

# 14<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – Morning Service

Jill Martin

## Call to Worship

Great and wonderful are your deeds, Lord God the Almighty.

**Just and true are your ways, O ruler of the nations.**

Who shall not revere and praise your name, O Lord? For you alone are holy.

**All nations shall come and worship in your presence: for your just dealings have been revealed.**

To the One who sits on the throne and to the Lamb

**be blessing and honour and glory and might, for ever and ever. Amen.**

This hymn was new to me when it was sung the first time I went into a Methodist Church after leaving behind my early church connections. I was caught by the tune and the words, *This is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.* I left the service humming the tune and smiling. The Lord's day, when we rejoice in music and prayer, let us join together and come before the Lord

## StF 152 – This is the day

- 1) This is the day,  
This is the day that the Lord has made,  
That the Lord has made;  
We will rejoice,  
We will rejoice and be glad in it,  
And be glad in it.  
This is the day that the Lord has made;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day,  
This is the day that the Lord has made.
- 2) This is the day, this is the day when he rose again,  
When he rose again;  
We will rejoice, we will rejoice and be glad in it,  
And be glad in it.  
This is the day when he rose again;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day, this is the day when he rose again.
- 3) This is the day,  
This is the day when the Spirit came,  
When the Spirit came;  
We will rejoice,  
We will rejoice and be glad in it,  
And be glad in it.  
This is the day when the Spirit came;  
We will rejoice and be glad in it.  
This is the day,  
This is the day when the Spirit came.

*Anonymous*

## Prayer for Vocations Sunday (The Methodist Church)

Loving parent God, you call us to worship, to gather together in story and song.

Arriving early in anxiety .... you call us

Arriving late in a panic .... you call us

Needing personal space ... you call us

Needing contact and connection ... you call us

Seeking silence from the world ... you call us

Seeking to talk at length of our loves and losses ... you call us

Craving predictability and routine ... you call us

Craving difference and change ... you call us

With different minds and different hearts, different bodies and different lives

You call us in your love to be one. We come. **Amen**

## Prayer of Confession

For the times when our love has not reflected your own...[Silence]...Lord, forgive us

For the times when our love has been too narrow...[Silence]...Lord forgive us

For the times when we give our love a price...[Silence]...Lord forgive us

For the times when we have withdrawn our love...[Silence]...Lord forgive us

For the times when we confuse duty with love...[Silence]...Lord forgive us

In the name of your Son, who gave his life as a gift of love, to bring us home when we were still far off, who rose from death, that we might also be raised and be united in you, we pray, **Amen**

## StF 518 – Father hear the prayer we offer

1) Father, hear the prayer we offer:

Not for ease that prayer shall be,  
But for strength that we may ever  
Live our lives courageously.

3) Not for ever by still waters

Would we idly rest and stay;  
But would strike the living fountains  
From the rocks along our way.

2) Not for ever in green pastures

Do we ask our way to be;  
But the steep and rugged pathway  
May we tread rejoicingly.

4) Be our strength in hours of weakness,

In our wanderings be our guide;  
Through endeavour, failure, danger,  
Father, be there at our side.

*Love Maria Willis*

## Reading: Psalm 8

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is humankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honour. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

## Reading: Luke 13: 10-17

On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues, and a woman was there who had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years. She was bent over and could not straighten up at all. When Jesus saw her, he called her forward and said to her, 'Woman, you are set free from your infirmity.' Then he put his hands on her, and immediately she straightened up and praised God.

Indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, 'There are six days for work. So come and be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath.' The Lord answered him, 'You hypocrites! Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to give it water? Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?' When he said this, all his opponents were humiliated, but the people were delighted with all the wonderful things he was doing.

## Sermon

Genesis tells us the story of creation, the chaos of a dark void until God spoke and everything changed. A new world is created, everything to sustain life is put in place. God is in control and he finishes this creation in 6 days and then with a sense of satisfaction God looks around and sees all is good. He then rests.

Psalm 8 reiterates how wonderful our Creator God is, how everything is made by him looking up at the multitude of stars in the night sky, and acknowledging how small humans are in comparison, but God loves each one of us.

We are part of Creation, each with a role to play as stewards of all we have been given. When the world was locked down during the COVID pandemic the world around us slowly repaired itself. The songs of birds were heard clearly, the sounds of humans, traffic, aircraft fell almost silent. The skies remained blue with no vapour trails, the air we breathed was purer with nowhere near the levels of pollution. People's ability to travel was severely curtailed. No queues at airports and or ports. Tourists had to forgo visits to places of interest and beautiful beaches, the earth rested. Marine animals returned to their previous habitats, dolphins were seen in the canals of Venice. Beautiful historic places were quiet and took back their mantle of spirituality and peace.

People slowed down, and became aware of the changes all around in the natural world. Only being allowed outside for an hour a day and staying in a small group meant I saw my world come to life. I truly noticed the sunshine and the effect it had on me, watched the new leaves start their new life as emerald green shoots. Saw wild flowers growing in hedgerows and in cracks in pavements, flowers which I had not seen growing wild since my childhood. I heard the wind blowing gently and saw the effect in storms. I took time to enjoy exploring my neighbourhood and watching gardens blossom. Even the shopping queues were relatively orderly - waiting to be admitted to a shop became an adventure. In the slowness I became more aware of the presence of God and of how much I had been unaware.

Of course I am so lucky and blessed that with all that was going on I felt closer to God in calmness. There must have been others who grew closer to God in their fear and anxiety, their personal pain and loss, lonely and isolated, the people who were hungry doing their best to survive and protect their loved ones. Speaking by phone to my ailing parents daily in an attempt to reassure them, speaking to elderly members of my church congregation so they could hear a live voice. Admitting that we didn't know what was going on and how it would end, praying that God could hear us.

Our lives have all been altered by circumstances beyond our control, but not beyond God. We are called to love to show an awareness of the not only the greatness of God in Creation but also to see the smallness of God in the wonders of Creation, the smallest details in the life of this world.

Earlier this year I was involved in an accident whilst travelling on the M6 motorway. My car was hit by a lorry which spun the car and pushed it sideways on down the hard shoulder for a good few yards. I didn't know what was happening and did my best to regain control and stop. Eventually the driver of the lorry managed to stop his vehicle and our car. Dazed and confused I got out and walked towards the cab which felt like it was in the sky, it was so far from the ground. The driver got out, fortunately, I suspect he was as shaken as I was. It was then that the realisation hit that I was surrounded by the presence of God. No one was injured, the day was clear and bright even with sunshine, we were on the hard shoulder and were able to clamber over the crash barrier to wait for help. I was able to phone for the motorway police to tell them what had happened and was able to wait in relative safety until they arrived. They stopped the traffic in the inside lane and turned my car until it was facing the right direction and helped the driver and myself share the information which was needed. The driver was Czech. I was advised to drive the car home, it looked like major cosmetic repairs were in order, with some trepidation I started the car, all manner of lights came on but essentially I was able to make the journey home. I had been told not to stop again on the hard shoulder but if necessary to leave the motorway and find alternative help. With continual prayer we reached home where I was able to contact my insurance company who stepped in and took over. Apart from the immediate shaking and upset as the accident evolved I was just aware that we were not alone that God was part of what was happening and I just offered thanks and praise for what God had done.

In Genesis we read God took time to rest and look at what had been created, we too must take time to stand and stare, to see what is in front of us, to acknowledge the presence of God in the everyday miracles of life. As Jesus said in our gospel reading the Sabbath is made for us to seek and know the presence of God, to take time to rest. It is not a rule that God made to test us but a gift, a time to recreate and be still, a time to praise and pray. God is with us at all times but it is only when we slow down and look we find him and when that happens, when we are truly aware of the presence of God it brings Sabbath rest. It can be on any day, at any time. Jesus reached out in love and compassion to heal a woman on the Sabbath day. It brought criticism and anger from the leader of the Synagogue, but only love and praise from the woman who was healed. Where and when do you feel deeply the presence of God?

### **StF 544 – As the deer**

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| 1) As the deer pants for the water,<br>So my soul longs after You.<br>You alone are my heart's desire<br>And I long to worship You.                       | 2) I want You more than gold or silver,<br>Only You can satisfy.<br>You alone are the real joy-giver<br>And the apple of my eye.             |
| Ch) <i>You alone are my strength, my shield,<br/>To You alone may my spirit yield.<br/>You alone are my heart's desire<br/>And I long to worship You.</i> | 3) You're my Friend and You are my Brother,<br>Even though You are a King.<br>I love You more than any other,<br>So much more than anything. |

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### **Prayers of Intercession**

Be still and think back through the week which has passed...[Silence]  
Bring to mind any pictures of places you have seen - were they pictures which made you smile, or angry, did you feel hurt by what you saw? ...[Silence]  
Hold them in your mind and bring them before God...[Silence]  
Bring to mind the faces you have seen, friends and family, strangers, those who gave help and kindness, those who irritated you and made you feel bad...[Silence]  
Hold them in your mind and bring them to God...[Silence]  
Pray for the places and faces you have seen, pray that God will bless them all and make his presence known...[Silence]

### **Prayer of Thanksgiving – Jan S Pickard “Oceans of Prayer”**

We thank you, God because you give us more than we would ever dream of asking: daily bread and shared meals that become feasts, the breath of life, and voices to celebrate, the understanding of our history and hope of our future, work we can do and time to be recreated, people to love and trust, people who love and trust us, gifts and responsibilities.

We thank you, God because you ask of us more than we dream of giving: skills we have never developed, care for a world whose problems we cannot solve, listening which hurts us, giving which leaves us empty handed, love which makes us vulnerable, faith which seems impossible.

But you do not ask us to be supermen and women. You challenges us to be human. Give us the courage to be human because you yourself became human and lived our lives, knowing our imperfections, sharing our joy and pain, making us your people so that we can say together,

## **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 abasing -  
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*

## **Blessing (STF 744)**

The peace of the earth be with you, the peace of the heavens too;  
The peace of the rivers be with you, the peace of the oceans too.  
Deep peace falling over you. God's peace, God's peace growing in you.