

**Winchester, Eastleigh and Romsey Circuit  
Service at Home  
1st February 2026**  
Prepared by Rev John Archer

**Call to Worship**

“Wonderful news for the peacemakers. You’ll be called God’s children” Matt 5 : 9

**Read pray or sing StF 276**

[Lift High the Cross \(Singing the Faith 276, StF276\)](#)

Lift high the Cross, the love of Christ proclaim  
till all the world adore his sacred name.

- 1 Follow the path on which our Captain trod,  
our King victorious, Christ the Son of God:
- 2 Each new-born soldier of the Crucified  
bears on their brow the seal of him who died:
- 3 Led on their way by this triumphant sign,  
the hosts of God in conquering ranks combine:
- 4 From farthest regions let them homage bring,  
and on his cross adore their Saviour King:
- 5 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,  
as thou hast promised, draw the world to thee:
- 6 Set up thy throne, that earth's despair may cease  
beneath the shadow of its healing peace:

*Michael Robert Newbolt (1874-1956) and  
George William Kitchin (1827-1912)*

**Prayers**

Sovereign God we have come to worship you,  
to declare your faithfulness,  
to acknowledge your majesty  
and to marvel at your love.  
We are here to seek mercy,  
to confess our mistakes,  
to recognise our weaknesses  
and to ask for your pardon.  
We are here to pray for ourselves, our world  
and one another  
We come to receive, hungry to hear you,

thirsty to know you better, longing to be filled  
Sovereign God accept this time of worship and  
help us, through it, to draw nearer to you.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

**Pray the Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**Read the 3 set lessons for today**

Micah 6 : 1 – 8

Matthew 5 : 1 – 12

I Corinthians 1 \_ 18 – 25

**Read pray or sing StF 713**

[Show me how to stand for justice. Lyric Video \(StF 713\)](#)

- 1 Show me how to stand for justice:  
how to work for what is right,  
how to challenge false assumptions,  
how to walk within the light.  
May I learn to share more freely  
in a world so full of greed,  
showing your immense compassion  
by the life I choose to lead.
- 2 Teach my heart to treasure mercy,  
whether given or received --  
for my need has not diminished  
since the day I first believed:  
let me seek no satisfaction  
boasting of what I have done,  
but rejoice that I am pardoned  
and accepted in your Son.

3 Gladly I embrace a lifestyle  
modelled on your living word,  
in humility submitting  
to the truth which I have heard.  
Make me conscious of your presence  
every day in all I do:  
by your Spirit's gracious prompting  
may I learn to walk with you.

*Martin Leckebusch (b. 1962)*

## **Sermon**

### **Text**

“What does the Lord require of us?”

This sentence from Micah applies to all the 3 Bible passages set for today.

### **Micah**

One thing we know God does not require, as an act of worship, is the slaughter of bullocks! But it was not crystal clear to the people of Micah's day. Temple worship centred on the sacrificial offering. When Micah cried it was no good expecting to get right with God merely by bringing offerings, he was attacking the accepted tradition head on, challenging the wealthy, the priests and the struggling peasant farmers. Here we are faced with 2 entirely different ways of looking at things. On the one hand there was the deeply engrained belief that God's favour was to be sought and bought by offerings. To put it crudely – every God has his price! On the other hand, prophets like Micah declared that rather than try and win God's approval for our way of life, we need to be shaping our lives, hopes and aims that we may ourselves be the offering we bring, that God seeks. Prophets like Micah were regarded as irritants and dangerous – the awkward squad! Micah challenged the accepted culture and few thanked him for doing so.

### **Paul**

Jump the centuries and we find Paul doing exactly the same thing. Writing to Corinth he declares that the folly of the cross is wiser than human wisdom. Being Christians, we agree with that, but we are in a tiny minority if we really accept what Paul is saying especially if we try to live by the teaching in the Beatitudes. Our culture is heavily dependent on worldly wisdom which says you have to compete, sell yourself, and be ready to make hard decisions (on others!). You have to bow to market forces and when it comes to the pinch, heaven helps those that help themselves! A bit cynical but often true.

### **Jesus**

Matthew organises his gospel very systematically. He starts with the announcement of Jesus' coming by John. Then his baptism. This is followed by his choice of methods (the temptations) and the selection of his close team of workers. In chapters 5 – 8 he sets out the bulk of Jesus teaching. The Sermon on the Mount is a distillation of Jesus teaching from many sermons. Jesus poses the same question as Micah. “What does the Lord require of you?” In Matthew 5 he goes through a series of attitudes and behaviours which will give the response to Micah's question.

### **Conclusion**

In all 3 passages we are faced with 2 completely different and often conflicting approaches to the business of living. To a people who want to know what it will cost to get God on their side, Micah declares that they need to start at the other end by asking what changes are required in their way of living to put them on God's side. They should act justly, which is much more than keeping within the law. It means that they are to do right by others especially the weak. And they are to accept fully the obligations of being human- includes mercy, loyalty and caring what happens to others. When we come to Paul he declares that the foolishness of following the way of the cross is far more powerful than the worldly wisdom of self-interest and self-promotion. In the Gospel passage

Jesus turns upside down the usual understanding of what it is to be blessed. These Bible passages are central to our understanding of the faith. We are faced with the question of how far is it possible to live out our faith in the real world. But it is not easy. To place the symbol of the cross on top of our churches or on our stationary or wear it round our neck is one thing, but to face poverty, humiliation or rejection for the faith is quite another. To live our life according to the beatitudes without making a few concessions is a challenge. We have to become part of God's Awkward Squad. It isn't easy. Rather than choosing between clear cut black and white, we are often required to distinguish between various shades of grey! But we must do it. Remember Micah's words.

*"The Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this; to do what is just, to show constant love. And to live in humble fellowship with our god"*

Amen

*Alan Gaunt (b. 1935)*

### **Read pray or sing StF 719**

[7 We Pray for Peace, music by David Barton, words by Alan Gaunt](#)

- 1 We pray for peace,  
but not the easy peace  
built on complacency  
and not the truth of God.  
We pray for real peace,  
the peace God's love alone can seal.
- 2 We pray for peace,  
but not the cruel peace  
leaving God's poor bereft  
and dying in distress;  
we pray for real peace,  
enriching all the human race.
- 3 We pray for peace,  
and not the evil peace  
defending unjust laws  
and nursing prejudice,  
but for the real peace  
of justice, mercy, truth and love.

- 4 We pray for peace:  
holy communion  
with Christ our risen Lord  
and every living thing;  
God's will fulfilled on earth  
and all creation reconciled.
- 5 We pray for peace,  
and, for the sake of peace,  
look to the risen Christ,  
who gives the grace we need  
to serve the cause of peace  
and make our own self-sacrifice.
- 6 God, give us peace;  
if you withdraw your love  
there is no peace for us,  
nor any hope of it.  
With you to lead us on,  
through death or tumult, peace will come.

### **Prayers for the Church and the World**

- O God our Father bless your church  
Give her such a passion for human souls that she  
will never be content until all men and women know  
the love of Jesus  
Give her such a passion for social justice that she  
will ever be the conscience of our nation  
Give her the adventurous spirit which refuses to  
be shackled to the past and which finds in tradition  
not a dead weight but an inspiration.  
Make her adventurous in thought that she may  
rethink and restate the gospel in terms that all can  
understand.  
Make her adventurous in action so that she may  
not shrink from that which is new.  
Make her a fellowship in which all social and  
racial distinctions have ceased to exist  
Grant that the church may be a place where boys  
and girls find Jesus as their friend; where young men  
and women have vision for their lives; where those  
in mid-life find a rod and a staff for the dust and  
heat of the day; where those in later life will find  
light at eventide; where the sorrowing find comfort

and the weary rest; where the doubting find  
certainty and the tempted strength; where the  
lonely find fellowship and the sinner forgiveness for  
his sins.

Hear our prayer through Jesus Christ our Lord

**Amen**

**Read pray or sing StF 707**

[Make Me a Channel of Your Peace \(StF 707 / Singing  
the Faith 707\)](#)

- 1 Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love;  
where there is injury, your pardon, Lord;  
and where there's doubt, true faith in you:  
O Master, grant that I may never seek  
so much to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love with all my soul.
  
- 2 Make me a channel of your peace.  
Where there's despair in life, let me bring hope;  
where there is darkness, only light;  
and where there's sadness, ever joy:  
Refrain
  
- 3 Make me a channel of your peace.  
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
in giving unto all that we receive,  
and in dying that we're born to eternal life.

*Sebastian Temple (1928-1997)  
from the Prayer of St Francis*

**Blessing**

May the Lord be with you when you rise  
May the wind be at your back  
May the lord keep you in the hollow of his hand  
In the name of Jesus

**Amen**

***Acknowledgements***

*World and church prayers – William Barclay*