

**Wednesday 20 July 2022 at The Church at Carrs Lane**  
**Farewell Service for Rev Dr Neil Johnson**

Welcome and Call to Worship

We gather today to worship the One who created us.

**The one who calls us.**

The one who equips us.

**The one who loves us without end.**

With joyful hearts let us worship God.

**Hymn 8 (Singing the Faith): God with us, Creator, Father**

**1 God with us : Creator, Father,  
bringing everything to birth ;  
Mother of the whole creation,  
fire of stars and life of earth :  
down the countless years composing,  
from the earth's evolving night,  
love's response to love, and forming  
mind and soul to seek your light.**

**2 God with us : Redeemer, Brother,  
Friend for ever at our side,  
here, in flesh, you walked among us,  
taking up your cross, you died.  
Crucified, despised, rejected,  
Perfect Love, who shared our shame,  
streaming from the cross, your  
judgement,  
full of mercy, clears our name.**

**3 God with us : Unwearied Spirit,  
from the birth of time and space,  
surging through unconscious being,  
joyful, Life-Creating Grace :  
through the centuries you find us ;  
you, as God, inspire our prayer ;  
Life and Power at work within us,  
Love for ever, everywhere !**

**4 God, Transcendent, far beyond us,  
closest Friend, unfailing Guide :  
through the ages, wronged, affronted,  
in your poor, still crucified !  
God with us : convict, forgive us ;  
by your holy love destroy  
all that hinders peace and justice :  
fill this aching world with joy !**

Alan Gaunt (*b.* 1935)

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Opening Prayers

Reading - Isaiah 53:1-6

Ermine Mitchell

**Hymn 681 (Singing the Faith): Community of Christ**

**1 Community of Christ,  
who make the Cross your own,  
live out your creed and risk your life  
for God alone :  
the God who wears your face,  
to whom all worlds belong,  
whose children are of every race  
and every song.**

**2 Community of Christ,  
look past the Church's door  
and see the refugee, the hungry,  
and the poor.  
Take hands with the oppressed,  
the jobless in your street,  
take towel and water, that you wash  
your neighbour's feet.**

**3 Community of Christ,  
through whom the word must sound -  
cry out for justice and for peace  
the whole world round :  
disarm the powers that war  
and all that can destroy,  
turn bombs to bread, and tears of  
anguish  
into joy.**

**4 When menace melts away,  
so shall God's will be done,  
the climate of the world be peace  
and Christ its Sun ;  
our currency be love  
and kindness our law,  
our food and faith be shared as one  
for evermore.**

Shirley Erena Murray (b. 1931)

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Reading - Matthew 8:16-20

Deacon Ruth Yorke

Sermon

Rev. Dr. Neil Johnson

### **Hymn 167 (Singing the Faith): Colours of day dawn into the mind**

**1 Colours of day dawn into the mind,  
the sun has come up, the night is behind.  
Go down in the city, into the street,  
and let's give the message to the people we meet.**

*So light up the fire and let the flame burn,  
open the door, let Jesus return.*

*Take seeds of his Spirit, let the fruit grow,  
tell the people of Jesus, let his love show.*

**2 Go through the park, on into the town ;  
the sun still shines on ; it never goes down.  
The light of the world is risen again ;  
the people of darkness are needing a friend.**

**3 Open your eyes, look into the sky,  
the darkness has come, the sun came to die.  
The evening draws on, the sun disappears,  
but Jesus is living, his Spirit is near.**

Sue McClellan (b. 1951), John Paculabo (b. 1946) and Keith Rycroft (b. 1949)

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Prayer

### **Hymn 546 (Singing the Faith): Behold the servant of the Lord**

**1 Behold the servant of the Lord !  
I wait thy guiding eye to feel,  
to hear and keep thy every word,  
to prove and do thy perfect will,  
joyful from my own works to cease,  
glad to fulfil all righteousness.**

**2 Me if thy grace vouchsafe to use,  
meanest of all thy creatures, me,  
the deed, the time, the manner  
choose ;  
let all my fruit be found of thee ;  
let all my works in thee be wrought,  
by thee to full perfection brought.**

**3 My every weak though good design  
o'errule or change, as seems thee  
meet ;  
Jesus, let all my work be thine !  
Thy work, O Lord, is all complete,  
and pleasing in thy Father's sight ;  
thou only hast done all things right.**

**4 Here then to thee thine own I leave ;  
mould as thou wilt thy passive clay ;  
but let me all thy stamp receive,  
but let me all thy words obey,  
serve with a single heart and eye,  
and to thy glory live and die.**

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

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Thank you to Neil

Neil, as we prepare to let you go, and you journey on in Christian ministry, we offer thanks and praise for your ministry here in Carrs Lane, in Saltley and all the churches you have served in Birmingham, and as Superintendent of this Circuit.

We pray for you as you set down your ministry here and take up new ministry in the City Centre as a Pioneer Minister.

Let us join together in prayer in this moment of thanks, dedication and offering;

For all that has been in these full years of ministry we say thank you.

**All: Thank you God who holds us gently.**

For all new lives welcomed and Baptisms celebrated,  
For all new relationships blessed and marriages marked,  
For new members welcomed and confirmed, churches and communities sustained,  
For all funerals led, people visited, lives mourned  
For all sermons and prayers written, songs and hymns chosen, liturgies crafted,  
connections between Gospel and everyday life woven together,  
For all communities and organisations supported, stories listened to and held with care  
and confidence, and for kingdom work unnoticed,

**Neil: I give thanks.**

**All: We give thanks.**

For sharp words, unspoken grudges, challenging moments, and difficult times, for all that is left undone and incomplete that we now let go of, giving thanks to God trusting in the work of others.

**Neil: I ask forgiveness and I let them go.**

**All: We ask forgiveness, and we water seeds of ministry and mission planted.**

For all faith companions who have inspired and nurtured Neil we give thanks.  
For all who have been ministered to, with and alongside we say thank you to God who continues to call us in Jesus to share Good News.

**All: We hear the call of Jesus to be and share Good News.**

Neil, we now hold you in prayer as you journey on in your ministry to become a Pioneer Minister in the Birmingham City Centre.

After a time of silent prayer for Neil we pray in words of ancient Hebrew wisdom:

**All: May the Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine on  
you and be gracious to you; the Lord look on you with kindness and give  
you peace. Amen**

Continue to listen to the call of Jesus, to respond to Christ's call on your life and in new ways as the Spirit leads you.

**All: We bless you now and always.**

Continue to respond to Christ's call to minister with love.

Read the signs of the times with wisdom and courage as you are shaped by Christ for the wellbeing and shalom of the people of the Birmingham City Centre.

**All: We bless you now and always.**

For Carrs Lane, Saltley and the Churches and mission of the Birmingham Circuit – be bold Kingdom communities of faith, healing and peace.

**All: We are blessed now and always. Amen**

Jesus said, my peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you. I do not give as the world gives, so do not let your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

The Peace of the Lord be always with you

**All: And also with you**

Based on prayers by Rev. Kate Gray – Worship Words

### **Hymn 564 (Singing the Faith): O thou who camest from above**

- 1 O thou who camest from above  
the pure celestial fire to impart,  
kindle a flame of sacred love  
on the mean altar of my heart !**
- 2 There let it for thy glory burn  
with inextinguishable blaze,  
and trembling to its source return,  
in humble prayer and fervent praise.**
- 3 Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
to work, and speak, and think for thee ;  
still let me guard the holy fire,  
and still stir up thy gift in me -**
- 4 Ready for all thy perfect will,  
my acts of faith and love repeat,  
till death thy endless mercies seal,  
and make the sacrifice complete.**

Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

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### **Blessing**

May the road rise up to meet you.

May the wind be always at your back.

May the sun shine warm upon your face;

the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,  
may God hold you in the palm of His hand.

May the Blessing of God and the Lord be yours, the blessing of the perfect Spirit be yours,  
the blessing of the three be poured on you generously, now and always. Amen.

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