

St Andrew's Church, Corbridge: Ministry of Healing

At the 10am service on 2nd March there will be opportunity to receive prayer with the laying on of hands and anointing for the grace of wholeness and healing. In the Sundays leading up to 2nd March we will be exploring Jesus' healing ministry and the healing ministry of the Church. There will be a series of 3 sermons at the 10am Service based around St Luke chapter 7:

- 16 Feb Luke 7. 1-10 The healing of the centurion's servant
- 23rd Feb Luke 7. 11-17 The raising of the son of the widow of Nain
- 2nd March Luke 7. 18-23 Jesus' report to John – signs of the Kingdom.

All of us experience dis-ease whether in our bodies, our minds or our spirits. These burdens are part of our experience of being human and sometimes, they can diminish us and cast a shadow over our lives; they can take away our joy and sense of peace (shalom). At the healing service, we ask the Lord to minister to these areas that we may have a firmer grasp of his love for us and his desire to 'give us rest'. We also have concerns for those we love and care about. Like the friends who carried the paralysed man to Jesus on a stretcher, we can bring others to the Lord by praying for them.

We invite everyone to spend a little time thinking about this ministry. In particular, think about what you would like to pray for at the service on 2nd March. Where do we desire healing for ourselves or those close to us? What do we want the Lord to do for us deep within our own bodies, hearts and minds? Where do we need the gift of shalom or strength or to experience the Lord's love for us or his healing grace deep within us?

When Jesus and the apostles ministered healing, they used two outward signs. The first is the laying on of hands. Jesus would stretch out his hand and touch the head of those who came to him. This reminds us that this is Jesus' life-giving touch that we receive. Sometimes, the apostles also anointed people with oil and this is mentioned in the Letter of James (James 5. 13-15). Anointing is a sign of the life and love of the Holy Spirit, of the fact that we belong to Christ (who is Messiah, which means 'anointed one').

What will happen on 2nd of March ? For those who were present at previous healing services, we will follow a similar pattern. It will be our usual Sunday Morning Communion, during which there will be a sermon after the Gospel. After some brief intercessions, there will be some organ music and music led by the choir.

During this music, all who wish to be prayed for will go to the communion rail at the High Altar, or to the Lady Chapel communion rail. At the High Altar, there will be stations, where the ministers will pray using the laying on of hands *and* anointing with oil on the palms of your hands. In the Lady Chapel, there will be prayer and the laying on of hands without anointing. There will be provision made for those who cannot access the east end of the church.

You will not be required to say anything to those ministering. God knows what your request is.

At the High Altar, ministers will lay on hands and say a simple prayer. They will then anoint the palms of your hands with the oil of healing, and say a second prayer. At the end of the prayer, say 'Amen' and return to your seat.

In the Lady Chapel, the ministers will say a simple prayer and place their hands on your head. At the end of the prayer, say 'Amen' and return to your seat.

Please spend some time over the next few weeks to think about this ministry. If you have any questions, please ask one of us. Ask the Lord to show you what to pray for from your own life. You may find these passages helpful as a focus:

Be still, and know that I am God (Psalm 46. 10).

Jesus says, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty' (John 6. 35).

Jesus says, 'Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and gentle of heart, and you shall find rest for your souls' (Matthew 11. 28-30).

At the service on 2nd March

My part in Receiving

- Come to Christ as openly as you can; desire whatever he wishes to give you for your wholeness
- Do not be afraid of what he gives; all he gives is out of his love and goodness for you and the world
- Tell him what you desire, but remember he may give you something else first
- Try not to hide from him any part of your feelings; he accepts you as you are
- He loves you and honours all who come to him

My part in Praying for Others

- In our Church community, we depend on one another. It is our duty and joy to pray for each other and seek God's blessing for each other
- Be aware of the need of all who come for prayer, remembering that we are all subject to weakness, vulnerability and need in areas of our lives
- Use the time in the service while the laying on of hands and anointing is happening to pray for wholeness and healing in the world, the church and within ourselves.

You may like to pray this prayer as you prepare.

O God, through all the changing moments of our life,
we yearn for your healing and holding.

We pray for ourselves and all your people,
here in this place and far from here.

May we work and pray for the coming of your kingdom,
and catch glimpses of its coming, even here and now.

Bring your healing into each person's life
and give us the energy you know we need to be part of your
healing of neighbour, church and world.

We ask this in Jesus name. Amen