**Morning Praise @ Home 7th August 2022**

**Opening prayer**

Blessed are you, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, you have blessed us with every spiritual blessing; enable us by your power to be true to our calling and live holy and blameless lives before you all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. **Amen**

**Confession** Let us admit to God the sin which always confronts us.

**Lord God, we have sinned against you; we have done evil in your sight. We are sorry and**

**repent.** **Have mercy on us according to your love. Wash away our wrongdoing and cleanse us**

**from our sin.** **Renew a right spirit within us** **and restore us to the joy of your salvation,** **through**

**Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen** cf Psalm 51

**Absolution** May the Father of all mercies cleanse us from our sins, and restore us in his image

to the praise and glory of his name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

### Bible Readings Psalm 50: 1 – 8, 23 – end Hebrews 11: 1 – 3, 8 – 16

**Reflection from Ruth**

The writer of Hebrews gives the example of the story of Abraham and Sarah. In the lives of this couple, both dimensions of faith shine forth. They show us that faithfulness requires both holding fast and moving forward.
First, faithfulness is holding fast to the promises of God. God had promised Sarah and Abraham countless descendants and a land that God would reveal to them. But both promises were “things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).
Abraham and Sarah also held fast to a second promise, that of land. That promise was equally impossible, for these two were wanderers, pilgrims who set out not knowing their destination. Even when they arrived in the promised land of Canaan, they lived like strangers in a foreign country, in tents, always ready to pack up and move.

But they did more than hold fast to this promise. Sarah and Abraham knew that the promise of God is also a call, and so they lived out the second dimension of faithfulness, that of moving forward. They lived in tents because they were not ultimately called to the land of Canaan. That was not their final destination. The journey was part of their obedience, but Canaan was not their home. They were looking for another city, the city with foundations not made with hands, “whose architect and builder is God” (Hebrews 11:10).

So how do we measure up with respect to these two dimensions of faith? Some of us find it easy to “hold fast.” We know the stories–stories of the Bible, stories of our congregations, stories of faithfulness and sacrifice. These stories matter because the stories we tell and make our own give us our bearings. They help us work out where we stand, who we are, and what we ought to do, but we find it harder to “move forward” into the future. We are not that fond of tents, and we travel with lots of baggage. Others of us have little trouble moving forward. We like to camp. We travel light. We ask, “Where can we join what God is doing now?” We are a people on the way, on the move, knowing that the future belongs to God, but we need help “holding fast,” learning the story of God’s faithfulness to promise. We need to know of loyalty and endurance that persevere even when the path is rough and long.

So we need both dimensions of faithfulness. We need to hold fast to the promises of God and to move forward into the future which is God’s. The power of the example of Sarah and Abraham is that their lives joined these two dimensions. In the midst of change and uncertainty, they found God constant and faithful. Therefore, they too could be full of faith, holding fast to God’s promises and moving forward into that future with God. May their faithfulness shine forth as an example for us that we too may prove faithful.

**Affirmation of faith**

Do you believe and trust in God the Father, source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Son, who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

**We believe and trust in him.**

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ

known in the world? **We believe and trust in him. This is the faith of the Church.**

**This is our faith. We believe and trust in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen**

**Prayers of intercession led by Tony**

Almighty God, your Holy Spirit equips the church with a rich variety of gifts.

We praise you for shared joys and accomplishments, and we commend our work to you. Grant that we may continue to bear witness to Christ in lives that are built on faith and love.

Father God, open our eyes, not to see the world more clearly, but to see you. Open our eyes to see you working around us and in us. Nothing happens by accident. You orchestrate every day of our lives. Help us to trust in what we cannot see, and believe in your invisible presence.

Dear God, thank you for the unmerited favour of your love. It is because of the faith you created in us that we have been saved, set apart to do your work, and received your grace. Thank you for the grace you lavish when we falter in our faith.

Father God, you shower the lilies of the field with beauty and feed the birds of the air. Build our faith to depend on you entirely for every need and not on the things of this world or our strength and abilities. Not one day can be added to our lives through worry. As our heavenly Father, you know what we need and you provide for all our cares. Help us to trust you to care for us.

Father, even the disciples that walked with Jesus needed to strengthen their faith. Jesus told them if their faith was only the size of a mustard seed, they could uproot trees and crumble mountains. Lord, we need more faith like the disciples. Increase our faith and make us movers of mountains. Grow our belief in you alone so that we would be strong in the Lord and ready to battle against the doubts planted by the enemy. Lord, increase our faith!

Dear God, praise you that you will not desert us. You are always with us. At the end of his life, everyone left Paul, but he was not alone. He continued to fight because you were at his side, giving him strength, so the message of your love and grace continued to be proclaimed. Father, you will never forsake us or leave us. To have you at our side gives us the ability to face whatever comes. Help us to keep our faith in you despite our circumstances, because you are with us.

Father God, the peace that comes through faith in you surpasses all human understanding. Help us to keep our faith in you alone that we would have peace and not falter in our thinking. The world wants to destroy the peace we have through faith in you. Protect our minds and hearts from the things of this world. Pour out your perfect peace.

Dear Lord, your will is our desire. We want your Word on our hearts and minds. Build in us a knowledge of your will. Make our heart’s desire your heart’s desire, then we will rejoice in doing your work. Our trust is in you alone. We know you will use every day of our lives to show everyone around us your love and grace. Teach us to do your will, for you are our God.

Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**The Lord’s Prayer** As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

***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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen***

**Closing prayer**

God give you grace to become the people He has called you to be,

that you may live and work to his praise and glory,

and the blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit

be with us and remain with us always. **Amen**

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. **In the name of Christ. Amen**