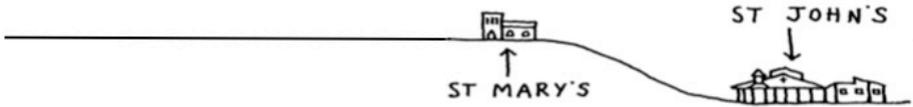


SIMPLY DEEP THANKSGIVING SERVICE

“A Celebration for Everyone”



Our Thanksgiving Service ***“Simply Deep: A celebration for Everyone”***

The vision for this service is summed up in its title. This service is a celebration. For everyone. We will be celebrating with our thanksgiving families for the gift of their children. We will be celebrating the amazing grace God has shown us in Jesus through the communion. We will be celebrating with the families whose children have recently joined the church through baptism. This service is a celebration.

Welcome + Notices

This is the initial contact. First impressions count and we want everyone ("regular" church family, "fringe" church family, and guests) to feel welcomed, valued and included. So our welcome and notices will be short and upbeat - introducing the "flavour" and giving the essentials.

Peace

We go straight into the Peace as it is a good way of continuing that welcome, of breaking down barriers and introducing each other to one another.

The creche is open from now, for those with little ones to make use of as they need it.

Song 1 *Hosanna (Praise is Rising)*

Song 2 *Great Big God*

The instruments will be available (and encouraged) from this point for anybody to use in these two songs.

The first and second song will be chosen according to its ability to help cement the celebratory tone that will run throughout the service.

The style of these first two songs - their upbeat, praiseful, engaging and joinability - will enable all of us, children and adults (both guests and regulars), to feel like we belong in the service and at the same time, praise our heavenly Father.

Affirmation of Faith

At the outset we will be declaring our belief in God. Although the style of the service is different to what we may be used to, it is the same God who we are worshipping. It is the same God who is present.

Thanksgiving + Giving of the Gospel

This is key point in the service. It is here that we introduce the families and children who will be getting baptized up at St Mary's in the near future. This is where we get to thank God for the gift of the children, pray a blessing over them (and their parents) and commit ourselves to supporting them as they seek to raise children of faith.

Family/s return to seats

[Telling the] Story (aka. Reading)

Jesus told stories. For good reason. Stories capture the heart and the imagination. So we shall imitate our Lord. We shall tell his story in an interactive, engaging, accessible way.

[Kids leave for craft/ activity (based on service theme)]

The kids will leave with the story fresh in their mind, to go and engage in a craft or game that is relevant to what they have just heard and will help to hook the story deeper in their mind.

Sermon

Truth can be simple and deep at the same time. This is where we will attempt to engage with the story in an accessible way that will touch our lives and draw us closer to God.

Prayers/ Intercessions

This is our time to talk with God....

Song *Bless The Lord Oh My Soul*

Song *This Is Amazing Grace* *[Table prepared]*

The two songs are here to help us transition our hearts and minds; as we respond to God's Word that we have just heard and anticipate meeting Him at The Table, we refocus our hearts on Jesus, reminding ourselves of who it is we worship, who it is we come to, whilst the tempo of the two songs help us to do this with joy, gladness and celebration.

(During the second song the Table will be prepared and the kids will rejoin the service.)

[Kids return]

Prayer of Penitence/ Confession

Once the kids have returned, we all confess together our shortcomings and failures and ask for God's mercy. We wait for the kids to return so that those who are able to join us at the communion table have had the chance to prepare themselves appropriately with the rest of us.

Absolution

At this point the Presider declares over all, the mercy and grace and forgiveness that is ours in Christ Jesus.

Eucharistic Prayer (Prayer 2)

The Church of England has recently authorized two new forms of the Communion prayer that are more child and family friendly. This form - prayer 2 - has its roots in the traditional Jewish Passover, where there is much more interaction between everyone.

We shall have three kids ask a question each. Each question is met with a response by the congregation, and the answer is given by the Presider.

Whilst the Presider is answering the question, the children will be building a visual picture of the answer by placing magnetic pictures onto a board that will hang off the front of the altar.

Lord's Prayer

At the end of the Eucharistic prayer we join together in saying the prayer Jesus taught us to pray.

Breaking the Bread

The presider breaks the bread - signifying how Christ's body was broken so that we may have relationship with God.

Invitation

We will all then be invited to come to the Lord's table to receive communion or a blessing - if you come for a blessing, a prayer will be said, words will be spoken, asking God to add to your life.

Song *Thank you for the Blood*

Normally, this is seen as a time of reflection.

However, we will be choosing a louder, more upbeat, song of praise.

The focus of the song will help us to stay engaged in the celebration of what Jesus offers us through the communion, whilst the volume of the song will cover the noise that children inevitably make - helping those families with children feel like they too can engage themselves with what is happening rather than worrying about whether or not their children are distracting others.

You will be invited to stand and join in with the song before you go to the table, as well as to continue to praise and celebrate what his death has given us by rejoining the church family in singing our thanks to Jesus when you return to your seat (you may remain standing or sit).

Prayer After Communion

The Presider will end our celebration at the Table by leading us in a prayer of thanks.

Presentation of Baptism Certificates

The final act of celebration within this service contains the Presentation of Baptism certificates. We have specially invited the families who have had their child/children baptised up at St Mary's Church, to come back to join us - in the first Thanksgiving service after their baptism - to collect their certificate.

This is so we can bless them one more time by celebrating with them, what they have done, and making them feel welcomed, valued and loved once more.

Also, we hope, that giving them a second chance to come back they will enjoy the welcome and friendliness that St John's offers, and will want to come back to encounter God's amazing grace and love again and again.

Final Blessing

A final blessing is pronounced over all of us - you cannot be too blessed.

Final Song *Happy Day*

This final song will be an upbeat and celebratory song.

Its lyrics sum up well what Jesus has done for us and who we are because of him. Its tone fits perfectly with the celebratory and praiseful feel we are aiming for.

I know most of us are British... and Anglican... but I encourage you to stand and join in unreservedly with this song - if you want to clap, feel free to do so... if you don't want to clap, that is okay too.

Finally, I want to say thank you for all your support and encouragement as we embark on this new format service, and I hope and pray that through it you will discover a new facet of God's radical love and faithful grace.