighed down by the cross

We thank you for his example

Of caring for the hurt; of loving the broken and the outcast

We thank you for all the blessings we have at your hands

Home and food; friends and family

Laughter, sympathy, love and song

So much – more than we could ever repay

We bring these offerings in thanksgiving

Bless them and bless us

Rededicate them and rededicate us

To your work in the world

To the building up of your church

To the bringing in of your kingdom

## Hymn

## CH4 513 Courage Brother, Do Not Stumble

Courage brother! do not stumble  
Though thy path be dark as night;  
There's a star to guide the humble:  
'Trust in God and do the right'  
Let the road be rough and dreary  
And its end far out of sight  
Foot it bravely; strong or weary  
'Trust in God and do the right'

Perish policy and cunning  
Perish all that fears the light!  
Whether losing, whether winning  
'Trust in God and do the right'  
Some will hate thee, some will love thee  
Cease from man, and look above thee  
'Trust in God and do the right'

Simple rule and safest guiding  
Inward peace and inward might,  
Star upon our path abiding -  
'Trust in God and do the right'  
Courage brother! do not stumble  
Though thy path be dark as night;  
There's a star to guide the humble:  
'Trust in God and do the right'

## **Benediction**

## **Do The Right**

Go now and trust in God

Trust in God and do the right

Because the world needs truth

The world needs justice

The world needs righteousness

And all of these are aspects of love

So go now to love everyone whose lives you touch