

Opening Hymn:

'We have a dream'

We have a dream: this nation will arise,
and truly live according to its creed,
that all are equal in their makers eyes,
and none shall suffer through another's greed

We have a dream; our children shall be free
from judgements based on colour or on race;
free to become whatever they may be,
of their own choosing in the light of grace.

We have a dream that truth will overcome
the fear and anger of our present day;
that black and white will share a common home,
and hand in hand will walk the pilgrim way.

Adapted by Michael Forster from a speech by Martin Luther King Jr

Tune: Woodlands

Complete Anglican Hymns Old & New 715

First Reading

Romans 8:18-25

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

'Future Glory'

18 I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. 19 For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; 20 for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope 21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now; 23 and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

Gospel Reading:

Matthew 6: 25-end

New Revised Standard Version, Anglicised

'Do Not Worry'

25 'Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? 28 And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, 29 yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. 30 But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? 31 Therefore do not worry, saying, "What will we eat?" or "What will we drink?" or "What will we wear?" 32 For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 'So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Sermon notes:

Today's readings are chosen from the ordinary Sunday lectionary for the 12th of February, but they fit very well with where we are in the CofE in terms of Racial Justice.

St Paul explores the experience of waiting, of enduring labour pains, but feeling full of hope, because of our faith in God.

Jesus gives us a way to live with the tension between where we are as a church and where we want to be – calling his disciples to be striving for the kingdom but working steadily and focussing on the tasks of each day.

The Church of England has come to recognise that it failed to fully welcome the diversity of the world church into its local congregations in the past. But it is now trying at all levels to be a place where Christians of global majority heritage can feel 'at ease' and exercise their God-given spiritual gifts for the good of all.

Of the ordinands recommended for training within the Church of England last year, 13% identified themselves as being of global majority heritage. The church is changing to more fully reflect and represent the diversity of the country we serve. Let us all work to ensure that when that cohort of ministers are ordained to serve in parishes they are truly welcomed and enabled to thrive in their ministry to our communities.

Hymn before the Eucharist:

'For the healing of the nations'

For the healing of the nations

Lord, we pray with one accord,
for a just and equal sharing
of the things that earth affords.
To a life of love in action
help us rise and pledge our word.

Lead us forward into freedom,
from despair your world release,
that, redeemed from war and hatred,
all may come and go in peace.
Show us how through care and goodness
fear will die and hope increase.

You, Creator God, have written
your great name on humankind;
for our growing in your likeness
bring the life of Christ to mind;
that by our response and service
earth its destiny may find.

Closing hymn:

'Brother, sister, let me serve you'

Brother, sister, let me serve you,
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to,
Let you be my servant too

We are pilgrims on a journey
We are brothers on the road
We are here to help each other
Walk the mile and bear the load

I will hold the Christ light for you
In the night-time of your fear
I will hold my hand out to you
Speak the peace you long to hear

I will weep when you are weeping
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you
I will share your joy and sorrow
Till we've seen this journey through

When we sing to God in heaven

We shall find such harmony
Born of all we've known together
Of Christ's love and agony

Brother, sister, let me serve you
Let me be as Christ to you
Pray that I may have the grace to
Let you be my servant too.

Words: Richard Gillard

Tune: Servant Song, Common Praise