11th October 2026 – Morning Service

Mindful of God's Love

Rev Jem Hawkins

Call to Worship: Isaiah 25:6-8 (GNB)

Here on Mount Zion the LORD Almighty will prepare a banquet for all the nations of the world—a banquet of the richest food and the finest wine. Here he will suddenly remove the cloud of sorrow that has been hanging over all the nations. The Sovereign LORD will destroy death forever! He will wipe away the tears from everyone's eyes and take away the disgrace his people have suffered throughout the world. The LORD himself has spoken.

StF 67 – This, this is the God we adore

1) This, this is the God we adore,
our faithful, unchangeable friend,
whose love is as great as his power,
and neither knows measure nor end:

2) 'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,
whose Spirit shall guide us safe home;
we'll praise him for all that is past,
and trust him for all that's to come.

Joseph Hart

Welcome

Welcome, as we share in worship with each other and with our brothers, sisters, siblings in Christ around the world. Today we look at God's streams of love and guidance through life, that we may be mindful of God's love.

Opening Prayers

Almighty God we gather together in your Name, as your people as we share our love and devotion to you in thought, word, song and reflection. We are in awe of your lovingkindness which reaches out to us and to the world as you love us, hold us and encourage us to grow as Your children. Lord, forgive us for the times we have hurt others, when we have hurt ourselves, when we have hurt You through our words, our thoughts or our actions. Even as we pray for forgiveness we rejoice in the promise of Christ that through Him our sins are forgiven, relationships renewed and our hope restored. Praise to You, Creator God, made flesh in Jesus, and living in us through the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The reading from Isaiah chapter 25 which we heard earlier paints a picture of battles, coping with loss, pain, disappointment, trauma and disgrace. Today there are battles which people struggle with. There are conflicts, deprivations, hatred, unfairness and injustice.

Let us take a moment to lift up to God those who are caught in the midst of these…
Loving God, may your presence bring hope and peace, In Jesus's name. **Amen.**

We look to God to help us and guide us: He will wipe away the tears from everyone's eyes.
May he wipe our tears with love, and may we let God's Spirit reign in us. **Amen.**

StF 63 – Over all the earth

1) Over all the earth, you reign on high,
every mountain stream, every sunset sky.
But my one request, Lord, my only aim
is that you'd reign in me again.

Ch) Lord, reign in me, reign in your power
over all my dreams, in my darkest hour.
You are the Lord of all I am,
so won't you reign in me again?

2) Over every thought, over every word,
may my life reflect the beauty of my Lord;
'cause You mean more to me
than any earthly thing,
so won't you reign in me again?

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As we travel the journey of life, we know we are loved by God, and we learn through experience that God shares the journey with us. He is like a shepherd who guides us through the highs, lows and mundane journey of life. There will be times when struggle and times that we rejoice! But always, we know God is with us! Others may leave us or hurt us or look down on us, but God loves us and stays with us always. Psalm 23 says this beautifully:

Reading: Psalm 23:1-6 (NLT)

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.
He lets me rest in green meadows; he leads me beside peaceful streams. He renews my strength.
He guides me along right paths, bringing honour to his name.
Even when I walk through the darkest valley,
I will not be afraid, for you are close beside me.
Your rod and your staff protect and comfort me.
You prepare a feast for me in the presence of my enemies.
You honour me by anointing my head with oil. My cup overflows with blessings.
Surely your goodness and unfailing love will pursue me all the days of my life,
and I will live in the house of the Lord forever.

As sheep trust their shepherd, so we trust God. And we know Jesus, the Good Shepherd who willingly lays down his life for us (John 10:11). May we trust in Him as we sing.

StF 481 – The Lord's my shepherd

1) The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;
he makes me lie in pastures green,
he leads me by the still, still waters,
his goodness restores my soul.

Ch) And I will trust in you alone,
and I will trust in you alone,
for your endless mercy follows me,
your goodness will lead me home.

2) He guides my ways in righteousness,
and he anoints my head with oil;
and my cup — it overflows with joy,
I feast on his pure delights.

3) And though I walk the darkest path —
I will not fear the evil one,
for you are with me, and your rod and staff
are the comfort I need to know.

Stuart Townend © 1996 Thankyou Music

As we follow Jesus, we learn to trust Him as our shepherd, who cares for us and finds us when we stray from him because His mercy and goodness is endless. Of course, we do have to choose to follow Jesus – He does not force us to trust and follow Him! If we do, we will be known as His through our love of God, ourselves and others. Jesus illustrated this in the reading from the gospel of Matthew chapter 22 verses 1 to 14.

Reading: Matthew 22:1-14 (GNT)

Jesus again used parables in talking to the people. "The Kingdom of heaven is like this. Once there was a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. He sent his servants to tell the invited guests to come to the feast, but they did not want to come. So he sent other servants with this message for the guests: 'My feast is ready now; my steers and prize calves have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast!' But the invited guests paid no attention and went about their business: one went to his farm, another to his store, while others grabbed the servants, beat them, and killed them. The king was very angry; so he sent his soldiers, who killed those murderers and burned down their city. Then he called his servants and said to them, 'My wedding feast is ready, but the people I invited did not deserve it. Now go to the main streets and invite to the feast as many people as you find.' So the servants went out into the

streets and gathered all the people they could find, good and bad alike; and the wedding hall was filled with people.

“The king went in to look at the guests and saw a man who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ the king asked him. But the man said nothing. Then the king told the servants, ‘Tie him up hand and foot, and throw him outside in the dark. There he will cry and gnash his teeth.’”

And Jesus concluded, “Many are invited, but few are chosen.”

As Jesus said, many are called but few are chosen (or choose to let Jesus change them). Yet even then we can choose wrong words or maintain wrong attitudes which do not reflect those of Christ. Sadly this can lead to dissension or division among God’s people as can be seen in Paul’s letter to the church in Philippi.

Reading: Philippians 4:1-9 (GNT)

So then, my friends, how dear you are to me and how I miss you! How happy you make me, and how proud I am of you!—this, dear friends, is how you should stand firm in your life in the Lord.

Euodia and Syntyche, please, I beg you, try to agree as sisters in the Lord. And you too, my faithful partner, I want you to help these women; for they have worked hard with me to spread the gospel, together with Clement and all my other fellow workers, whose names are in God's book of the living.

May you always be joyful in your union with the Lord. I say it again: rejoice!

Show a gentle attitude toward everyone. The Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything, but in all your prayers ask God for what you need, always asking him with a thankful heart. And God's peace, which is far beyond human understanding, will keep your hearts and minds safe in union with Christ Jesus.

In conclusion, my friends, fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honourable. Put into practice what you learned and received from me, both from my words and from my actions. And the God who gives us peace will be with you.

Reflection

Paul pleads for unity, with a focus on Jesus. As we focus on Jesus, we see that God loves us and cares about us. We are precious to God! Yet we can still allow negative thoughts into our minds which counter the fact that we are beloved children of God. Thoughts such as ‘we are not good enough’ or ‘we are failures’ or ‘we have made mistakes’ or ‘chosen wrong paths’ can get lodged in our minds and make it hard to hear the whisper of God who says, ‘I love you, you are mine.’ Paul says, ‘Rejoice in the Lord’ and again ‘Rejoice!’ Rejoice in the love and presence of God. Choose to be gentle – with others and yourself!

From verse 6-7 Paul reminds us:
Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

So what thoughts should we choose to keep hold of? Paul says in verse 8:
Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things! **…and The God of peace will be with you.** May we be mindful of Christ and His love.

A Prayer for World Mental Health Day (Saturday 10th October 2026) by The Revd Stephen Normanton

Thank you God for your assurance that your love for me is stronger than all the stress and anguish caused by:
not having enough time to get everything done;
not having the health and fitness to do the things I would like to do;
not having enough money to provide the family with all I want for them;
not being able to change situations that are out of my control.
For all the times when I feel weary, lonely and worthless I thank you that your Spirit just gently lets me know your love for me is stronger... so much stronger. **Amen.**

Prayer

God, You know everything about us. You know what is going to be said even before it is spoken. You know all of our thoughts, desires, and intentions. Lord, help us to see how valued and loved we are. That whatever our circumstance, you are alongside us and sharing our burdens, our fears, our joys and our hopes. You walk with us through life and so we are blessed. Help us to see our blessings, to appreciate that which we have and not to focus just on that we have lost. We praise you for our blessing of life, love, breath and peace. For the wonder of nature and the wonder of love. We offer our day, our desires, our gifts, ourselves… that we too, might bless others. In Jesus' name, **amen.**

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours now and for ever. **Amen.**

StF 504 – May the mind of Christ my Saviour

1) May the mind of Christ my Saviour
   live in me from day to day,
   by his love and power controlling
   all I do or say.

2) May the word of God dwell richly
   in my heart from hour to hour,
   so that all may see I triumph
   only through his power.

3) May the peace of God my Father
   rule my life in everything,
   that I may be calm to comfort
   sick and sorrowing.

4) May the love of Jesus fill me,
   as the waters fill the sea;
   him exalting, self forgetting –
   this is victory.

5) May I run the race before me,
   strong and brave to face the foe,
   looking only unto Jesus
   as I onward go.

Katie Barclay Wilkinson

The Grace

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, now and evermore. **Amen.**