

26 Feb 2023

Worship Sheet for Sunday 26 February Affirm for service

We are accustomed to a congregation affirming ministers at their ordination. We do it for students graduating. Here God affirms Jesus at his baptism and as he embarks on his ministry – including the temptations. We look at the importance of affirmation and encouragement.

Call: In the doubts we have; In the lives that we lead; In the business of our days; In our longing for quiet; Here in this place; God is with us. So let us worship here. God is with us.

Pray : Lord, thank you for the wonderful truth that you love us, that you long to give to us so much of what you gave to Jesus your Son, our Saviour. You want to affirm us and equip us and encourage us to serve you. Take from us our reticence to follow your lead, the stubbornness that rears its head and insists either that we don't want to serve or that we're not capable. Open our hearts to your affirmation and encouragement; release the potential which is within all of us so that we may truly live lives which advance your purposes of love – and that we enjoy doing it – finding true fulfilment and blessing. Forgive us our failings including our lack of faith – pick us up, dust us down and embrace us by your Spirit that we may truly enjoy that relationship of love with you that you enjoy with Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Deepen our love for you and for our sisters and brothers in Christ and help us to share that love with our families, friends and the community at large. And hear us as together we pray: Our Father
Reading Mark 1:9-13 Jesus baptism and temptations.

Thought Mark doesn't waste his words. He wants to get to the nub of the issue and he wants to move his story along. In a handful of verses he tells us about Jesus' baptism, the Father's affirmation of Jesus and his ministry, the Holy Spirit's blessing and the temptations in the desert! There is no denying that while Jesus was "on his own" for periods – esp in the desert temptations and later on the cross – he knew the power and presence of God – he was affirmed and encouraged. We tend to distance ourselves not only from Jesus' challenges (and equipping) but also from those who are specially set apart for ministry. Actually, we are all called to serve and God wants to affirm and encourage each and every one of us in our service for him whatever form that takes. When people tell me that they don't feel they have anything to offer, I often reply that they have two things that are greatly in demand in Christian service – the ability to make a cuppa and offer words of encouragement! Hospitality and encouragement are powerful gifts that can be of enormous benefit to us as we engage in serving God and others for his sake. Don't run yourself down, don't despise the "little things" – it's not ONLY a cup of tea or coffee, it's not ONLY offering a listening ear or a few words – it can be the gift of God that a weary or downhearted friend needs to sustain them in service. YOU are servant of God – there's work for you to do, perhaps not the same as your neighbour or me, but important work for the kingdom nevertheless! Affirmation and encouragement for service – perhaps in the guise of a cup of tea and a few helpful words.

Praise CH4 595

O Breath of life.

Pray We applaud and comment favourably on the wild landscapes of some of our native lands – even in Angus. There's many a soul who has said they feel closer to you, Lord in those parts – away from the hustle and bustle of noisy towns and endless demands on our time and attention. Was that why Jesus retreated into the wilderness – to seek peace and quiet, to listen more clearly to you, to sense your will and purpose and to receive affirmation and encouragement for the difficult road that lay ahead of him? Is that we should be doing more of – whether up in the hills and glens or in the stillness of the moments nearer home? We pray for those who need peace and quiet – who need strength and patience – amid the trying times of family life, overly pressured job, stresses and strains among friends, with the church. We pray for us to be more open to give and receive affirmation and encouragement in our every day living and especially as we seek to live for Jesus and be salt and light in our community. We pray for those whose lives are fraught with danger – not only the victims of terrorism and tragedy which hits the headlines but the victims of greed, violence and

manipulation the world over – and yes, locally too. We pray for those who more than most are feeling things are getting on top of them, that they simply can't cope. Open us up to one another that these concerns can be shared and talked about. Maybe not a problem shared, a problem halved but still an opportunity for exploring solutions and supporting one another while we do. Give grace, compassion and understanding to all those in positions of authority, whose decisions impact, sometimes greatly and adversely, on others that they may remember that their calls affect real people – people with families, with feelings, people who matter – people you love. We pray for all who could do with affirmation and encouragement just now. May we be more sensitive to that and seek it from you to pass on as well as for ourselves. In our prayer walk we pray for those who live or work in or use Waterside Road and Trail Terrace. SILENCE. Affirming and encouraging God, hear and answer our prayers, spoken and silent, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Blessing May the Lord bless you. Amen.

Notices

To assist those unable to access material via the internet we have established a phone line where people can phone in to hear the mini service or sermon.

01674 902624.

To hear the mini service people just need to dial in and wait. To hear the sermon, after dialling you need to press 1 then #. In either case there is a few seconds delay while the message loads so tell folk not to hang up! If folk press 1 for the sermon before the intro finishes the system doesn't pick up on it and it defaults to the mini service. The message now says wait until after the tone before pressing 1 but give it a few seconds after that and do press # after pressing 1.

Sermon, prayers and news (or links to them) will be uploaded to our website www.oldandstandrews.com and the Old and St Andrew's Facebook page. Feel free to copy this and pass it on to Church members or friends who might not use the web or social media

Please continue to pray for one another and support where you can and remember that the congregation is united in love wherever we are and however we are worshipping.

Stay safe! May the Lord bless you!

Ian

Rev Dr Ian A McLean