

## **Breathe 5 September 2020: The Bread of Life**

### **Looking up – bread**

*Exodus 16. 4*

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "I am going to rain bread from heaven for you, and each day the people shall go out and gather enough for that day".*

I don't know if you've ever made your own bread. When Lockdown first began, my daughters and I started to experiment. First, we made simple flatbreads such as naan and chapatis. Then, emboldened by our success, we moved onto proper bread, and that, too, has been very successful. It's a lot of effort and takes time, but it's worth it.

Bread is a staple of life for most of the people on this planet. A simple yet sustaining food. In the reading from Exodus, we hear how God gives the Israelites bread from Heaven to sustain them.

So, let's start by saying 'thank you'.

Thank you, Lord God, for all your gifts and blessings to us.....

Open prayer.....  
Amen

## Looking in – yeast

*Matthew 13. 33*

*Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."*

Without yeast, a loaf is hard and heavy. Without yeast, bread can be solid and daunting. No one wants to eat it. Yet the addition of a tiny amount of yeast, a living organism, makes the bread come alive. It rises and becomes light and fluffy. God can be the yeast in our lives, changing us and our actions.

So, let's look inwards now. To the times when we have allowed God to be the yeast in our lives. To the times when we have refused that. We will do this in silence.

Thank you, Lord God, for all being the yeast in our lives. Forgive us the times when we have turned away from you and followed our own paths.

Amen

## Looking back – Salt

*Matt 5. 13*

*"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled underfoot.*

We are called to be the salt of the earth; to give life its flavouring by bringing the Gospel message to others or seeing Christ in those we encounter.

Let's look back over the summer months. When have we been salt? When have our churches been salt? When has the wider church acted as salt? When have we lost our flavour?

Thank you, Lord God, for asking us to be the salt of the earth. In particular we offer to you .....

Open prayer.....

Amen

## Looking out – water

*John 4. 13-14*

*Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life."*

The other major ingredient of bread is water. Just water and flour can make a flat bread, I have discovered. And water, of course, is essential for all life. During the dry periods this summer the gardeners among us will have been busy watering their essential plants. Farmers will have despaired during the long dry spells. Yet when the rain comes, dry brown grass turns green and parched wilted plants perk up again. As we look out into our world, where is it that the water of life is desperately needed?

Lord God, we offer to you our concerns and fears for ourselves and your world.....

Open prayer.....

Amen

## Looking forward – oil

*Leviticus 24. 2*

*Command the people of Israel to bring you pure oil of beaten olives for the lamp, that a light may be kept burning regularly.*

*Luke 10. 33*

*But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them.*

Many bread recipes include oil. I have used olive oil, to oil the bowl the bread proves in, and butter to fry the chapatis we have made. And for millennia, oil has been used to anoint and to bless. As we move forward into the autumn, we need to ask God to bless our plans and be with us as we navigate an unknown landscape.

Lord God, we ask your blessings on the coming month and season. Be with us in our planning and help us to dream your dreams.....

Open prayer.....

Amen

John 6. 32-34

*Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always."*

**Give us this day our daily bread:**

To end, the Lord's Prayer:

**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.**