

Church Together

Responding To God's Promises By Joining In
3rd November 2024



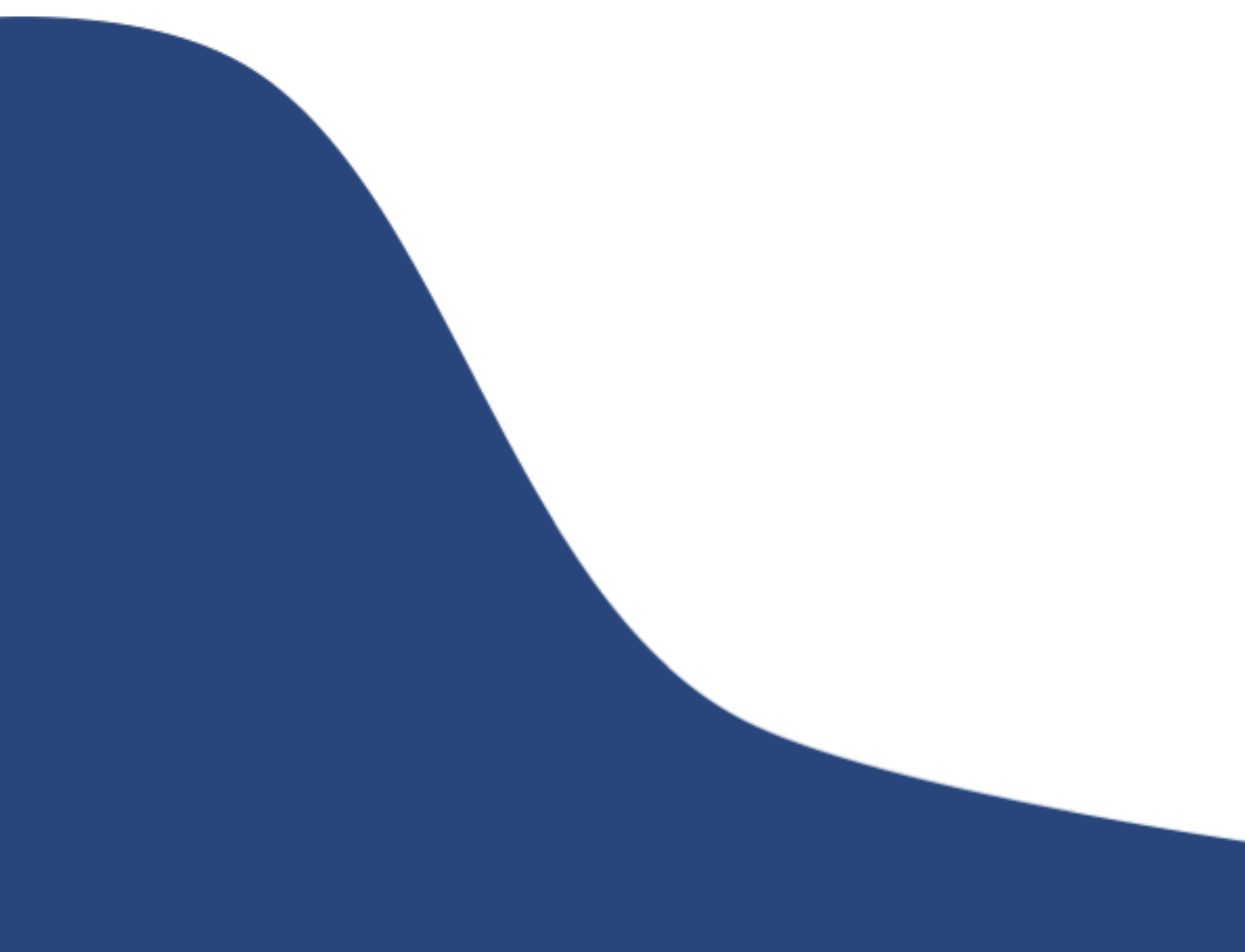
Welcome

In today's Service we will be looking at: **Ezra 3 v. 1 – 13**

The theme for our service today is: **Responding To God's Promises By Joining In**

Our service today also includes: **Communion**

We hope that you will be able to engage with everything that has been produced for today's service and that you would be able to **Know That You Can Be Part Of God's Future Plans – If You Let Him!**



Call To Worship

Psalm 100- v. 1 - 5 NLT

Shout for joy to the Lord, O earth!

Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

Acknowledge that the Lord is God!

He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and bless his name.

For the Lord is good.

His unfailing love continues forever,

And his faithfulness continues to
each generation.



GOD

WILL NOT GIVE UP ON YOU

Opening Prayer

Father God thank you that you have brought each of us safely to this place this day. We gladly surrender our lives to you in worship and praise this day. We invite Your Holy Spirit to move freely amongst us. Come dwell in each of our hearts. Equip us, challenge us, comfort us, teach us. As we read your word in Scripture today, inspire us as we learn more about your ways for our lives. As we meet together may we see your beauty and encounter your grace and love.

Thank you Lord, that we dwell in your kingdom and live in your presence and love. Thank you that as we gather together we join with all Christians across the world to glorify your holy name. Loving Lord Jesus, as we gather together we thank you for fellowship and friendship. We ask that you will strengthen us as a church and as individuals, restore us and inspire us with your love. Lord, would you fill us with your peace so that as we journey onwards together we would share your love and grace with others that we meet along that journey.

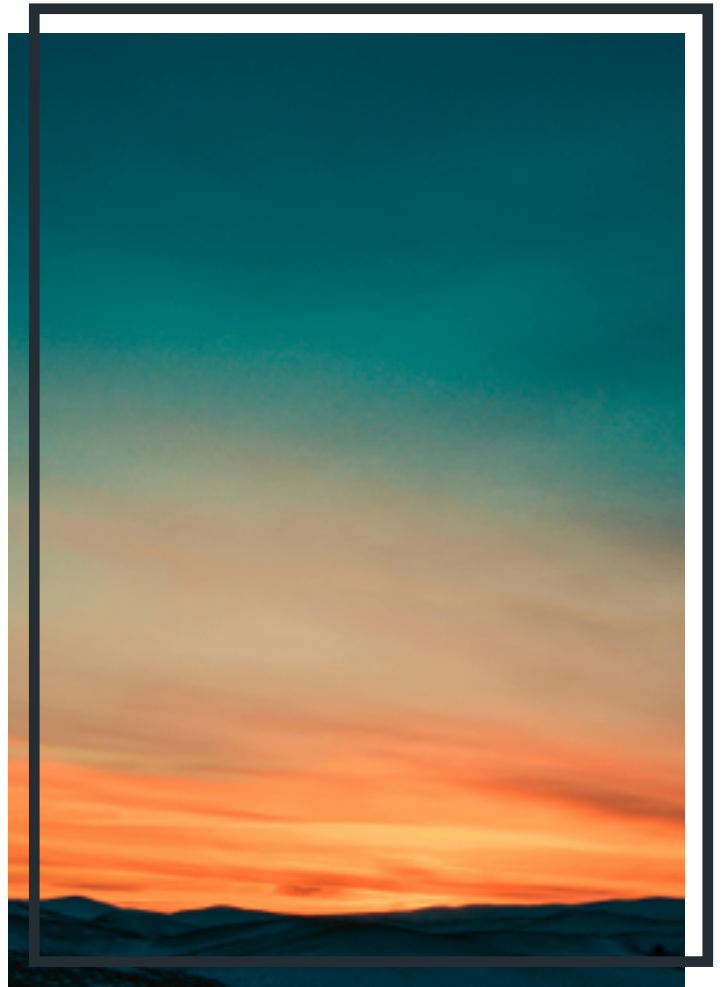
Loving Lord Jesus, we confess to you that we have often failed to live up to the reasonable expectations that you require of us. We know that you welcomed sinners and lifted up the downcast, so, we ask you to forgive us for what we have done and what we have made of ourselves. Refresh our faith we pray, and in your willingness to accept us, help us to enjoy our standing as your much loved children, and enable us to live lives in which you can take delight we pray.

We ask these prayers as we come before you today, in the precious and glorious name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.

Amen

Song Suggestion

Blessed Assurance



Bible Reading

Ezra 3 v. 1 – 13 NIV

Rebuilding the Altar

3 When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people assembled together as one in Jerusalem. 2 Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3 Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the Lord, both the morning and evening sacrifices. 4 Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day. 5 After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the Lord, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the Lord. 6 On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, though the foundation of the Lord's temple had not yet been laid.

Rebuilding the Temple

7 Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorized by Cyrus king of Persia.

8 In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) began the work. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the Lord. 9 Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers—all Levites—joined together in supervising those working on the house of God.

10 When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the Lord, as prescribed by David king of Israel. 11 With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the Lord:

“He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever.”

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. 12 But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. 13 No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

Song Suggestion

Meekness And Majesty



Church Together

Thought

Someone once wrote: 'A huge green industrial unit, affectionately known as the **'Peppermint Palace'**, stands empty at the edge of our town. Footsteps and voices echo around the vast space as you walk into it. Light squeezes in through the grimy windows. In the distance, there is the harsh clanging of metal on metal as a train rumbles clumsily by. Unpromising as it may sound, this is the space my church is considering moving into - a place where our vision and hope would be to encounter God and create community.'

So, as we read Ezra's account of rebuilding the temple, we need to read it with particular interest.

We may not be in the process of building something with bricks and mortar, but whatever we're doing for God, there's lots to learn from the Israelites as they set about their task of rebuilding the Temple in Jerusalem. Only the altar and the foundations had been completed, yet the Jews were already using the space to meet together and praise God!

Their exuberant worship was a testimony to their desire to be completely faithful. It served another purpose too. The things we do for God can so easily become 'our projects' rather than his.

Constant worship gave these people the right focus for all that they were doing! The Jews were also carefully re-establishing the ceremonies and feasts God had given

them through their history, but which they had neglected in the period leading up to the exile. We, too, can easily forget to do some of the important things through which we encounter God. We need to let God remind us of some of these and take the time to build them back into our lives.

Our modern culture has favoured an individualistic 'go-it-alone' approach to things, but this would have been abhorrent to the Jews. Their unity from the outset is striking. The NIV version of the passage communicates this powerfully in the phrase: **'the people assembled as one man'**.

The Jewish unity is further demonstrated in the way the altar was built and the foundation laid: in a process which clearly conformed with Paul's much later teaching about the Church as a body as referenced in **Romans 12 v. 4 - 8; 1 Corinthians 12 v. 12 - 31**. It's worth remembering that each person had a key part to play, whether it was financially, in time and effort, or in nerve and determination!

Disunity can arise between generations.

As we become older, we find ourselves lost somewhere between 'young' and 'old', and we begin to have that alarming experience of watching younger people do things - and wondering, 'Why do they do that?'. We too, can sympathise with the older generation of Israelites, who wept when they saw the new altar and foundations as described in **Ezra 3 v. 12**, which says: 'But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. 13 No one could distinguish the sound of

the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away'. Maybe they were mourning the mistakes of a previous era, or maybe they felt the new work compared unfavourably with the former temple.

Perhaps the lesson for us today is to value the past and learn from its lessons, while keeping in step with what God is doing now in the present day! Let's remember, too, that God has a 'foreverplan'.

Isaiah declares in a moving passage that God's heart is to gather people together to know and praise him. It happened in a very specific way here, but it's also a process which goes on through history to completion at the end of time, when 'every knee will bow' at the name and in the presence of Jesus, as portrayed in **Philippians 2 v. 10 – 11**, which says: 'that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father'.

It's not always easy to know where to start when we face a job such as sorting out a garage or a shed or even moving house! This passage tells us that the people of God faced a building project, but didn't start by laying the foundations. They had to get other things done first.

So, what did they have to do before laying the foundations?

FIRSTLY, THEY LAID FOUNDATIONS OF WORSHIP (Ezra 3 v. 1 – 6)

Before a stone is laid, even before the logs are ordered, the spiritual foundations of the faith community are laid. Our mission and service should be started (and continued) with prayer and worship. If we are not right

with God, our work will not be right for God.

SECONDLY, THEY PREPARED THE FOUNDATIONS (Ezra 3 v. 7 – 9)

They could not rush into it. Carpenters and masons had to be employed, as we see in Ezra 3 v.7, management procedures had to be set up, as referred to in Ezra 3 v. 8, 9. If we want to achieve great things for God, we cannot rush into them. We need to set up the right structures, seek the right gifts and people. Often God's timescale is much longer than ours.

FINALLY, THEY STARTED BUILDING THE FOUNDATIONS (Ezra 3 v. 10 – 13)

The whole purpose for the return to Israel was to rebuild the temple.

ILLUSTRATION

Two bricklayers were at work. The foundations were laid, and they were starting to build the walls. One of them appeared bored and tired, the other was working at twice the pace and clearly excited. A passer-by asked the first what he was doing. 'Laying bricks,' came the disgruntled response. Then the passer-by asked the second why he was so enthusiastic. 'I'm building a cathedral,' he replied. The two bricklayers did not share the same vision.

So, when the foundations were laid, there was great rejoicing. Some of the older Jews who had seen the old temple were overcome with emotion and didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It was great to see it, but it was not as great as what they had known in the past.

When the foundation was laid, people gave glory to God, and did not exalt in the work of their own hands. We need to remember that it is God who gives the increase as we are told in **1 Corinthians 3 v. 5 – 15**.

Song Suggestion

Name Of All Majesty



Communion

As we gather today we come to share in this act of Communion together, remembering the love and sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the Cross. We remember the price that he paid for our sins and for our forgiveness. We gather together here in Church as the body of Christ in order to share the bread and the cup together. We come in faith, conscious of our weakness, seeking to renounce our sin, humbly putting our trust in Christ, and seeking his grace, as we look forward to the day when he will come again.

A prayer of Thanksgiving:

Heavenly Father, we offer you this day our praise and thanksgiving; we thank you for raising Jesus to life again and exalting him so that we might call him 'Lord', as we offer our faithfulness to him and seek to share in his ways. Loving Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Holy Spirit, powerfully present in your people and your world, for the fellowship of your church, and for all the means of grace and the hope of glory. Living God, fill us with your Spirit, that as we share this bread and this cup we may feed on the body and blood of Christ, and be empowered for service in your world. Heavenly Father, accept our prayers and thanksgiving in the name of Jesus, the light of the world and the life of your people.

Our normal practice is to say these words:

For I received from the Lord what I also pass on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of

me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

1 Corinthians 11 v. 22 - 26

After all have received the bread and the cup and after a period of silence, we end with these words in a Prayer of Thanksgiving for the blessings received at the Table:

Leader: Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection we celebrate. Your final coming we await. May the glory be to you, O Lord.

Response: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again.

Loving Gracious God, we praise you for what you have given and for what you have promised us here. You have made us one with all who know you as Lord and Saviour. You have fed us with the bread of life and renewed us for your service. Now we give ourselves to you and we ask that our daily living may be part of the life of your eternal kingdom, and that our love may be your love in the world where we find ourselves., through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray these things.

Amen

Prayers Of Intercession

As we pray today and throughout this coming week, we share these prayers together:

Give us strength of purpose and faith in you today Lord, in order to take decisions seriously, to understand the consequences of our actions for others, as well as ourselves, and, always, to seek your guidance through prayer.

We are reminded of our responsibilities as your people that the world you gave us is your creation and that you have called us to be good stewards of this world. We pray for world leaders and our own Prime minister and his Cabinet that they and we would all play our part in the future of our planet and that we would consider the longer term effects of our own part that we play in the world.

Lord Jesus be with those who find themselves lost and alone in society. Support all those who work and volunteer to bring hope to these people. We pray for the Emergency Services of Police, Fire and Ambulance as they help and reassure others in times of need.

We pray for our families and friends Lord and we thank you that Jesus knows our every situation. Help us we pray to face the many different situations that are before us with dignity and love and courage.

We continue to pray for those who are unwell, both at

home and in hospital, or hospice. We think of the elderly, the housebound and those in care homes. We pray for all those who care for their needs, both professionally and within the family setting. So, we share a moment of silence together and we bring before you those known only to ourselves and name them before you, Lord Jesus, in our hearts.

And finally, Lord we pray for ourselves. Help us Lord to follow your example in all that we do and say as we journey with you. We place ourselves, this Church and all your people into your loving care. Please accept these our prayers, in Jesus name.

Amen

WE HAVE A PROFOUND,
OPEN-ENDED INVITATION
TO TRUST GOD AND
HIS PROMISES.

Tithes, Gifts & Offerings

No matter wherever you are, whatever you do, whoever you are, together we can grow as Church Together here at Salendine Nook.

If you feel that your are able to, then please keep on giving with a cheerful and grateful heart, praising God for all that he has given to you and share in the finances of the church.



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.
Lead us not into temptation
But deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power
And the glory, forever and ever.

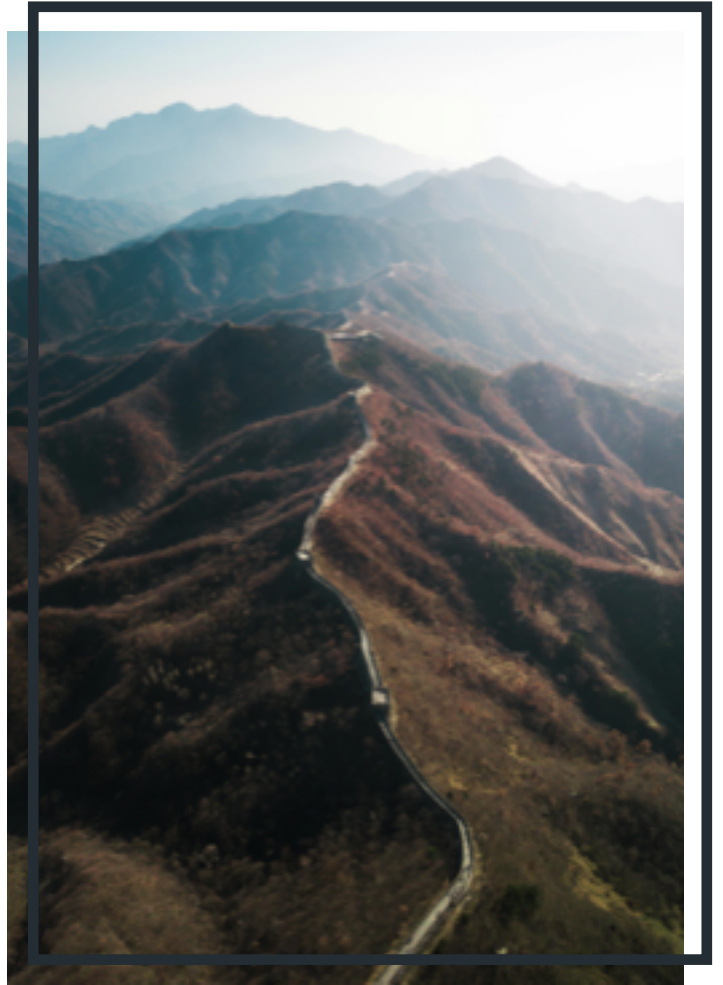
Amen

GOD
has the most
amazing plan
for you.



Song Suggestion

And Can It Be



Blessing

We give you thanks at the end of our time together today for all the ways that you bless our lives: for the beauty and abundance of nature, the love of family and friends, the joy of knowing you as our Lord and Saviour and hearing your word.

Amen