

# Who Knows Who You'll Meet?



**Eaglesfield 14th January 2024**

# Order of Service

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## **Call to Worship**    Encounter

God calls us to encounter him

As travellers on the road

Come let us gather and reach out for him in prayer

Come let us gather and reflect on his word

Come let us gather and praise him in song

Come let us encounter the Lord

Lifting our voices in worship

## Hymn

## CH4 713 Come All Who Look To God Today

Come, all who look to God today,  
Stretch out your hands, enlarge your mind,  
Together share his living way  
Where all who humbly seek will find.

Come, young and old from every faith,  
Bring all your treasures of prayer,  
Join the dynamic Spirit's breath  
To press beyond the truths we share.

Bring your traditions' richest store,  
Your hymns and rites and cherished creeds;  
Explore our visions, pray for more,  
Since God delights to meet fresh needs.

Come, trust in God and live in peace,  
Anticipate that final light  
When strife and bigotry shall cease,  
And faith be lost in praise and sight.

## Approach

## Encounter

Lord God we gather here in your presence  
We gather humbly before you  
Because you are all that is perfect while we are not  
Far from it.  
We gather hoping to catch a glimpse of you  
To encounter you here in this place  
You whose love is perfect  
Whose truth is perfect  
Whose justice is perfect  
Knowing that we sometimes know hate rather than love  
That we sometimes lie, or at least are evasive in our truths  
That we look on the injustices of the world  
And shrug and say, it's the way things are'.  
Father forgive us

You came to us in Christ, your Son  
That we may encounter you as one of us  
He taught us who we are, what we are meant to be  
In simple parables of everyday life  
Of farmers, fathers and fishermen  
But sometimes we ignore his teachings  
We refuse to carry our cross  
We imagine we can serve two masters  
And chase after wealth at the cost of another's poverty  
We do not walk in his footsteps  
Father, forgive us

Forgive us and open our hearts and minds  
That we may encounter your Holy Spirit  
Ever living in this world  
Calling us onward and upward  
To greater love, greater truth, greater justice  
Guiding us as we walk our way in the world

Ever more closely in the path of your son  
Who taught us these words of prayer

## Address

## Encounters On The Road

I set out seeking Jesus  
For I'd cracked the Bible Code  
I'd read the texts like ancient maps  
And set out on the road

I came upon a homeless man  
Shivering in the cold  
I pay Council Tax to see to that  
I passed him on the road

I came upon a hungry man  
His face was gaunt and grey  
But I give a lot to charity  
So I passed him on the way

I came upon an injured man  
He was clearly in distress  
But I just kept on walking  
And trusted the NHS

I came upon a refugee  
Behind a barbed wire fence  
But I'd put some clothes in a plastic bag  
And that was recompense

At last I came to Jesus  
My heart just overflowed  
And said, with haunting déjà vu  
"Did I pass you on the road?"

## Hymn

## CH4 606 Lord You Sometimes Speak In Wonders

Lord, You sometimes speak in wonders,  
Unmistakable and clear;  
Mighty signs to prove your presence,  
Overcoming doubt and fear.

Lord, You sometimes speak in whispers,  
Still and small and scarcely heard;  
Only those who want to listen  
Catch the all-important word.

Lord, You sometimes speak in silence,  
Through our loud and noisy day;  
We can know and trust you better  
When we quietly wait and pray.

Lord, You sometimes speak in scripture,  
Words that summon from the page,  
Shown and taught us by Your Spirit  
With fresh light fo every age

Lord, You always speak in JESUS,  
Always new, yet still the same;  
Teach us now more of the Saviour;  
Make our lives display His name.



## Readings

### 1 Samuel 3:1-10

Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. Then the LORD called, "Samuel! Samuel!" and he said, "Here I am!" and ran to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call; lie down again." So he went and lay down.

The LORD called again, "Samuel!" Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." But he said, "I did not call, my son; lie down again."

Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, "Here I am, for you called me." Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

### Psalm 139:1-6

O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it.

### John 1:43-51

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth."

Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

## Hymn

## CH4 542 Lord Speak To Me That I May Speak

Lord, speak to me that I may speak  
In living echoes of your tone;  
As you have sought, so let me seek  
Your erring children lost and lone.

O lead me, Lord, that I may lead  
The wandering and the wavering feet;  
O feed me, Lord, that I may feed  
Your hungering ones with manna sweet.

O strengthen me, that while I stand  
Firm on the rock, and strong in you,  
I may stretch out a loving hand  
To wrestlers with the troubled sea.

O teach me, Lord, that I may teach  
The precious things which you impart;  
And wing my words, that they may reach  
The hidden depths of many a heart

O fill me with your fullness, Lord,  
Until my very heart overflow  
In kindling thought and glowing word,  
Your love to tell, your praise to show.

O use me, Lord, use even me,  
Just as you will, and when, and where,  
Until your blessed face I see,  
Your rest, your joy, your glory share.

## **Intercession**

## **Children Of Your Love**

**We are children of your love**

*Shine through us*

Sometimes we look around us and the world seems such a mess

There's violence and division

There's pain and suffering

Sometimes it all seems so overwhelming that we just want to hide away

As your son's followers did at Pentecost

But your Holy Spirit touched them and reminded them who they were

**We are children of your love**

We look around us and folk are suffering

Through illness or age

Through broken relationships

Through stress and strain

Some are facing death or have lost loved ones

Some are known to us, some aren't

Some we name before you now

We care about those who suffer and ask you to comfort and heal them

We can smile and touch and care

**We are children of your love**

We look around us and there's injustice

There are folk who are exploited in their poverty

Or traded like cattle

There are kids who spend their twilight days sewing shoes

There are women and girls who turn tricks in slavery

We care about justice and we ask you to make this a just world

We can speak up for the silenced and we can choose what we buy

**We are children of your love**

We look around us and there's conflict

There are wars that rage across nations  
There are sectarian tensions that divide communities  
There is crime that shatters lives  
All come down to people weeping over loss and living in fear  
We care about peace and we ask you to heal the world's divisions  
We can speak peace to those around us, and we can show tolerance  
**We are children of your love**

We look around us and there's loneliness  
The loneliness of the outcast  
The loneliness of the beggar  
The loneliness of the forgotten  
The victims of a world that so often doesn't care  
We care for the lonely and ask you to be their friend in times of trouble  
We can touch the lives of others, we can befriend the lonely  
**We are children of your love**

We look around us and pray for your church  
We are the body of your Son on Earth  
Each of us meant to make a difference in the world  
Strengthen us and be with us  
**We are children of your love**

This we ask through your Son  
Our saviour, our guide, our teacher who taught us  
**We are children of your love**

## Hymn

## CH4 510 Jesus Calls Us Here To Meet Him

Jesus calls us here to meet him  
as, through word and song and prayer,  
we affirm God's promised presence  
where his people live and care.  
Praise the God who keeps his promise;  
praise the Son who calls us friends;  
praise the Spirit who, among us,  
to our hopes and fears attends.

Jesus calls us to confess him  
Word of Life and Lord of all,  
sharer of our flesh and frailness  
saving all who fail or fall.  
Tell his holy human story;  
tell his tales that all may hear;  
tell the world that Christ in glory  
came to earth to meet us here.

Jesus calls us to each other:  
Vastly different though we are  
Creed and colour, class and gender  
Neither limit nor debar  
Join the hand of friend and stranger;  
join the hands of age and youth;  
join the faithful and the doubter  
In their common search for truth.

Jesus calls us to his table  
rooted firm in time and space,  
where the church in earth and heaven  
finds a common meeting place.  
Share the bread and wine, his body;  
share the love of which we sing;

share the feast for saints and sinners  
hosted by our Lord and King.

## Sermon

## Who Knows Who You'll Meet?

**Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." (John 1:46)**

Some of you may be old enough to remember Peter Cook and Dudley Moore back in the 1960s and early 70's. They used to do sketches known as the Dagenham Duologues: two ordinary guys engaged in surreal conversations. I remember a snatch of one where Peter Cook says, "I heard this scrabbling sound outside my bedroom window. I looked out and climbing up the drainpipe, blinking Greta Garbo." Like I said. Surreal. But here's the thing; Garbo is no longer with us but let's take someone who is. Taylor Swift is real. She's alive. That means she has to be somewhere. The chances of that somewhere being the drainpipe outside your bedroom are extremely small, but technically not zero.

You never know who you'll meet when you step out of your door. You never know who you might engage in conversation at the checkout at Tesco, or on the train, or whatever. These days you don't even have to step out of the door. Through the internet - social media and the like - you can come into contact with people all over the world. My son does a lot of online gaming and he has friends now around the globe. You never know who you might meet online.

Nathanael really had no idea who he was going to meet when Philip took him to meet Jesus. Sure, Philip had told him it was the Messiah but his expectations aren't too high. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" he asks. I've read about on this. There's no agreement about what he means. Galileans were looked down on by pious Jews because lots of Gentiles lived there, but Nathanael himself lived in Cana. Maybe the reputation of Nazareth was especially dodgy. Whatever the case he's not convinced he's going to meet the Messiah. But then, you never know who you're going to meet.

He's going to meet Jesus. He is going to meet the Christ in whom God came into the world in the life of a human being. He is going to meet the man in whom God came into this world to meet us where we are; to meet us in our weakness and our flaws; to accept the physical frailties of humanity and meet us in our



darkest moments, including facing death itself, to assure us that he is always with us and offer us the hope of the resurrection. This is a Greta Garbo moment. No one imagined this would happen. No one foresaw this. No one - not the most ardent prophets of the Messiah - foretold that God would come to us in this way.

So Nathanael meets Jesus and it changes his life. But that was all a long time ago. What of here and now. You never know who you're going to meet and sometimes you meet a person who changes your life. Sounds dramatic but we all know it's true. Anyone who's ever fallen in love knows it's true. Conversely anyone who has been severely bullied knows it's true.

Sometimes the influence of people you meet is subtle but life-changing. From about the age of 10 I decided that there was no God and I identified as an atheist. I thought I was clear about what God was and what Christianity was about. Then I went to university and my first real girlfriend was an active Christian and talking to her I came to understand that for her God was not an abstract concept but a living reality; as real to her, as she put it, as the chair, the desk, the bed.

Then there was the friend I made when I moved to Lockerbie. We'd sit in the King's Arms drinking of an evening and talking about all sorts of things. He is a devout Catholic so we'd get talking about religion and I came to understand that Christianity isn't just a bunch of superstitions but a coherent set of ideas and beliefs that inform the way he lives his life. Between them these two people, and others rearranged my mental furniture.

That meant that when I met God one night when I was 24 the ground had been prepared. I'm not sure how far they are aware of how they fulfilled the role of Philip for me and brought me to meet the Messiah; the Christ. The last person, I suppose, I ever expected to meet. But you never know who you'll meet or how they will influence you or, more importantly, how you will influence them.

That's what we do as human beings. We are social animals. We interact with each other. We influence each other. We communicate ideas to each other. Not just in the things we say but in the things we do; the values we stand by; the beliefs we embody; the standards we hold ourselves to. To encounter Christ is to

encounter the love of God; a love that enfolds us all the days of our lives and assures us that we matter in a world that often seems uncaring and chaotic. A love that we are meant to share with the world around us.

A love that we are meant to share with those we meet, whether it's face to face or through the internet or whatever. A love we can share by following the teachings of Christ: by doing what we can to ensure that the hungry are fed and that the homeless are sheltered and that the stranger is welcomed. By offering that supporting hand on the shoulder of someone who feels lonely or lost or taking the time to listen to their grief. By standing up for what is right even if it's unpopular or inconvenient. By living our faith openly and confidently as children of God. You never know who you'll meet but maybe, by living our lives in Christ, people may meet Christ in us.

*Lord when people meet us, may they meet your son in us. May they know that they are loved through us and may they come to know that they matter to you.*

## Offering

## Place Of Meeting

Lord we thank you  
We thank you for times of meeting with you  
When you challenge us with the troubles of the world  
When we find you in the face of a stranger  
When you touch our hearts in the needs of others  
We thank you for the coming of your Son  
In whose teachings we hear you  
Whose life death and resurrection bring us home to you  
We than you for your Holy Spirit  
Touching our hearts and minds  
We thank you for all the blessings we have at your hand  
For love of family friends and strangers  
For food and flavour, sound and song  
For the times we gather together in laughter  
Or meet each other in sorrow  
We bring these offerings to this place of meeting  
And we bring our whole selves  
Bless them Lord and bless us  
Rededicate them Lord and rededicate us  
To making your Church a time and a place of meeting  
Where those we meet may encounter your love

## Hymn

## CH4 448 Shine Jesus Shine

Lord, the Light of Your Love is shining,  
In the midst of the darkness shining,  
Jesus, Light of the World, shine upon us,  
Set us free by the truth You now bring us,  
Shine on me. Shine on me.

*Shine, Jesus shine,*

*Fill this land with the Father's glory.*

*Blaze, Spirit blaze,*

*Set our hearts on fire.*

*Flow, river flow,*

*Flood the nations with grace and mercy.*

*Send forth Your word,*

*Lord and let there be light.*

Lord I come to Your awesome presence,  
From the shadows into Your radiance.  
By the blood I may enter Your brightness,  
Search me, try me, consume all my darkness.  
Shine on me. Shine on me.

As we gaze on Your kindly brightness.  
So our faces display Your likeness.  
Ever changing from glory to glory,  
Mirrored here may our lives tell Your story.  
Shine on me. Shine on me.

**Benediction**            **God's Welcome**

You are God's welcome

A smile in the world is a welcome

An offered hand is a welcome

A word of love is a welcome

These God has given you

Go now to be God's welcome to his glory