

ORDER OF WORSHIP
WEOLEY HILL; URC 13 SEPTEMBER 2020
Led by Rev Richard Alford

Theme – watchmen & women

Scripture sentences

Psalm 143:10 Teach me to do your will, for you are my God; may your good spirit lead me on level ground.

Hymn

MP 467 Morning has broken

Prayers

Father God we come to you this morning

We Worship and praise you for you are a great and wonderful God

We recognise that we are not worthy to even approach you

Lord we sin in so many ways – to you by forgetting you and your Word

To each other in the way we speak and think about others

Forgive us we pray and fill us again with the Holy Spirit

PAUSE

Thank you Lord that our sins are forgiven when we come to you and confess them.

So we praise you Lord – we worship you Lord

You have cared for your people from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

Moses and the prophets and then your Son – our Saviour Jesus

Who taught us how we should pray

Lords prayer

Reading

message)

Ezekiel 33:1-11 (included with the

Offering & dedication

Lord we ask your blessing on the gifts of money given in the different ways we can and we thank you. Also bless those people who serve you and the church in many ways now and in the time to come. Amen

Hymn

MP 188 God is our strength

Prayers for others

Lord we pray for those affected by the virus
For those we know who are sick and in pain
Let us remember them and bring them before God

SILENCE

We pray for those who are frightened and afraid of catching the virus
who have locked themselves away and who are worried about what it
might mean if they do catch it

Bring any you know before God

SILENCE

We pray for the community of Weoley Hill, the church and those who
live around this church

May this church be a blessing to this community and may this
community be a place of peace.

SILENCE

We pray for those affected by the stabbings in the centre of
Birmingham

For those who are injured – Lord heal them we pray

And for the family of the person who died.

Lord may they know your presence and your peace

SILENCE

And finally, Lord we pray for this country.

There have been many good things that have come out of the current
situation people have helped each other people have gone the extra mile
for others

Lord may that sense of community never be lost as we go on through
the year and things start to get back to some sort of normal

Amen

Message

Theme – watchmen & women

Although I only asked for the first 11 verses to be read I will refer to the rest of the chapter so when you go home I suggest you read the whole chapter

We are living in strange times with COVID 19 and its consequences, and the lock downs and their effects on our lives

So we are living through something we have never experienced before at least people of my generation and younger haven't

Ezekiel was living a strange time

He had been carted off to Babylon when Nebuchadnezzar had invaded Judah, the southern kingdom along with the king and the higher echelons of society.

But if you carry on reading chapter 33 then we will note that the news has come that finally the Babylonians had enough of Judah and its rebellious ways and had sacked it completely. Burning the temple and carrying off most of the rest of the population.

This was the scene that Ezekiel was prophesying earlier on in the book but in our chapter the theme seems to take a different line after the judgements of the previous chapters. Now Ezekiel is being told to tell the people that they have to make choices

The comparisons with today are stark

Later on in the chapter God condemns those who are making a profit out of their situation a bit like today – I have heard stories like people being phoned and the person on the phone saying that they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for the COVID and then the person on the phone is asking for your bank details because you have to pay to be tested yourself. A scam and there are plenty of others out there.

But there is a flip side of this as well in that others are really trying to help people – and I hope we do not lose that sense of community

But many people are afraid and wondering why and are turning to all sorts of things and many to churches web pages

The Gas Street church in the centre of Birmingham had 2,500 hits last week for their morning service– that is far more than the building can actually hold

And I believe that God is doing a new work amongst the people

As he said in Isaiah 43:19 See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.

Is God doing a new thing in this country?

And if so what is to be our response?

Is it to do the things we did before the lockdown?

Or is it to listen to God and respond to his commands?

To do new thing?

The passage talks about our responsibility to be a watchman or woman, to warn others about the results of their sin and that has always been the responsibility of God's people to proclaim the message that although God is a God of love he is also a God of judgement.

And as it says in Romans 6:23 The wages of sin is death

But also, that God loves those who come to him

Many people are seeking God at this time and it is our responsibility to

be as Ezekiel says and to warn people about the judgement of God

Many will hear and simply say 'ok so what' But it mustn't stop us

Those who respond will find – as we already know a great deal of peace and certainty in these unsettled times

And they can sing of God's love as we can sing although not in church yet except for choirs

Amen

Hymn

MP 631 Tell out my soul

Blessing

May the world continue to surprise us, love continue to astonish us, life continue to captivate us, faith continue to sustain us, and may God go with us always, now and for evermore. **Amen.**