



'PUTTING DOWN AND MOVING ON'

***PAUL LANGHAM AND A TEAM FROM
CHRIST CHURCH CLIFTON***

Sunday 15 May 2022, 6.30 to 8.00 pm T

The church will be open for prayer and reflection
from 3.00 to 5.00 pm

Tea and cakes will be served from 5.45 pm

'There is a time for everything and a season for every activity'

The year 2022 is a year of transition for All Saints in so many ways – emerging from Covid, a change of Rector, departures of much-loved and valued staff members and hopefully by the end of the year, the start of the transformation of our building. And in our personal lives, many of us have experienced both joyful and painful events and transitions,

Nearly all transition is marked by three stages: the ending, the waiting, and new beginnings. The service on 15 May is a special opportunity for us to come together in fellowship with one another and before God to reflect and respond on this time of transition. This is an invitation to come ready to lay down what needs to be laid down, and ready to move forward in unity with each other into the new season which the Lord is preparing for us.

We hope that the following framework will be helpful – we invite you to see it as a journey which can be taken both alone, maybe with your prayer triplet or your home group. As you walk through these reflective questions, please allow yourself to feel whatever comes – disappointment, excitement, sadness, fear, hope, or anything else. Invite the Holy Spirit to be your companion on the journey, and remember that *‘we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.’*

Endings

It’s important to acknowledge that every transition involves a sort of a loss and a letting go for what was.

With this in mind, spend some time acknowledging any losses and disappointments as well as situations where you might need to forgive or be forgiven. Draw strength from:

‘The Spirit of the Sovereign Lord is on me, because the Lord has anointed me

- *to bind up the broken-hearted*
- *to proclaim freedom for the captives*
- *to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve*

- *to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair.*

They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendour.' *Isaiah 61*

Waiting

Between endings and beginnings, there is a period of waiting. In this space, we begin to anticipate what is to come. This stage can feel anxious or unsettling as well as hopeful and full of expectation. Because this is an essential part of the journey, it is worth investing time to process these emotions.

What about this transition do you perceive will be difficult? What questions do you have?

'Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. For John baptised with water, but in a few days you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit.' Acts 1

New Beginnings

After the putting down and the waiting phases comes an opportunity for new life. Often, new beginnings can only exist because of a transition. The loss we face creates the space required for new life, growth, and opportunity.

What hopes do you have for our church family on the other side of this transition? What are you most excited about? Ask the Holy Spirit to give you scriptures, words, and pictures to encourage your brothers and sisters as we all look to the future together.

'See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.' Sing to the LORD a new song, his praise from the ends of the earth.'

Isaiah 42

So we invite every member of All Saints (or someone from every family) to come to the service on 15 May, so that we can acknowledge all that has been good and not so good in the past AND accept the Lord's gracious invitation into his future.

Paul Langham and a team from Christchurch Clifton in Bristol have generously and prayerfully put this service together for us. There will be times of stillness and of worship, times of listening to the word of God and a sharing of the Lord's supper and an opportunity for all of us to bring and share a scripture, a word, a picture of encouragement for the future with you. It promises to be a special time.

'However, as it is written:

*'What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard,
and what no human mind has conceived' –
the things God has prepared for those who love him –
these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.'*

1 Corinthians 2

'Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus.'

Philippians 3

'Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy that was set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.'

Hebrews 3