Good Morning everyone! Good morning and welcome to Emmanuel Church Northstowe this morning. And a special welcome if you’re visiting today, do say hello to the people around you, and come and say hello me after. I’m Nathanael, I’m a member of the church here.

**[pause]**

We’re gathered here to focus on our God and to encourage one another. We live in a world which has been corrupted by sin. We see the effects of that in the blindness and deafness that exists around us – both physical and spiritual. But in our God we have hope of healing, hope for the future. Hope even in the face of death.

In Isaiah 29 v18-19, the prophet looks forward to the hope there is for the future, and writes “In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see. Once more the humble will rejoice in the Lord; the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.” Let’s come and rejoice before our God now, the Holy one of Israel, as those who are needy and humbled, as we stand and sing 2 songs of praise. Please stand.

**[Songs]**

* **Come praise and glorify**
* **Who breaks the power (?)**

**[prayer]** Lord God, you are the one who broke the powers of sin and darkness, who brings our chaos back into order. We recognise our inadequacy and neediness before you, and come to you as the only one able to work healing and redemption for us. We praise you for this Lord. Amen

Do take a seat.

For the past few months we as a church have been working our way through the gospel of Matthew in our morning services and, after something a bit different last week, we’re going to pick up with that again this Morning. So Laura (who has just recently joined the church here) is going to come and read the next passage we’re going to be looking at this morning.

**[reading] Matthew 9:27-34**

**[children’s talk]**

For the next bit now, I’m going to need some help. I’m going to need a volunteer, and whoever helps me is going to have to be able to listen very carefully to what I tell them, is going to have to do what I say, and is going to have to trust me. So, can I have a volunteer.

Great thanks come on up. Remind me your name?

Ok, so I said you’re going to have to listen carefully to my instructions, to do what I say, and to trust me. You think you can do that? So let’s just test that. Can you do this ***[pull a face]****.* Great, that’s a good start. Can you do this ***[rub stomach, pat head]***  and this ***[other way round]***. Brilliant ok.

So now, what I want you to do is put both of your arms out in front of you. Now I’m going to give you a cup in each hand. And I’ve got here a bottle of water, ***[drink]*** and I’m going to put a little water in each cup.

Now let me take this cup back. What I want you to do just now is to close your eyes, hold the cup on your head, spin in a circle, and then hold the cup out in front of you again. Can you do that? Go on then. Great.

Now. Here’s what I want you to do next. I’m going to count to 3, and I want you to turn the cup upside down above your head. Do you understand? Can you do that? Do you trust me? He says yes! Are you ready? One, two, three! Great! Well done – go take a seat, let’s give him a clap!

What we’ve just seen is an example of faith. [name] believed what I said. He said it with his mouth, and demonstrated by his actions – he turned a cup of water over his head! But, do you think that it was his faith that held the water in the cup? No (it was actually a sponge). But Because of his faith [name] was able to do what I said and didn’t get wet!

In the story that Laura read form the bible just now, we saw an even more amazing example of faith. Two blind men believed that Jesus could heal them and give them their sight back. They believed he was able to do what they did, and because of their faith they were healed.

This is a picture of what putting faith in Jesus is for each of us. Jesus offers healing to each of us – not just for things like eyes that do not work, but for our biggest problem. Jesus offers healing for our hears, for all the ways that we have turned away from him. And he offers this healing on the basis of faith.

We’re going to sing 2 songs again now, which speak of the promises of believing in God, and the great power of faith in our lives. Now the first of these songs is often sang as a round, so when it comes to that just pick a half to sing and I’m sure it will all be excellent. Please stand.

**[Songs]**

* **For God so loved the world**
* **By faith we see the hand of God**

Great, do sit down. And let me welcome you again to Emmanuel Church Northstowe this morning! After the service this morning there will be tea, coffee, cold drinks and various snacks served at the back corner of the church there, so do stick around to chat afterwards – especially if you’re visiting, we’d love to get to know you.

A few reminders about next week. The first thing to remember is that the clocks are going back, so if you arrive an hour ***[think]*** early to church, everyone will know why. The service next week will be a family service, including a thanksgiving for baby Rosalie, and a church lunch afterwards. It should be a wonderful time.

Josh has a very exciting notice about health and safety.

Thanks Josh. For now though the children can make their way out to their groups – if you’re not sure where to go just ask someone – and the rest of us will take a short break now. Say hello to the people around you, and I’ll call things to order again shortly.

**[Break]**

Great if I could draw your attention back to the front that would be excellent. Do pick up your conversations again afterwards over a drink.

In a moment Josh is going to be sharing form God’s word based on the passage which we read earlier, but first Dawn is going to come and lead us in a time of prayer for the church and the world. Thanks Dawn.

**[prayer]**

**[sermon]**

Before Jesus died, rose, and returned to heaven he put in place a meal of remembrance to be repeated by those throughout history who have believed in him. This is a time for us to actively remember Christ’s death in our place, and to place our faith in him again. If you’re a visitor here this morning who loves the Lord and is in good standing with your own church then please join us. If you have not placed your faith in Jesus death in your place, then please just let the bread and wine pass you by, and perhaps use the time to reflect on all we have been hearing. It’s great to have you with us.

Before we come to the table though, let’s stand and sing a song to remind us of what the table represents, and to set our hearts on him again. Please stand.

**[song]**

* **Behold the Lamb (Communion Hymn)**

Do sit down, and let’s pray:

**[prayer]** Dear Heavenly Father, we lower our heads before you and we confess that we have too often forgotten that we are yours. Sometimes we carry on our lives as if there was no God and we fall short of being a credible witness to You. We behave like those who are blind, and those who cannot speak. We confess these things in our hearts before you now.

The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 11 “For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.””

**[prayer]** Almighty God, your word tells us that it is for grace we have been saved, through faith. The preciousness of your death cannot be measured. What can we do but bow before such power and love? As we remember you by sharing this bread please seal these things to our hearts and have us wonder and worship. Amen.

If you’re participating, do take a piece of bread and hold onto it, and we’ll eat together once everyone has been served.

The body of Christ, broken for you.

Paul Continues in 1 Corinthians: “In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”

**[prayer]** Almighty God, we know that we cannot claim to be righteous apart from your righteousness given to us through faith in Christ. We praise and honour you for this New Covenant sealed by the blood of your Son poured out. As we drink this cup in remembrance of Christ’s sacrifice for our sins, make us ever more aware of your eternal presence with us by your Holy Spirit, and grant us the confidence of those sealed as your righteous ones. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Do hold onto your cups again so we can drink together.

The blood of Christ, shed for you.

**[prayer]** Almighty God, our Father in heaven, we praise you for the wonder of Jesus’ sacrifice for us. We praise you that his death brings salvation from sin. We praise you that there is now no condemnation for those who have placed their faith in Christ Jesus. Father in heaven, as those declared righteous by Christ’s death in our place, we ask that you might give us eyes to see and mouths to speak so we may witness to You in our world. Remind us to be who You would have us to be regardless of what we are doing or who we are with. Hold us to You and build our relationship with You and with those You have given us on earth. Amen.

Jesus Christ has worked healing for each of us, and offers it to all on the basis of faith. He has healed our blindness, and given us voices to sing. This truly is good news, amazing news. Let’s stand now, amazed, in the presence of our God.

**[song]**

* I stand amazed in the presence

And now may Christ dwell in our hearts through faith—that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God. Amen.