

## **Morning Service**

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

*You may wish to light a candle.*

### **Introduction**

Welcome to our online service on Sea Sunday. Today is a chance to give thanks for seafarers and the vital work that they do.

It's appropriate that we in Formby should celebrate Sea Sunday, for it was here in Formby that the 1st Lifeboat Station in the world was built in 1776 by William Hutchinson, the Dock Master in Liverpool.

Regardless whether we live near the sea or far from it we rely on those whose jobs take them out to sea. 90% of the world's trade is done by sea and increases to 95% where Britain is concerned. Half of our food and energy is imported and comes to our shores by ship – from tea, coffee, chocolate to clothes, cars and electronics. Life on these container ships can be very difficult

Today we worship with others from around the world – from Liverpool to Lagos, Manila to Melbourne – giving thanks for all seafarers from those who serve on container ships to those who serve in the Merchant and Royal Navy. And it is a reminder that we should be looking after the natural resources that we have.

Let us worship together.

### **Opening Sentences**

Grace and peace be with you,

**and keep you in the love of Christ.**

**Hymn Eternal father strong to save** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Vta4ct64qo>

### **The Collect for Sea Sunday**

Lord God, Creator of land and sea, bless those who work at sea. Be with them in fair weather and foul, in danger or distress. Strengthen them when weary, lift them up when down and comfort them when far from their loved ones. In this life, bring them safely to shore and, in the life to come, welcome them to your kingdom. For Jesus Christ's sake. **Amen.**

### **Bible Readings**

**Epistle – Acts 27. 27-36**

read by Ros Jackson

When the fourteenth night had come, as we were drifting across the sea of Adria, about midnight the sailors suspected that they were nearing land. So they took soundings and found twenty fathoms; a little farther on they took soundings again and found fifteen fathoms. Fearing that we might run on the rocks, they let down four anchors from the stern and prayed for day to come. But when the sailors tried to escape from the ship and had lowered the boat into the sea, on the pretext of putting out anchors from the bow, Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, 'Unless these men stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.' Then the soldiers cut away the ropes of the boat and set it adrift.

Just before daybreak, Paul urged all of them to take some food, saying, 'Today is the fourteenth day that you have been in suspense and remaining without food, having eaten nothing. Therefore I urge you to take some food, for it will help you survive; for none of you will lose a hair from your heads.' After he had said this, he took bread; and giving thanks to God in the presence of all, he broke it and began to eat. Then all of them were encouraged and took food for themselves.

## **Gospel – Mark 1.14-20**

read by Lana Jackson

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.'

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fish for people.' And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

**Sermon – Rev Ted Woods – see below**

**Hymn Amazing Grace** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qTnFF50UHZA>

## **Prayers**

by Simon Macaulay

### **The Peace**

Christ came and proclaimed the gospel: peace to those who are far off and peace to those who are near.

The peace of the Lord be always with you

**And also with you**

### **Taking of the Bread and Wine**

The Lord is here.

**His Spirit is with us.**

Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give thanks and praise.**

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,  
that we should always sing of your glory,  
holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord:

And now we give you thanks

because by the Holy Spirit you lead us into all truth,  
and give us power to proclaim your gospel to the nations,  
and to serve you as a royal priesthood.

So, with the saints and angels around your throne  
we join to glorify your name, for ever praising you.



**Holy, holy, holy Lord,**

**God of power and might,**

**heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

**Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.**

**Hosanna in the highest.**

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends  
and, taking bread, he praised you.  
He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:  
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;  
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.  
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:  
Drink this, all of you;  
this is my blood of the new covenant,  
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.  
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.  
So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,  
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice  
made once for all upon the cross.  
We proclaim his death and resurrection  
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

**Christ has died:**

**Christ is risen:**

**Christ will come again.**

Lord of all life, help us to work together for that day  
when your kingdom comes  
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,  
gather us in your loving arms  
and bring us with St Peter and all the saints  
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,  
for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

Wherever you may be let us pray together with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name;  
thy kingdom come;  
thy will be done;  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation;  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Breaking of the Bread**

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.  
Though we are many, we are one body,

because we all share in the one bread.

### **Prayer after Communion**

Father of all, we give you thanks and praise,  
that when we were still far off  
you met us in your Son and brought us home.  
Dying and living, he declared your love,  
gave us grace, and opened the gate of glory.  
May we bring life and hope to others;  
and we whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.  
Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us,  
so we and all your children shall be free,  
and the whole earth live to praise your name;  
through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **Hymn**

**I the Lord of sea and sky**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mqLwH5RdtPk>

### **The Blessing**

May the boldness of the Spirit transform you, may the gentleness of the Spirit lead you, may the gifts of the Spirit equip you to serve and worship God;; and the blessing of God almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be with you and all whom you love this day and always.  
**Amen.**

## **SEA SUNDAY 2020**

In the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd in America and the subsequent Black Lives Matter movement, there have been many demands that the statues and memorials of people associated with the slave trade should be torn down and removed, and their memories erased from public consciousness.

And Liverpool, which was the capital of slave trading in Britain, has not escaped, with street names such as Penny Lane being defaced. At the height of the Slave Trade one in five captives crossing the Atlantic were carried in a Liverpool slave ship, and 40% of the city's income derived from the slave trade.

It is something Liverpool has not tried to hide or deny, as the establishment of the International Slavery Museum testifies. Acknowledging the past we seek to learn from its mistakes. And now with the high profile involvement of the premier league teams we hope and pray that discrimination and racism can be resigned to the pages of the history books.

And associated with Liverpool as a great maritime and trading port, our own Formby coastline has witnessed many shipwrecks over the years, some of which can still be seen embedded in the sand. And indeed many of those who died in these shipwrecks are buried in St. Peter's churchyard.

Slavery and Shipwreck – come together on this Sea Sunday as we think about the writer of our next hymn – Amazing Grace. For its author, John Newtown, was the captain of a slave trader, plying his trade between Africa and the West Indies and Britain in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Newton's life as a sailor began when he was 11 – not by choice, although his father was a sailor – but being press-ganged into the navy, a not too uncommon event in those days.

Newton did desert from the Navy but was captured and endured a severe flogging for being absent without leave.

It didn't put him off a life at sea, for he later transferred to the Merchant Navy, eventually captaining his own ship and carrying goods from England to Africa and the West Indies and slaves back on the return journey.

At that stage in his life, according to himself, he was without God and without morals. On his epitaph he describes himself as "John Newton, Clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of the slaves in Africa...."

A servant of the slaves? Yes, even that. At one stage he sold himself to a black woman who, it is said, kept him under her table and fed him with crusts like a dog!

So, how did the transition from vice to vicar come about?

A bit like Paul in our epistle this morning, John Newton was caught in a very severe storm at sea. His ship was taking in water at a ferocious rate and was in danger of sinking.

For 9 hours Newton and his crew plied the pumps trying to keep the vessel afloat. At one point he was so desperate he shouted, "If this will not do, then the Lord have mercy upon us."

Then his mind jolted! Who was he to ask for mercy? How could there be mercy for someone who had so little mercy or regard for others, not least for his galley full of slaves. It wasn't a time for philosophising. He was fighting to save his ship, but he found himself again and again crying out to God to save him.

He was more fortunate than the captain of the ship Paul was sailing in. For while the crew of Paul's boat survived, the vessel was broken to pieces by the force of the waves. In Newton's case both the ship and the crew and the slaves in the hold all survived.

And unlike many before and since, John Newton, once safe, didn't forget his prayers and promises to God. He turned to God, changed his ways, forsook the slave trade and eventually offered himself to be ordained, a journey that took 9 years to complete.

During his ministry, he never hid his past life and never tired of telling people of the great change in his life that had been brought about God's amazing grace that had "saved a wretch like me."

After 16 years as a curate in Olney in Buckinghamshire where he wrote many of his hymns, he was appointed to St. Mary's, Woolnoth in London.

He became a celebrated pastor and preacher in London and spent the rest of his years in St. Mary's. But just before he died in 1807, at the age of 82, he said to a friend, "My memory is nearly gone, but I remember two great things – that I am a great sinner and that Jesus is a great Saviour."

Our hymnbook has five of his hymns, among them such favourites as "How sweet the name of Jesus sounds" and "Glorious things of thee are spoken".

I hope, unlike the statues that have been removed, that his hymns will not be erased because of his connection with the slave trade of a former age.

Yes, terrible things happened of which we rightly repent and react against today. But surely, it is important that as we learn *about* atrocities like the slave trade, that we also learn *from* them. And keeping these monuments and sites – like the concentration camps of Poland - let them serve as a reminder and a warning against ever letting such injustices happen again.

Still today, “many go down to the sea in ships”. We rely on the tankers bringing food and goods but many of those who work on these huge container ships have a very difficult life. Often months away from their families, paid below the minimum wage with little job security. Having to spend what little free time they have in foreign ports among strangers.

Recent research by the World Health Organisation suggests that seafarers are an at risk group because of the loneliness and isolation they experience – most ships have small crews who may not always speak the same language – and they have very little time for rest and relaxation.

The Mission to Seafarers amongst others do crucial work to help the marginalised and hidden needs of today’s seafarers.

So, it’s right that we should have a special Sunday to acknowledge and remember with gratitude all who serve on the sea.

This Sea Sunday, we especially give thanks for the transformation that took place in the life of John Newton, something which underlines so vividly the message of Jesus that no one is beyond redemption, and that even those who are lost, can, by God’s grace, be found and restored. A strong reminder that none of us are beyond God’s love. And none of us are beyond being able to serve God and bring about a better world.