Good morning! Good morning and welcome to Emmanuel church Northstowe this morning! It’s so great to be gathered together this morning to, taking the time out to encourage one another, to hear God’s word, and to worship the risen, living Lord Jesus.

My name’s Nathanael, I’m a member of the church here, I’ll be guiding us through the service. A bit later on Josh will be preaching from a passage in Matthew’s account of Jesus life, as it’s recorded in the Bibles you can find dotted around the seats.

Before we go any further though, let’s take a moment of silence to calm our hearts and minds, to focus on the almighty judge and justifier, to focus on the one who became man, died on a cross, and rose that we might be unified with him. A moment of quiet, after which the band will start and we’ll stand to sing our first song.

**Song**

*Who has held the oceans in his hand (Behold our God)*

**Prayer**

*Almighty Lord, as we gather before you this morning we each come from different weeks, different mornings, different pressures, different stresses, different joys and different pains. And yet we are here united as one church gathered to offer you the praise due to the eternal king who, seated on the throne, who will reign forever, and who one day will fill the earth with you glory. We give you the glory Lord. Amen.*

Do take a seat.

The opening line of that song asks the question “who has held the oceans in his hands?”. It continues “who has numbered every grain of sand?”. The chorus of course answers “Behold our God…”! It is our God who holds the oceans in his hands, who knows every grain of sand.

The second verse picks up on this greatness and ‘bigness’ of our God, on the difference between him and us by asking “who has given counsel to the Lord?” “who can teach the one who knows all things?”. Him who knows all things – the one who has planned and is in control of all of history. What kind of person could give advice to him, tell him something he doesn’t know? Surely God is completely unlike us humans.

And then we get to the third verse. Which asks the question “who has felt the nails upon his hands?”. “who has felt the nail upon his hands?”. Those same hands which held the oceans, are those which were pierced for our sins. Because the almighty God from the beginning of time had how we who had turned away from him might be brought back to him. And that involved God becoming human, becoming like us in every way. Knowing what it means to be tempted to sin in every way, and yet he did not concede.

The passage we’re going to be thinking about today is from the hours leading up to Jesus’ trial and crucifixion. At this time he is deeply troubled as he knows what’s coming, as he know why he came to earth. To understand the importance of what’s going on here we need to know that Jesus, while being the eternal God, was fully human, and tempted in every way.

I’ve asked Rosie to come and read a short poem, which I think does well to set into context this idea of God becoming man, which we call the ‘incarnation’. Listen and think about the words as Rosie reads them.

***Have poem read [Rosie]***

Thanks Rosie.

*For grace and truth in fullness came*

*And showed the Father’s glory*

*When Jesus donned our flesh and died:*

*This is the gospel story.*

The fact that God became man is hard to understand, but it is something which should cause great joy for us. It means that God himself has experienced the troubles, pressures and temptations just as we do; but supremely it means that as a man he was able to take the punishment for sin on humanity’s behalf, so that we might be put right with God. This is good news. The gospel story.

Let’s stand and sing of our wonderful Lord and saviour now.

**Songs**

*See the man*

*Jesus, you were tempted (Jesus, you’re my hope)*

Do take a seat.

As I already mentioned, we’re going to be looking at the time leading up to Jesus’ arrest and trial this morning, and Mark is going to come and read that passage now, after which Alex is going to help us start thinking about it. Thanks Mark

**Reading – Mark Cardwell**

**Children’s talk – Alex Cardwell**

Thank you Alex! We’re going to stand and sing two more songs now, in which speak of the amazing servant nature of our Lord, and the hope we can place in him.

**Songs**

*Servant king*

*My hope is built on nothing less (Cornerstone)*

Do take a seat.

**Notices**

Just a couple of things to tell you about in church life:

***[TODO: ask Josh]***

We’re going to take a break in our service now. This is a chance for the children to go out to their groups, for you to say hello to your neighbour, or just to sit quietly if that’s more your style. I’ll call us together again in a few moments.

**Break**

Great, I think that’s everyone back now.

In a moment Josh is going to come and bring God’s word for us, but before that we’re going to spend some time praying together, with a particular focus on those facing hard choices, and on Christians around the world who face persecution because of their faith. Let’s unite our hearts in prayer.

**Intercessions**

*Heavenly Father, we come before you in the confidence that you understand the pressures we face, that you are compassionate, and that you are the Lord who is in control of all things. We pray for all those facing hard decisions at this time or in the coming months; choices which may affect families, jobs, relationships of all kinds. We pray they would be granted wisdom and discernment. That their eyes may be opened to the barriers holding them back from spiritual progress, and that they may walk confidently as they discern the next steps to be taken. We pray for clear understanding, and peace in decisions which have been made. Heavenly father we know that your thoughts are not our thoughts, and your ways not our ways, and so above all we pray that those facing decisions would pursue your will above all else, and that your will would be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

*Lord God, we praise you for the freedom with which we can meet here as a community of believers. But we are aware that in many places in the world this is not the case. Sovereign God we remember those who are imprisoned for their faith and ask that they would see that even though they are captive, their chains have furthered the gospel, not frustrated it. May they inspire and embolden their fellow believers to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly. We pray particularly for the country of Brunei, as Islamic law comes into force there. Comfort, Lord, those in that country who must sacrifice so much to follow you. Heavenly father we pray you would make us always mindful of our brothers and sisters around the world who need us to stand with them as they suffer in your name.*

*Finally Lord we pray for Josh as he brings your word to use now. We pray your spirit will be at work as he speaks to communicate the passage well, and in our hearts to receive it well, that your glory might be magnified and go forth into the world.*

*Hear our prayer, o Lord, we pray in Jesus name. Amen.*

**Sermon**

*“My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done”.* These were the words of the Lord Jesus Christ as he submitted himself to the father’s will so that we might be set free and brought into right relationship with him. What wondrous love. Let’s stand a sing in response to this love of our Lord.

**Song**

*I stand amazed in the presence*

And so: “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 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.” Amen.