Dear friend

Many thanks to Judith for preparing this week's virtual service. She has suggested as a hymn 'Lord thy word abideth', here sung by North Stoneham and Bassett Parish Church choir
https://youtu.be/qcghwj7zZZg

A gently upbeat version of 'Give thanks with a grateful heart', courtesy of Chet Valley churches
https://youtu.be/2inhx3kytGQ

'Sing joyfully', by William Byrd, with wonderful word painting, sung delicately by the Tallis Scholars and a rolling score to challenge singers
https://youtu.be/9uK9nVVbGHw

From Martin, a worship song; LOVKN - "Solid Rock" (LIVE) with kazoo
Chilled, acoustic version of the hymn by a new artist, Steven Lufkin
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxghGbjJZaQ

And finally, an organ voluntary to play us out. Daniel Cook plays VW's prelude on the hymn tune Rhosymedre at Salisbury Cathedral.
https://youtu.be/PFdMrkXE2_s

Enjoy!
Chris

Service sheet for Sunday 4th July
5th Sunday after Trinity

Teach us, O Christ, to cast off all bonds of prejudice and custom, and to let your love direct every enterprise on which we embark and every labour that we undertake.
(Catherine Booth 1829-1890)

CONFESSION
Holy God, when we ignore your living word, when we close our hearts and minds to your open word, when we make it hard for others to hear your generous word, you wait to be gracious to us.
May we hear that word of grace, spoken, written, incarnate, so that our days may be alight with your truth and our lives may be renewed in your service. Amen.
(Alison Tomlin)

COLLECT
Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of the Church is governed and sanctified: hear our prayer which we offer for all your faithful people, that in their vocation and ministry they may serve you in holiness and in truth, to the glory of your name; through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

READINGS
Ezekiel 2: 1-5; Psalm 123; 2 Corinthians 12: 2-10; Mark 6: 1-13

REFLECTION
It's not easy! It can be tempting to have favourite 'good bits' from the Bible – stories with happy endings, positive in outlook and leaving the reader in an optimistic glow. Today's readings, in different ways, underline the difficulties which faced early preachers and prophets. Ezekiel, commissioned by God, is warned of the pitfalls of preaching to 'a rebellious house' and the psalmist cries out for God's mercy. 'Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn...of the contempt of the proud'. Jesus, in his home town, his home synagogue, is greeted with astonishment; his hearers are offended by him. He has arrived after a series of wonderful healings, where he has been followed by crowds hanging on his every word. Now he is treated with contempt and cynicism. Well, they know him, and his family, don't they?

Mark's gospel account underlines Jesus's local, very ordinary, family life, and we have the impression of a dismissive audience, to Jesus's own amazement. *We* might give up in the face of such opposition; Jesus just carries on teaching elsewhere, and in his turn, commissions his disciples to spread the word, which they do to good effect. Paul tells of his hardships as well, reminding us that it is God's grace which has turned his own weakness into strength.

PRAYERS
God of the living word, give us the faith to receive your message, the wisdom to know what it means, and the courage to put it into practice.
(A New Zealand Prayer Book).

We pray for the church throughout the world; for all who teach and for all who listen. Help us to hear your word with open minds; not to be so set in our ways that we cannot learn something new. Give us grace to experience the fresh and the new, so that constantly, we may grow in faith.

We pray for the world and especially for all who are in trouble or in danger; for the people of the Tigray region of Ethiopia; for Iran; for Afghanistan; for people suffering extreme heat; for regions of the world devastated by natural or man-made disaster.

We pray for the sick and suffering, the lonely, the anxious and the depressed; for all places still experiencing high Covid infection rates; for people separated from those they love. We spend quiet moments praying for those known to us……

We thank you for all the good things we enjoy and all the love we have been shown. Help us to share that love with all whom we will meet this week.

WE SAY THE LORD'S PRAYER

WE SHARE THE GRACE

A FINAL PRAYER

Flood our lives with your grace, O Lord. Fill our whole being with your radiance, our innermost souls with your presence, and our very wills with your strength. Let us shine with the light of Christ, let us preach by example and let us carry nothing in our hearts but your love, through Christ our Lord. Amen.
(John Henry Newman, 1801-90)