

**Dorset South and West Circuit – Written Service – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2023 by Revd John Yarrien**  
**“Feeding and Thirsting”**

**Opening Prayer: -**

May you be strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit; Spirit of God, enter us and fill us with compassion and justice. May you be encouraged by Jesus Christ to love one another. Christ Jesus, enter our hearts and fill us with Your love. May you be renewed by our Creator God; Ancient of Days, re-create in us a sense of awe and wonder at Your works. May we enter this time of worship, a new creation, ready to do the work Christ has given us to do. Amen.

**Active Thank You Prayer: - Eyes, Ears, Mouth and Nose “Thank you” Prayers**

*In our prayers today we are going to thank God for all the senses he has given us, with which we can experience our world. Even if some of those senses don't work as well as we would like, we all have ways of feeling God's goodness in and through our bodies.*

*Perhaps You have seen something beautiful (Touch EYE)*

*Or Heard Something amazing (Touch EAR)*

*Or Smelt something delicious (Touch NOSE)*

*Or Felt something lovely (Touch HAND)*

*Whatever it is you would like to thank God For, spend a few moments thanking God for those things you have experienced with your senses.*

**Then Say out loud: -**

Thank you Father, For all the good things we can, See, hear, touch, taste and smell. Thank you for our wonderful World. And for the bodies that you have given each of us to explore it with. Amen.

**Songs: - STF 544 – As the Deer Pants**

As the deer pants for the water,  
So my soul longs after You,  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship You.

I want You more than gold or silver,  
Only You can satisfy.  
You alone are the real joy-giver  
And the apple of my eye.

*You alone are my strength, my shield,  
To you alone may my spirit yield.  
You alone are my heart's desire  
And I long to worship You.*

You are my friend and You are my Brother,  
Even though you are King.  
I love You more than any other,  
So much more than anything

**Prayer of Confession: -**

Loving God, You have called us to be your servants, To offer our service to Christ, To one another, To your Church, And to your world. **Forgive us that so often we have failed you.**

Forgive us that we are concerned to serve only ourselves, Our own interests, Our own needs, Our own desires, Our own ends. **Forgive us that so often we have failed you.**

*We pause for a few moments to bring our confessions (things we want to say sorry to God that we have done or said in the past few days / week) of heart and mind to God.*

Know that Through Christ, God forgives all who truly say they are sorry. That we may lay down our burdens of the past, And live in the light of his eternal kingdom. Now gracious God, we pray that you would teach us

to serve seeking no reward, To love without expecting love in return, To give without counting the cost, To follow without holding back, To live each day as your people. **Amen.**

### **Reading: John 6: 1 – 15**

6After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. <sup>2</sup>A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. <sup>3</sup>Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. <sup>4</sup>Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. <sup>5</sup>When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” <sup>6</sup>He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. <sup>7</sup>Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” <sup>8</sup>One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, <sup>9</sup>“There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” <sup>10</sup>Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. <sup>11</sup>Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. <sup>12</sup>When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” <sup>13</sup>So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. <sup>14</sup>When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

<sup>15</sup>When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

### **Reflection - “Knowing what we need”**

In the reading we just heard – there was a Really Huge Crowd – over 5000 men, women and children. The disciples come running over to Jesus. And Jesus Said to them – HOW ARE WE GOING TO FEED ALL THESE PEOPLE?

A Boy, similar kind of age to young Samuel here – and presents 5 loaves of Bread and 2 fish. The Disciples laugh and panic – WELL THAT’S NOT GOING TO FEED ALL THESE PEOPLE. Jesus gets the people to sit. He Lifted the bread and Fish – gave thanks, broke them into pieces and then got the disciples to distribute bread and fish – and there was ENOUGH, MORE THAN ENOUGH, to feed all the people, and there were 12 baskets full left over.

**Now did you notice, that in the story it was Jesus who asked the Question – “How are we going to feed all these people”.** Well, I think this tells us that Jesus knew exactly what he was going to do that – and he did – feed all those 5000 people. God always knows what we need because God knows everything about us. God knows that on a hot summer day when we are thirsty that we need water. And in our story for today, God knows that hungry people need food.

The boy’s lunch was enough to feed everyone in the crowd! Most of the time, God provides what we need in ordinary ways. But every now and again, God surprises us with miracles that show the amazing power of God. God doesn’t always give us what we want, but we can count on God to provide everything we need.

Let’s pray: Thank you God for providing everything we need. Help us always to be thankful.  
Amen.

### **Prayers of Intercession: - “Prayer Tree”**

*There are so many things happening in our world today that we need to lift to God to ask for his intervention, through his grace and mercy for all people. Wars need and terrorism need to be stopped, people who are hungry need to be fed, people we know who are poorly and ill need our prayers for healing, for hope and for wholeness.*

*Spend a few moments in prayer, praying for the World, the Church, your community, those who are ill or in need of prayer, and finally for yourselves.*

**Gathering our Prayers together:**

God our creator and sustainer,

We offer you these prayers

Our Candles of Hope and our leaves rooted to our tree of prayers.

May you hold these prayers for people, places and situations in your hands of love and peace,

And carry them towards the dawn of your eternal kingdom.

**Amen.**

**Reflection: - "Thirsting, Feeding & Serving"**

So we come to the final part of this written service. Feeding, Thirsting and Serving.

Jesus is asking us an important question this Sunday: "What are your five loaves and two fishes?" What is our hidden treasure that we can use to feed the lives and souls of those in need in our communities across the circuit.

When the people of God, meet together, to listen to Jesus, across Dorset South and West circuit – What do you bring, that feeds and nourishes our community?

The story of the feeding of the 5000 reminds us that the community gathered at this miraculous scene were all hungry – maybe physically hungry and maybe spiritually hungry. But what do we bring to our community that feeds the Body, Mind and Soul.

The boy in the story only has the contents of his lunch basket to offer, towards the awesome task of feeding a whole community gathered, to listen to Jesus. We could focus again on the fact that Jesus lifts the gifts, breaks bread and fish, and then through God's grace and holy spirit, feeds thousands of people.

But the miracle of feeding 5000 touches powerfully, on the reality that this story is not just about the miracle that Jesus performs, but about our willingness to give and share everything we have, to feed and grow and nourish the kingdom of God.

I love the phrase in the song – take my fears and inhibitions, all my burdens and ambitions, use all of me to feed everyone. This speaks of our need to surrender, all that we are, every breathe that we take, every tear that we shed, every smile that we share, our need to surrender it all to God, that he might transform us and all the world, through his great love for us.

We might worry about what little we have to offer – just like the boy, wondering if his gift of Bread and fish could possibly be enough to feed a crowd. Maybe you feel like you cant get involved in all the activities that take place in your own church or across the circuit, or your not very comfortable with reading the Bible, praying out loud. Maybe knitting the Angels for the Christmas project is, like me just a skill I haven't conquered. But lets not focus anymore on what we cant do. Lets offer what we can do, lets offer who we are, wholeheartedly to God, and lets see what God does amongst.

If you love to pray – Pray for God to pour out his holy spirit on our Church and community.

If you love to knit – pick up a knitting pattern and some wool – and lets get knitting our angels for Christmas.

If you like to make a cake or to serve tea and coffee – maybe you could come and share those gifts.

God doesn't call us to say yes I have all those skills – here I am, he says, thank you for offering you can bring – thank you for your bread or your fish – I can transform that – I can build on that, I make my kingdom here, when you first offer your hearts to me, offering all you have to give.

Lets Surrender ourselves  
Lets explore our gifts,  
Lets bring our all and ourselves  
Lets put them at the foot of cross, and see what God does with what we have to offer.

Amen.

**Song: - 120 - The Servant King**

From heaven you came helpless babe  
Entered our world, your glory veiled  
Not to be served but to serve  
And give Your life that we might live

*This is our God, The Servant King  
He calls us now to follow Him  
To bring our lives as a daily offering  
Of worship to The Servant King*

There in the garden of tears  
My heavy load he chose to bear  
His heart with sorrow was torn  
'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said

Come see His hands and His feet  
The scars that speak of sacrifice  
Hands that flung stars into space  
To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve  
And in our lives enthrone Him  
Each other's needs to prefer  
For it is Christ we're serving.

**Blessing: -**

May the grace of God thrill your hearts,  
The mercy of God transform your minds,  
The Peace of God flood your souls  
And the Love of God flow through your lives,  
To the honour of his name.

The Blessing of God,  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
Be with you,  
With those you love,  
And those you are called to Love,  
Now in the Name of Christ.  
Amen.

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