

**Kingswood Tea Service 4pm via Zoom - 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021** (Lent 5, lead-up to national day of reflection on 23<sup>rd</sup> March) **Rev Christine Fox**

**Welcome and call to worship** God spoke through Jeremiah – the days are coming when I will make a new covenant with my people... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts... they will all know me, from the least to the greatest. (Jeremiah 31:31,33,34)

Today's songs are chosen from the most popular of this past year  
**Bless the Lord O my soul (10,000 reasons)**

***Prayer of praise***

*Lord God, we worship your holy Name – our hearts sing of our love for you. Your love shines out from the beauty of each new day, and every new day reminds us of your constant love for us. You have brought us through days of darkness as well as days of light; we thank and praise you for inspiring and encouraging us through the love and care of others, and the presence and example of your beloved son Jesus. Lord you are with us now, you have walked with us in the past and we trust you for all that is to come. Amen.*

This Tuesday there will be a national day of reflection - 1 minute of silence at noon and from 8pm lighting up our doorsteps with phones and torches shone into the sky. Some will tie yellow ribbons round trees 'to reflect on our collective loss, celebrate the lives of the people no longer here, support those bereaved and look towards a much brighter future'. Today we begin to prepare ourselves for this process of reflection in our worship together.

**Readings – Hebrews 5:5-10  
John 12:20-33**

**Message**

Earlier this week I saw a cartoon on Facebook of Pooh bear and Piglet hand in hand, going for a walk – the caption read “Cherish every moment and every person in your life because you never know when will be the last time you see someone”. That has been brought home to us all, more than ever over this last year, for some of us even this week. That word ‘cherish’ doesn't just mean smile to yourself when you think of these people in your life – it will also mean putting yourself out for them – taking time out for their benefit, a giving of little things and sometimes bigger sacrifices. And every time someone takes even a small step of unselfishness, once again we see a person who has God's law of love written on their heart.

God said right back in the time of Jeremiah that there would be a time when this would happen – and that time was when God came to earth in Jesus – Jesus who chose suffering, not only on the cross but in every selfless act of care and healing, words of wisdom that built people up not tearing them down. And seeing this example of selfless suffering writes God’s law of love on our hearts – giving *us* hearts for justice and an end to the needless suffering of those who haven't chosen it, inspiring carers and healers, politicians and teachers, and more. Chosen suffering in response to the uncalled-for suffering of others.

This week’s National Day of Reflection will be a time to look back on a difficult year; to think on suffering of all different kinds for many – be it from sickness or bereavement, either long hours of work or loss of work, loss of contact with loved ones or too much contact for some families all shut in at home. But we will also reflect on the ones who have overcome suffering, and the ones who have given up aspects of their lives for others. We all know some of those whose selflessness has made such a difference either to us or to those we know.

What is their inspiration? For some it will be the example of another’s reaction to suffering; for us we have Jesus – not only as an example, but as a living presence, giving us inspiration and strength in the face of suffering to learn obedience to God’s law of love, as he did. If you need any more encouragement, hear Jesus’ promise – ‘*Anyone* who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life’.

So, a question to ask yourselves – do you love your life here and now so much that it stops you giving of your life to cherish those that ‘you never know when will be the last time you see’, this side of heaven? No, I didn’t think so – but we can all use a little reminder sometimes to take every opportunity to show some love while we’ve got the chance. Hand in hand with Jesus, walk his way with him.

**Amen**

**Reflection time** – take a minute to start to reflect back over the year – the ones who have suffered and also the ones overcoming suffering.

**StF 693 Beauty for brokenness**

***Prayers for others*** -

Be silent between sentences for your own reflection.

In the presence of Christ our Healer, Saviour and Friend, let us pause in the midst of life to remember... the ones we’ve lost, the ones who are still sick, the ones whose lives have been changed forever.

Let us pause in the midst of life to remember... the ones who are worried, the ones who've worked and worked, the ones who feel forgotten.

Let us pause in the midst of life to remember... the ease with which we hugged one another, the family gatherings and evenings with friends, the matches, gigs, concerts, films, and holidays.

Let us pause in the midst of life and reach for hope... hope for those who mourn, hope for those who are tired or anxious, hope for those who are bored and hope for ourselves  
in Jesus' Name we pray. **Amen**

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

**StF 470 Lord for the years your love has kept and guided**

### ***Blessing***

Deep peace of the running wave to you. Deep peace of the flowing air to you. Deep peace of the quiet earth to you. Deep peace of the shining stars to you. Deep peace of the gentle night to you; moon and stars pour their healing light on you. Deep peace of Christ, the light, to you.

**Amen**